



article

a matter of perspective

reflections on perspective-taking in the community of philosophical inquiry

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abstract

Perspective-taking, the mental act of simulating an 'other's' situation, is widely recognised as being fundamental to the proper functioning of critical thinking and belief-formation and in promoting empathy, social and cultural competence, and prosocial outcomes. Increasingly featured in learning continua in and across disciplines, and whose elicitation and development features strongly in Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC) and other Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CoPI) styled programs, it is commonly treated as a unitary concept. As an initial teacher educator on dialogic pedagogies, and experienced facilitator trainer in P4wC, here I argue against a unidimensional conception of perspective-taking in favour of a multidimensional one. Six perspective-taking types are proposed, defined by their frames of reference, or 'deictic fields,' what I call *Somatic*, *Agentive*, *Sociative*, *Temporal*, *Spatial*, and *Alethic*. Using a conceptual analysis approach and leaning on the cognate fields of psychology and moral philosophy, I argue that different perspective-taking types implicate different categories of decentric thinking requiring the application of different kinds of cognitive proficiencies and dexterities. I

argue, further, that different perspective-taking types, and combination of types, bring with them different sorts of affordances for the thinking subject, as well as precipitating some familiar, and some not so familiar, challenges and deterrents. A better understanding of perspective-taking types, I conclude, could be used to assist P4wC/CoPI practitioners in better cultivating this competency and ought to inform empirical assessments into the impact that such programs might have on children's decentric thinking.

keywords: philosophy for/with children; perspective-taking; decentric thinking; empathy.

una cuestión de perspectiva
reflexiones sobre la adopción de
perspectivas en la comunidad de
indagación filosófica

resumen

La toma de perspectiva, el acto mental de simular la situación de «otro», se reconoce ampliamente como fundamental para el correcto funcionamiento del pensamiento crítico y la formación de creencias, así como para promover la empatía, la competencia sociocultural y los resultados prosociales. Cada vez más presente en los procesos de aprendizaje dentro y fuera de las disciplinas, y cuya elicitación y desarrollo ocupan un lugar destacado en la Filosofía para/con Niños (P4wC) y otros programas de estilo Comunidad de Indagación Filosófica (CoPI), se suele tratar como un concepto unitario. Como formadora inicial de docentes en pedagogías dialógicas y con experiencia como formadora de facilitadores en P4wC, argumentó en contra de una concepción unidimensional de la toma de perspectiva, a favor de una multidimensional. Se proponen seis tipos de toma de perspectiva, definidos por sus marcos de referencia o «campos deícticos», que denomino Somático, Agentivo, Sociativo, Temporal, Espacial y Alético. Utilizando un enfoque de análisis conceptual y apoyándose en campos afines como la

psicología y la filosofía moral, sostengo que los distintos tipos de toma de perspectiva implican diferentes categorías de pensamiento descentrado, lo que requiere la aplicación de diversas habilidades y destrezas cognitivas. Argumento, además, que los diferentes tipos de toma de perspectiva, y sus combinaciones, ofrecen distintas posibilidades al sujeto pensante, además de generar desafíos y obstáculos, algunos conocidos y otros no tanto. Concluyo que una mejor comprensión de los tipos de toma de perspectiva podría ayudar a los profesionales de P4wC/CoPI a cultivar mejor esta competencia y debería fundamentar las evaluaciones empíricas sobre el impacto que dichos programas podrían tener en el pensamiento descentrado infantil.

palabras clave: filosofía para/con los niños; toma de perspectiva; pensamiento decéntrico; empatía.

uma questão de perspectiva
reflexões sobre a tomada de perspectiva na
comunidade de investigação filosófica

resumo

A tomada de perspectiva, o ato mental de simular a situação de um "outro", é amplamente reconhecida como fundamental para o bom funcionamento do pensamento crítico e da formação de crenças, bem como para a promoção da empatia, da competência sociocultural e de resultados pró-sociais. Cada vez mais presente nos processos de aprendizagem contínua dentro e entre disciplinas, e cuja elicitación e desenvolvimento são fortemente abordados na Filosofia para/com Crianças (FpcC) e em outros programas no estilo da Comunidade de Investigação Filosófica (CIF), ela é comumente tratada como um conceito unitário. Como formadora inicial de professores em pedagogias dialógicas e formadora experiente de facilitadores em FpcC, argumento aqui contra uma concepção unidimensional da tomada de perspectiva em favor de uma

multidimensional. Proponho seis tipos de tomada de perspectiva, definidos por seus quadros de referência, ou “campos dêiticos”, que denomino Somático, Agentivo, Sociativo, Temporal, Espacial e Alético. Utilizando uma abordagem de análise conceitual e apoiando-me nos campos afins da psicologia e da filosofia moral, argumento que diferentes tipos de tomada de perspectiva implicam diferentes categorias de pensamento descêntrico, exigindo a aplicação de diferentes tipos de habilidades e destrezas cognitivas. Argumento, ainda, que diferentes tipos de tomada de perspectiva, bem como suas combinações, trazem consigo diferentes tipos de possibilidades para o sujeito pensante, além de precipitar alguns desafios e obstáculos familiares e outros nem tanto. Concluo que uma melhor compreensão dos tipos de tomada de perspectiva poderia ser usada para auxiliar os profissionais de FpcC/CIF a cultivar melhor essa competência e deveria fundamentar avaliações empíricas sobre o impacto que tais programas podem ter no pensamento descêntrico das crianças.

palavras-chave: filosofia para/com crianças; tomada de perspectiva; pensamento descêntrico; empatia.

a matter of perspective

reflections on perspective-taking in the community of philosophical inquiry

“if only you could see what I’ve seen with your eyes”
Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* (1982)

introduction

Perspective-taking, the act of mentally simulating an ‘other’s’ situation, is an essential competency in Philosophy for/with Children (P4wC), Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CoPI) and in education more broadly; in some jurisdictions, not only within traditional disciplinary areas, but across a range of recently scoped and sequenced capabilities (see especially the Acara, 2025; The New Zealand Curriculum, 2025)¹. It has garnered considerable attention in many other fields too. Called *representation*, *imaginative substitution* or *role-taking*, in moral philosophy (Brandt, 1979; Hare, 1981), *focalization* in narrative studies (Genette, 1980), *mentalizing* and *mindreading* in theory of mind contexts (Nichols & Stich, 2003), or simply *perspective-taking*, as it is predominantly known in developmental and social psychology, neuroscience, education (Markman et al. 2008; Asgari et al., 2023) and among P4wC advocates (Lipman, 1982, 2003), the ability to imaginatively shift one’s frame of reference is fundamental to the proper functioning of reasoning and belief formation, empathetic thinking, and more.

In social psychology perspective-taking is considered essential in decreasing stereotypic biases because of its role in encouraging the expansion of a thinking subject’s domain of agential concern (Batson, 1991; Davis, 1980). This is because of the increased overlap that acts of perspective-taking affords agents between representations of the ‘self’ and representations of the ‘other;’ a phenomenon known as *agential* or *self-other overlap* (Erle & Topolinski, 2017, p. 684). Other studies positively correlate perspective-taking with increased self-esteem or in promoting social competence and prosocial outcomes (Galinsky

¹ In the recently released Australian Curriculum for instance, the capacity to ‘appreciate diverse perspectives’ constitutes a sub-element in the Personal and Social Capability; the capacity to ‘consider alternatives’ constitutes a sub-element in Critical and Creative Thinking Capability; the capacity to ‘consider points of view’ constitutes a sub-element in Ethical Understanding Capability; and the capacity to ‘consider and develop multiple perspectives’ and to ‘empathise with others’ constitutes sub-elements in the Intercultural Understanding Capability (Acara, 2025).

& Moskowitz, 2000) as well as improving intercultural awareness (Hanukaev, 2022).

On the other hand, an absence or delay in one's ability to perspective-take, compromises one's ability to then attribute intentional or mental states to others, and that include emotions, desires, beliefs and knowledge, impairing the development of one's theory of mind, and has even been characterised as a sign of developmental impairment (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Dennett, 1981, 1987). After all, the capacity to form judgments about the reasons associated with other standpoints depends on one's ability to imaginatively project oneself in another's shoes in order to receive that other's relevant input (Timmerman, 2014, p. 914). Whereas the inability, or disinclination, to do so inhibits one's capacity to recognize, and therefore judge, the reasons involved with that other's standpoint. In his seminal work, *The moral judgement of the child*, Piaget (1932) marks the early emergence of the cognitive mechanisms that provide us with the ability to represent and entertain the perspective of another, as a key developmental milestone in cognition, crucial to inferring mental states and in anticipating others' behaviour. The ability to understand another's point of view similarly constitutes a critical ingredient in Robert Selman's (1976) theory of role-taking development and cognitive growth. Child psychologists Alison Gopnik and Joshua Tenenbaum (2007) point out that perspective-taking through extended play in childhood appears to assist the development of problem-solving skills by aiding causal and counterfactual thinking; the ability to consider, not just how things are, but how things might have been.

The importance of being able to imaginatively project oneself into another's situation has also not been lost on moral theorists. Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) and Richard M. Hare (1981), for instance, separately recognised its importance in their respective classifications of moral reasoning while Jürgen Habermas (1984) designates it a vital function in his theory of communicative action. Its significance can be evidenced in a great many other fields too; from cognitive psychology (Apperley, 2010; Feffer, 1959; Flavell, 1968, 1977,, 1999), philosophy of education (Dewey, 1894; Hume, 1739; Husserl, 1913; Lipman, 1977; Lipps, 2018; Nagel, 1974; Searle, 1999), neuroscience and psychiatry (Baron-Cohen et al., 1999; Eyal et al.,

2018), to computational science and machine learning (Labash et al., 2019; Hassabis et al., 2007; Rabinowitz et al., 2018).

In sum, perspective-taking is a core cognitive competency, allowing us to navigate our *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* worlds, by encouraging social cognition and understanding, assisting with intention and belief formation, and therefore empathetic thinking, as well as complex reasoning and forward planning. If educational psychologists are correct, it is also a competency that can be learnt, and, therefore, one whose elicitation and development in education, and especially among interactionist pedagogies like P4wC/CoPI can, and should, be cultivated and encouraged.

However, perspective-taking, at least among critical thinking theorists, and on whose works P4wC/CoPI proponents regularly rely, is often approached as a unitary concept (see Ennis, 2018; Facione et al., 1994; Paul & Elder, 2006; Petress, 2004; Southworth, 2022)². But is it a unitary concept?

unitary concept or collection of concepts?

A distinction is commonly drawn between two forms of perspective-taking. The first, called *visuospatial* or *perceptual perspective-taking*, involves imaginatively substituting oneself in another's shoes, while preserving one's own beliefs, values and thoughts, then imagining how one would see that other's situation; that is, imagining how *oneself* would feel. The second, called *psychological* or *conceptual perspective-taking*, also involves imaginatively substituting oneself in another's shoes, only, this time, doing so lock, stock and barrel; that is, imagining how that other sees their situation with *their* beliefs, values and thoughts, then imagining how that '*other*' feels (Barrett-Lennard, 1981;; Batson, 1991, 1997, 2009). But, beyond this distinction, perspective-taking has remained a doggedly unitary

² In psychology, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI: Davis, 1980), designed to measure empathy, describes its 7-item perspective-taking subscale as simply the tendency to adopt the psychological point of view of others; a cognitive component of empathy (Chopik et al., 2017). Following Hannah Arendt's lead, this socially-focused conception of perspective-taking, would also be shared by Anne Margaret Sharp (2007) when, in 'Let's Go Visiting: Learning Judgment-Making in a Classroom Community of Inquiry' perspective-taking is described as the mental act of 'visiting' another's world 'in all its complexity', in the sense of 'intentionally entering into the worlds of different people with different views' (p. 303) with the aim of understanding their particular world-views and how they might be wholly different to one's own. What Sharp does not do is to distinguish between perspective-taking types, of which there are many.

concept. (Even the perceptual/conceptual distinction has been the subject of some derision and debate (Ford, 1979), though, for reasons of brevity, I'll here leave aside.) While commentators have typically suspected the process of imagining another's situation as being multi-faceted (Dennett, 1987; Erle & Toplinski, 2017), the tendency has been to consider it a unidimensional concept.

But are all acts of perspective-taking the same? Does the ability to imaginatively substitute myself in, say, my *past* 'self' differ qualitatively, in kind or complexity, with the ability to imaginatively substitute myself in my *future* 'self' or *present* 'self'? Does the ability to imaginatively substitute myself in my past, present or future 'self,' differ with the ability to imaginatively substitute myself in *your* past, present or future 'self'; or to that, say, of a non-human, hypothetical or counter-factual 'self'? The differences I argue are substantive and worth extricating, not merely because of the varying imaginative manoeuvres they demand, but because of the mental topologies they might help to reveal.

Here I argue that a better understanding of perspective-taking *types* can shed light on why some children show greater adeptness at certain forms of decentric (non-egocentric) thinking while not others, and why, say, some struggle to attenuate their egocentric biases, where others flourish. (The inability or unwillingness to decenter is not of course a problem that is unique to children. One only needs to look at the recent rise of xenophobic attitudes among adults and governments, and that include the wanton violations of human rights, including genocide, to understand that education still has much work to do.) Leaning on the fields of psychology and moral philosophy, I argue in favour of a multidimensional model of perspective-taking, distinguishing between six perspective-taking types identified by their *frames of reference* or *deictic fields* (more of which shortly); what I call *Somatic*, *Agentive*, *Sociative*, *Temporal*, *Spatial*, and *Alethic*. While probably not exhaustive, I argue that these perspective-taking types implicate different categories of decentric thinking, requiring in turn the application of different kinds of cognitive and imaginative proficiencies. I argue, further, that different perspective-taking types (and combination of types) precipitate different sorts of challenges and affordances for the thinking subject. A more nuanced understanding of perspective-taking types, I conclude, could prove useful in better assisting P4wC/CoPI practitioners interested in eliciting and

developing children's non-egocentric thinking, or for researchers interested in investigating the impact that P4wC/CoPI-styled pedagogies might have in cultivating this important competency.

decentric thinking

Before turning to the concept of decentrism, and to the field of psychology, in which it perhaps best sits, it is important to clarify my starting point, and to the moral analytical philosophy of Richard M. Hare (1919-2002).

Hare was of the view that an understanding of the logic of moral language, reveals that there exist certain *logical properties* inherent in the moral terms we use; words such as 'right', 'wrong', 'good', 'bad', and 'ought' etc.; at least when used in moral contexts. Moral judgements, he argued, are universalizable, prescriptive and overriding (Hare, 1981, 1984, 1989). Hare's groundbreaking idea, though, was to suggest that the presence of these properties logically constrain moral agents when making judgements, committing them to making the same moral judgment in any other situation they deem to be relevant in all their morally relevant features. Hare's analysis of moral language culminated in his theory of universal prescriptivism, and that posits that we are all utilitarians, and irrespective of whether we are unaware of it. Interestingly, Hare later comes to treat perspective-taking as yet another logical component of his theory, and something that is pivotal in one's ability to universalize one's prescriptions. Importantly, Hare's analytical investigations into moral reasoning, provide facilitators of P4wC/CoPI with an appropriate theoretical lens with which to analyse our own and others' thinking. While competing moral epistemologies and approaches certainly exist, including hermeneutical, emotivist, intuitionist, naturalist as well as perception-based moral theories (Murdoch, 1970), few if any offer the kinds of insights into the role that reasoning and rationality play in moral decision-making. Using Hare's analytical approach, let us turn then to the fields of moral and empirical psychology.

Following Martin Ford's lead, let us lean on Melvin Feffer's (1959, 1970) theory of interpersonal decentring and define *egocentrism*, 'as the inability to "decentre", where decentration refers to one's ability to shift attention to consider more than one aspect of an event' (Ford, 1979, p. 1170). This typically is achieved

by projecting oneself, into an 'other' or an 'unfamiliar frame of reference' (Kearney, 2015, p. 170; Hanukaev, 2022). Here we may want to broaden Feffer's definition to also include a *willingness* to decentre. After all, and as Hunter Gehlbach (2004) rightly argues, 'the motivation, or propensity, to engage in perspective-taking, is an equally important component of the process' (p. 208). Further still, there is no reason why 'decentring' could not also be understood to include cases of *intra*-personal perspective-taking. Next, let us define that perspective which requires no conceptual elaboration beyond that which is *immediately* or directly perceived by the subject as constituting one's egocentric frame of reference, or what linguists call one's 'deictic centre'. One's deictic centre can be said to reside at the nucleus of one's 'deictic world', or what Simon Prosser calls, one's 'centred world'; a world where 'the thinking subject is marked at the "centre"' (Prosser, 2005, p. 381).

The allure of egocentrism as Feffer, and later Ford, point out, is that, on the surface at least, this one way of perceiving, where one refrains from travelling from one's deictic centre and across one's deictic world, 'is the one that is easiest for the individual, that is, the one that requires no conceptual elaboration beyond what is directly perceived' (Feffer as cited in Ford, 1979, p. 1171). In other words, egocentric or 'cyclopic-type' thinking (Worley, 2021) is psychologically less effortful, and therefore (on the surface at least) more cognitively economic, than its counterpart decentric thinking, requiring little contextual detail, and therefore little imaginative manoeuvring and cognitive expenditure on the part of the thinking subject, beyond, to repeat, that which needs to be immediately perceived. Egocentric thinking requires no such travelling across one's deictic world.

However, such cognitive 'miserliness' (a refusal or inability to voyage out beyond one's deictic centre) ultimately comes at considerable intrapersonal and interpersonal epistemic cost (see also Taylor & Fiske, 1975; Gehlbach, 2004, p. 227). Conversely, decentric thinking, the sort of thinking that results when shifting one's perspective away from one's 'self' and towards an 'other' or 'unfamiliar frame of reference', profitably extends the boundaries of one's epistemic space, offering a thinking subject a degree of cognitive movement and, therefore, deicto-topographic insights, that would not have otherwise been possible to access. But does there exist more than just one *dimension* of cognitive movement? I

think there is. This is because one's deictic world is composed, not of a single *deictic field* or *deictic region*, but many, and with acts of decentration occurring across any one or more of these, often simultaneously and at other times not. I can, for example, imaginatively project myself *temporally* while remaining *spatially* fixed, and vice-versa. I can imagine sitting at my desk at home in suburban Mordialloc typing this paragraph, precisely as I am now, only this time tomorrow. I can also, with similar ease, imagine myself, now, typing this same paragraph, but from my office, 25 kilometres from here.

Similarly, I can, with a little more effort, imaginatively project myself temporally *and* spatially, while remaining agentially fixed; namely, by imagining my 'self' occupying some future (or past) time as well as place while remaining agentially the same.

Categorising the full suite of deictic fields, and, *ipso facto* of perspective-taking *types*, should bring with it a more nuanced understanding of their topographies, and therefore of the likely enablers and inhibitors that contribute to, or hinder, their proper functioning and development. I begin with what is arguably the most nascent type and to the work of Daniel Dennett, one that centres around the invocation of intentional notions.

somatic perspective-taking: imagining 'self'/imagining 'other'

It is not unusual, when engaging in everyday discourse, Dennett (1971) famously observed, to invoke intentional notions, like mental states, or minds, to all sorts of ordinary objects or systems we encounter, especially of those whose 'behaviours' we are keen to interpret, explain or predict. This includes not only other human beings, but entities from animals and artefacts to robots and computers. Anthropomorphising an object or system, 'by treating it *as if* it were a rational agent who governed its "choice" of "action" by a "consideration" of its "beliefs" and "desires"' (Dennett, 2009, p. 339) is to adopt, what Dennett calls, an *intentional stance* towards it. This assigning of intentional stances towards entities is useful, Dennett argues, because we are often better skilled at interpreting, explaining and predicting actions and behaviours when they are couched in terms of mental states. Indeed, '[a]nything that is usefully and voluminously predictable from the intentional stance' Dennett (2009) contends 'is, by definition, an

intentional system' (p. 339). This applies equally to animals, chess-playing computers as it does to you or me.

Dennett's (1987) theory of intentional attribution (elaborately expounded in *The Intentional Stance*) gives rise to 'questions about the conditions under which a thing can be *truly* said to have a mind, or to have beliefs, desires and other "mental" states' (Dennett, 2009, p. 339). However, the theory deliberately draws no sharp line between things that are intentional systems and things that are not; 'between "real believers" and things like thermostats' (Shoemaker, 1990, p. 212). It is deliberately silent on this point, avoiding reference to such self-contained features of systems, opting instead to refer to

specific predictively profitable interpretations of them. Any system whose behaviour is predictable and/or interpretable in terms of beliefs, desires and ratiocination, that is, any system to which we can fruitfully adopt the 'intentional stance' is an intentional system. (Slors, 1996, p. 93)

'Whatever else a person might be', writes Dennett (1971), '– embodied mind or soul, self-conscious moral agent, "emergent" form of intelligence – he is an Intentional system, and whatever follows just from being an Intentional system thus is true of a person' (p. 100). Being ontologically neutral', Dennett's theory side-steps 'questions about the conditions under which a thing can be truly said to have a mind, or to have beliefs, desires and other "mental" states' (Dennett, 2009, p. 339).

While there are pragmatic advantages to be had in attributing intentional stances to certain entities, like humans, chess-playing computers, animals and even plants, there are, Dennett argues, no obvious predictively profitable interpretations to be had in attributing intentional stances to a host of other entities, like plastic dolls, imaginary friends and pet rocks.³ But yet, human beings

³ It is also important, for our purposes, to contrast Dennett's intentional stance with two more basic strategies of prediction or stances, what he calls the *physical stance* and the *design stance*, worth repeating here:

The physical stance is simply the standard laborious method of the physical sciences, in which we use whatever we know about the laws of physics and the physical constitution of the things in question to devise our prediction. When I predict that a stone released from my hand will fall to the ground, I am using the physical stance. In general, for things that are neither alive nor artefacts, the physical stance is the only available strategy [. . .]

[. . .] Alarm clocks, being designed objects (unlike the stone), are [. . .] amenable to a fancier style of prediction – prediction from the design stance [. . .]

[. . .] Designed things are occasionally misdesigned, and sometimes they break. (Nothing that happens to, or in, a stone counts as its malfunctioning, since it has no function in the first place, and if it breaks in two, the result is two stones, not a single broken stone.) When a designed thing is fairly complicated (a chain saw in contrast to an axe, for instance) the

do. After all, we are imaginatively quite adept at *projecting* ourselves, *together* with our own mental states, into all sorts of entities, physical or designed, endowing them with intentional stances where there exists no obvious pragmatic, interpretive or explanatory advantages. It is entirely possible to imaginatively project oneself into all sorts of unlikely entities, real or imagined, in the absence of any such rewards; just as a child is able to do when projecting an intentional stance onto her plastic doll, imaginary friend or pet rock, an automobile enthusiast onto her classic car or a musician onto her favourite guitar. (Importantly, only perceptual perspective-taking could permit one to do this. Conceptual perspective-taking, being dependent on one's preparedness to attribute beliefs, desires and ratiocination, to one's target object, does not.) Nevertheless, most acts of perspective-taking, involve entities for which we are happy to attribute intentional states.

This brings us then to the first, most elemental, category of perspective-taking, residing in what I will, hereon, call the *somatic field* (from the Greek *σῶμα*, for 'body'). *Somatic perspective-taking* is the act of imaginatively substituting oneself into another *soma*. By 'soma', I mean any entity or system, physical or designed, real or imagined, however simple or complex (inanimate object, artefact or organism, human, animal or plant) that one wishes to mentally simulate. *Somatic perspective-taking*, then, can be divided into two, the first involving somata that the subject in question is willing to *attribute* intentional states, and, at the risk of causing confusion, can be denoted by the indexical⁴ term

moderate price one pays in riskiness is more than compensated for by the tremendous ease of prediction. Nobody would prefer to fall back on the fundamental laws of physics to predict the behaviour of a chain saw when there was a handy diagram of its moving parts available to consult instead. (Dennett, 2009, p. 340)

However, the riskiest strategy of prediction, and a sub-species of the design stance, is the intentional stance, invoked for such entities as animals and people, as well as chess-playing computers whose designed purpose is to 'reason' and who "want" to win, and who "know" the rules and principles of chess'. (Dennett, 2009, p. 340)

⁴ Some words refer to (that is, they index) the same thing irrespective of who or when they are uttered. For example, 'Uluru' always refers to the same sandstone rock formation in the centre of Australia. It is not a word that changes its meaning from utterer to utter or from context to context and is thus said to be *insensitive*. (Davis, 2015, p. 470.) They include names, like *Elvis Presley*, definite descriptions, like *The first Nobel Prize laureate in Physics*, nouns like *book* and adjectives like *adolescent*. However, other words, like 'I', as in 'I visited Uluru' change their meaning depending on who says them and are therefore said to be *context-sensitive*. Indexicals then are context-sensitive words, changing their reference depending on the speaker and context, and 'include temporal expressions like "today" and "now", demonstratives like "this" and "that", locative expressions

‘self’, e.g. another person. Let us call these, *intentional bearing* somata. Let us also follow Dennett’s lead by similarly taking a purely pragmatic stance and adopt a theory-neutral way of capturing the cognitive competences of such intentional-bearing agents, and not commit ourselves to over-specific hypotheses about the internal structures that might underlie their competences.

The second type of somatic perspective-taking involves somata onto which the subject merely projects intentional states, typically a physical or designed thing, and which can be denoted by the term ‘other’, e.g. plastic doll, imaginary friend or pet rock. Let us call these non-intentional bearing somata (See Table 1).

Table 1. Somatic perspective-taking

Somatic	Intentional (self)	Non-intentional (other)
Proximal		Distal

Source: Author

epistemic closeness

One may notice that perspective-taking that is of the non-intentional bearing variety, is easier to imagine than perspective-taking that is of the intentional-bearing variety; requiring no epistemic guesswork on the part of the thinking subject, not dissimilar to an egocentric thinker. Unlike the egoist, though, it does require the possession of the affective, volitional and imaginary resources to *project* an intentional stance onto the target soma. In contrast, intentional-bearing somata are those to which we happily attribute intentional stances because of the pragmatic, interpretative or explanatory advantages that doing so brings with it. However, being a strategy of prediction, it involves an element of epistemic guesswork. It is therefore the riskier of the two; arguably the more difficult to imagine. Far easier to project an intentional stance onto an imaginary human than to predict the intentions of a real human, a toy alien over a real alien, or an unthinking entity over a living entity.

Moreover, the degree of confidence one has in attributing intentional stances will vary depending (at least in part) on one’s *epistemic familiarity*, or what

like “here” and “nearby”, and pronouns like “I”, “she” and “it” (Mount, 2008, p. 193. See also Fost, 2013; Gert, 2008; King, 2006; Prosser, 2005, 2015; Yalcin, 2015).

we might call, degree of *epistemic closeness* one has to one's target soma. After all, I am more confident in accurately attributing intentional states to, say, someone I reside with or have grown up with, whose beliefs, values and ratiocination etc., I am more familiar with, than I am to, say, my neighbour with whom I seldom interact, my neighbour than to your neighbour, with whom I never interact, your neighbour than to a national of a country whose socio-behavioural norms and practices are wholly alien to me, and so on. (This is not to say epistemic familiarity *alone* is predictive of one's propensity to attribute intentional stances. Over-confidence, lack of confidence, cognitive functioning including one's short-term and long-term memory, would surely play a role too.) Let us describe, then, those target somata whose beliefs, desires, ratiocination, etc. we are more familiar with, and therefore more confident in assigning, as being more *epistemically proximal*, and those whose intentional stances we are less confident in interpreting, explaining or predicting, as being more *epistemically distal*.

Note that epistemic closeness is a matter of degree rather than an all or nothing affair. Moreover, the more 'proximal' end of the epistemic scale, one would expect, would bring with it a corresponding reduction in epistemic uncertainty. And, in a community of inquiry, the less epistemic uncertainty experienced by a participant, the easier it would be, to imaginatively substitute oneself into the shoes of the intended subject. However, Darren Chetty also warns of the danger of 'presumed familiarity' when perspective-taking. In 'The Elephant in the Room: Picturebooks, Philosophy for Children and Racism', Chetty (2014) bemoans that

throughout American literature, White writers writing Black characters have themselves failed to fully empathise with their character and have instead offered their own perspective on Blackness through the lens of Whiteness . . . As the lone person of colour in the community of enquiry, I have often struggled to express perspectives I know to be shared by other people of colour and noticed that my struggle is compounded by, and personalised by, omission of academic perspectives that are similar to mine. (p. 26)

In short, no amount of presumed epistemic familiarity, however confident one might be, can or should be mistaken for absolute certainty.

agentive perspective-taking: imagining 'I'/imagining 'you'

Perhaps the most familiar category of imaginative substitution is what might be called perspective-taking of the *agentive* variety, and of which there are two sorts. Perspective-taking can be understood to mean imaginatively substituting oneself in an 'other', usually denoted by the indexical term 'you' and where the target host is typically of another thinking subject; though, as argued above, in the case of plastic dolls, imaginary friends or pet rocks, this may not always be the case. Let us call perspective-taking that focuses upon an 'other', *inter-personal* or *allocentric*.

However, agentive perspective-taking can also involve imaginatively substituting oneself *intra-personally*. I do so every time I am presented with, say, two, three or more possible courses of action and needing to answer, rationally, the practical question '*What shall I now do?*' Assuming I have the time and inclination to do so, identifying that rational course of action, necessarily requires me to first imaginatively substitute myself in the hypothetical case where I choose, say, each of acts *a*, *b* or *c*, etc., calculating the likely causal consequences that will ensue if I do, then choosing that act I deem most optimific (or prudential or moral, etc.) depending on my objective. (See also Hare, 1981, pp. 104–106; Hare, 1989, pp. 245–250; Persson, 1983). Let us call agentive perspective-taking that focuses upon oneself, *idiocentric* and assign to it the indexical term 'I'.

Table 2. Agentive perspective-taking

Agentive	Idiocentric (I)	Allocentric (you)
Proximal		Distal

Source: Author

One will notice that idiocentric perspective-taking permits a thinking subject to imagine the likely causal consequences of the choices one makes. Perspective-taking of this intra-personal variety is especially useful when thinking causally, hypothetically or prudentially; when we are wanting to determine what our present preferences ought to be, by exposing them to logic and the facts.

To borrow Ingmar Persson's (1983) well-worn example of Odysseus and the Sirens, 'Odysseus prefers that, should he beseech his companions to release him, they should not do so, because if they do their ship will be wrecked (Homer *Od.* 12)' (Hare, 1989, p. 246). Odysseus' strongest preference is rationally arrived at through a careful consideration of all his present preferences, (and which, in this instance, include surrogate present preferences that engender what he would want to happen at that future time when he is under the spell of the Sirens, as well as surrogate present preferences engendering what he would want to happen at an even later time, were he to survive the Sirens). Odysseus' decision in the end is that he be left tied to the ship's mast, a decision, unsurprisingly, that best serves his prudential self-interest, as it maximally satisfies his preferences over time, namely, that he survive to see Ithaca, Penelope, Telemachus and Argos again. It is a decision that would not have been reached without the employment of idiocentric perspective-taking, the insights it reveals and reasoning it permits.

agential leaping

Allocentric perspective-taking differs from idiocentric perspective-taking, in one obvious way: by requiring a thinking subject to employ the requisite imaginative resources, in addition to possessing the affective and volitional funds, to substitute oneself into the shoes of a wholly different thinking subject. After all, I must in deciding to imaginatively substitute myself into the shoes of an 'other', possess not just the necessary cognitive wherewithal that would allow me to do so, but also the desire to do so. Idiocentric perspective-taking requires no such *agential leaping* and consequently less cognitive and motivational expenditure on the part of the thinking subject.

Whilst it is true that the possession of affective and volitional funds are also required in the decision to employ idiocentric perspective-taking, such as in Odysseus's case, there is nothing quite like blatant self-interest in motivating one before settling on a preferred course of action. And whilst one can similarly point to the prudential, moral or other advantages to be had in imaginatively substituting oneself into the shoes of an 'other', (and there are, to be sure, advantages to be had) these are not as easily discernible. Had Odysseus neglected to imaginatively substitute himself in the hypothetical case where his companions

caved into his demands and untied him, their ship would most certainly have been wrecked.

Idiocentric perspective-taking also differs from its allocentric counterpart by usually bringing with it a far greater level of epistemic familiarity and, therefore, predictive confidence on the part of the thinking subject.

sociative perspective-taking: imagining 'me'/imagining 'we'

The imaginary, affective and volitional challenges that thinking subjects may experience when imaginatively substituting themselves allocentrically is certainly not unique to this variety of perspective-taking. Nor is allocentric perspective-taking the only type of imaginative substitution that requires agential leaping. The same challenges can be found in collectivist-type perspective-taking; when imaginatively substituting oneself into the frame of reference of a particular group, or collective of individuals; precisely as we are sometimes called upon to do when, say, determining the collective preferences of one's own (or another's) family, tribe, community, country, species, etc., or when interpreting, explaining or predicting their collective actions, behaviours or best interests. And we can be sure that such collectivist-type perspective-taking, actually exist, because all that is required for it to be actualised is that the thinking subject in question deems it advantageous to attribute intentional stances to a group of others, than, say, to any single member of that group. Consider, for instance, the use of gendered pronouns, such as 'she' for 'England' and gendered language such as 'mother Russia' or 'Uncle Sam'.

We need, therefore, to distinguish between perspective-taking types that involve imaginatively substituting oneself into a solitary individual, from those that involve imaginatively substituting oneself into a collective of individuals. Let us call, the former *monadic* perspective-taking (from the Greek *μονάδα* for 'singular') denoted by the indexical term 'me' and the latter, *omadic* perspective-taking (from the Greek *ομάδα* for 'collective') and denoted by the indexical term 'we'.

Table 3. Sociative perspective-taking

Sociative	Monadic (<i>me</i>)	Omadic (<i>we</i>)
<i>Proximal</i>		<i>Distal</i>

Source: Author

Notice that sociative perspective-taking of the monadic variety can be either idiocentric or allocentric. Note, too, that sociative perspective-taking of the omadic variety typically entails one's membership of that target group, though one can imagine cases where one is not. Consider, say, German industrialist Oskar Schindler's efforts to save Jewish workers from their Nazi oppressors in WW2. Interestingly, examples of altruistic behaviours can be either of the monadic or omadic variety. This is unsurprising, since acts of moral impartiality, including acts of extreme selflessness, (acts that seek to serve the interests of another, or group of others to the detriment of one's own perceived self-interest) can just as easily be directed towards another, as they can towards a group of others. Even more interesting is the question of how big a role does, or can, decentric thinking play in encouraging altruistic behaviours, and perhaps even observance of, that most pervasive of principles, the golden rule of morality: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". If Erle and Topolinski (2017) are correct that representations of the other encourages the expansion of a thinking subject's domain of agential concern (a consequence of what they called agential or self/other overlap) then decentric thinking may well play a role. (For a different, philosophic-logical, explanation of how perspective-taking assists in generating the motivational potency required for impartial thinking, see Hare (1984) on moral supervenience).

subjectual forms of decentric thinking

Somative, Agentive and Sociative perspective-taking, round off what we might call the *subjectual forms of decentric thinking*. They are 'subjectual', in the sense that they require a shift in one's subjective frame of reference, whether interpersonally or intrapersonally. For clarity we assigned them indexicals; terms

that change their meanings from utterer to utterer, such as ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘me’, ‘we’, etc (see Table 4.)

Table 4. Subjectual perspective-taking types

	Perspective-Taking Types		s u b j e c t u a l
Somatic	Intentional (self)	Non-intentional (other)	
Agentive	Idiocentric (I)	Allocentric (you)	
Sociative	Monadic (me)	Omadic (we)	
Proximal Distal			

Source: Author

All subjectual forms of decentric thinking, I argued, require an ability and willingness to represent another or group of others, and, therefore, the exercise of some level of generosity of self, extended from one thinking subject to an ‘other’. However, frames of reference can also differ *locationally* and so it is to these that I now turn.

temporal perspective-taking: imagining ‘now’/imaging ‘then’

Let us begin with a look at the first of three locationally-oriented forms of decentric thinking, and to that of the temporal dimension. I turn once more to Persson’s example of Odysseus.

One may have noticed that the example, while illustrating Odysseus’ idiocentric thinking, as he considers his possible options, weighs up their likely consequences and corresponding costs, before settling on his preferred course of action, also happens to involve him decentering *temporally*. He does so each time he imaginatively substitutes himself into his possible futures, (where he instructs that he be tied to his ship, is left untethered, etc.) and which he represents as surrogate present preferences engendering what he would want to happen at those future times, before deciding on what he should (now) do. One can similarly

imagine Odysseus, pausing to imaginatively substitute himself into his past self, imagining his preferences at that past time, and that would presumably include following through with his promise to Penelope and Telemachus that he return to them again. That is temporal perspective-taking can be *present-oriented* or *future* or *past-oriented*; the first denoted with the indexical term ‘now’ and the latter two with the indexical term ‘then’.

Table 5. Temporal perspective-taking

Temporal	Present-oriented (now)	Past/Future-oriented (then)
Proximal		Distal

Source: Author

While present-oriented perspective-taking is highly proximal, past and future oriented perspective-taking can be more or less proximal or more or less distal from one’s deictic centre. Moreover, typically, the more temporally distal, in the past or in the future, an event is, the more epistemically distal that event becomes. As with subjectual forms of decentric thinking, the more distal an event happens to be, the more imaginative resources and epistemic guesswork is required to be able to reasonably interpret, explain or predict that state of affairs, at least with any degree of confidence.

chronocentrism – diminishing domains of temporal concern

It is with temporal perspective-taking, that we also observe the emergence of ascending and descending levels, or domains, of moral concern; and that we can broadly call *chronocentrism*. The further away one travels from one’s deictic centre, the less the motivational pull to assign weight to the preferences of those that reside there. I care less, I must confess, about the memories, interests, welfare and fortunes, of my great-grandparents, than I ever did of my grand-parents or parents; still less for my great-great-grand-parents, or those before them⁵.

⁵ For an interesting exploration of the moral convolutions surrounding the wishes of those who are now deceased see Barry Lam’s 2017 podcast:
<https://hiphination.org/complete-season-one-episodes/episode-one-the-wishes-of-the-dead/>

Similarly, I tend to care less about the memories, interests, welfare and fortunes of my past 'selves' than I do for those of my current self. The more distal they reside from my deictic centre the less care I apportion them.

The same phenomenon is mirrored when considering future-oriented perspective-taking. The more distal in the future an event or person resides, the less moral weight we tend to give them. While it is not unusual to concern ourselves with the wellbeing and welfare of, say, the next generation, how often does one concern oneself with the generation that will follow them, or for the needs, wants and desires of those that are yet to exist? And there are no shortage of examples in the real world of how diminishing realms of temporal concern factor in thinking. Think of the burgeoning national debt crises plaguing the US, or even one's own household debt levels. Consider too climate collapse, insect extinction, the West's addiction to non-renewable fossil fuels, nuclear weapons testing in the late 20th century, or the tobacco industry's relentless drive to increase profits.

Chronocentrism, then, describes that form of egocentrism that attributes greater importance to one's present and diminishing importance to more distal times, past or future. Similar diminishing levels of moral concern can also be evidenced with the subjectual forms of perspective-taking we considered earlier; for instance, when thinking allocentrically.

spatial perspective-taking: imagining 'here'/imagining 'there'

The second locationally-oriented type of decentric thinking, is of the spatial variety. As with all other forms of perspective-taking, acts of spatial decentration can be sorted into two types, those that reside *at* one's spatial location and those that are spatially distant. Let us call the first *edotic* perspective-taking (from the Greek *εδώ* for 'here') and denoted by the indexical term 'here' and the latter, *ekeitic* perspective-taking (from the Greek *εκει* for 'there') and denoted by the indexical term 'there'. Similar to temporal perspective-taking, edotic perspective-taking is highly proximal, whereas, ekeitic perspective-taking can be more or less proximal, or more or less distal.

Table 6. Spatial perspective-taking

Spatial	Edotic (here)	Ekeitic (there)
Proximal		Distal

Source: Author

topocentrism – diminishing domains of spatial concern

As with temporal types of perspective-taking, similar egocentric biases can be evidenced in the spatial sphere, depending on how proximal or distal a place or subject resides from one's deictic centre. That is the more spatially distal, an event or person may be from our deictic centre, the less moral weight we are likely to apportion it; the more proximal, the greater the weight. (For a more detailed discussion on such 'topocentric' biases, see Peter Singer, 1972.)

alethic perspective-taking: imagining 'truthities'/imagining 'falsities'

The third and likely most overlooked locational type of perspective-taking is that which resides at the actual/counter-factual level. *Modal* or *alethic* perspective-taking denotes those mental acts of simulating logically possible worlds and of which there are two kinds. Leaning on David Lewis's (1941-2012) theory on the plurality of worlds (Lewis, 1986), the first, denotes those acts of perspective-taking that invoke the *actual world*, the one in which we reside (that is, the world of the big bang, cosmological inflation, planets and stars, black holes and worm holes, where dinosaurs once roamed the Earth and the allies won WW2, and where Donald Trump beats Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election).

The latter, counter-factual perspective-taking, denotes those that involve imaginatively substituting oneself in worlds in which 'we' *do not* reside, those that are also logically possible and of which there are an infinite many. They include, as Lewis explains, worlds where:

I do not exist, or there are no people at all, or the physical constants do not permit life, or totally different laws govern the doings of alien particles with alien properties. There are so many other worlds, in fact, that absolutely every way that a world could possibly be is a way that some world is. (Lewis, 1986, p. 2)

Lewis’ metaphysical view is that there are a great many ways that things could have been, besides the way they actually are, and that for every way the world could have been, there is a world, just as real as our own, that that way is. For our purposes, of course, we do not need to accept Lewis’ wholesale view of actuality, that has possible worlds existing as concretely as ours. But we can certainly benefit from the conceptual and explanatory advantages to be had by understanding that perspective-taking can also function at the modal level, and that counter-factual thinking brings with it its own affordances (and challenges).

According to Lewis, the terms ‘true’ and ‘false’, become *modal* expressions, changing their reference depending on the world that one happens to have in mind. Similar to our spatial and temporal expressions ‘here’ and ‘there’, and ‘now’ and ‘then’, ‘true’ and ‘false’ become context-sensitive words, changing their meaning depending on the possible world the speaker happens to be indexing. So the sentence ‘Donald Trump won the 2024 American election’ may well be true in the actual world, but false in worlds where he was not nominated, was assassinated, withdrew his candidacy or never existed. That is ‘true’ and ‘false’ in this case are *contingent*, depending on the world one happens to be imagining.

With this in mind, perspective-taking acts that take as their point of reference the actual world, can then be denoted by the term ‘true’, while perspective-taking acts that take as their point of reference counter-factual worlds, can be denoted by the term ‘false’.

Table 7. Alethic perspective-taking

Alethic	Actual <i>true</i>	Counter-factual <i>false</i>
Proximal		Distal

Source: Author

Note, too, that while some truths and falsities (the types of truths and falsities we are concerned with here) are contingently so, changing their meaning depending on the world one happens to be indexing, *necessary truths* and *necessary falsities* are not index-dependent as they remain so in all possible worlds (Lewis, 1986).

As we noticed with agential perspective-taking, counterfactual perspective-taking also differs to its counterpart, actual perspective-taking, in one obvious way: by requiring the thinking subject to possess and employ the requisite imaginative, affective and volitional resources, to imaginatively substitute oneself into a counterfactual world, or in the shoes of someone who resides there. Actual perspective-taking requires no such leaps of faith into unknown worlds and, therefore, involves less cognitive and motivational effort.

While instances of such modal miserliness and imaginative resistance might impede one's capacity or willingness to imaginatively substitute oneself counterfactually, counterfactual thinking profitably extends one's epistemic insights in a range of ways. In logic and philosophy, the capacity to temporarily suspend one's judgements by imagining worlds where one adopts opposing viewpoints is essential when evaluating the reasonableness or rational successfulness of competing arguments, theories and worldviews. In the sciences and social sciences, including literature, politics, history and ethics, the capacity to imagine invented or imaginary worlds, utopian and dystopian, brings with it advantages as we test our assumptions and theories for their *completeness* and *consistency* in unfamiliar terrains, alternative histories and narratives, or where different ontological realities pertain and then apply our findings to our own world (think of the ring of Gyges).

As with other forms of perspective-taking, the more proximal a possible world is to our own, the more epistemically familiar it is and, therefore, the easier it is to imagine. Conversely, the more distal, the less our predictive confidence and the more difficult it is to imagine. I can quite easily imagine a possible world where Karmala Harris won the election; far more difficult to imagine one that is travelling backwards in time, where gravity does not exist or where objects travel faster than the speed of light. Finally, let us call *alethocentrism* the unreasonable or inexplicable refusal and/or inability, to cognitively represent to oneself counter-factual worlds, the kind of egocentrism that manifests at the modal level.

locational forms of decentric thinking

Temporal, Spatial and Alethic perspective-taking, then, comprise the three locational forms of decentric thinking. Together with the three subjectual forms considered earlier, decentric thinking can be understood to fall under six types, each being bi-directional and falling along a spectrum, represented in the table below:

Table 8. Perspective-taking types

	Perspective-Taking Types		
Somatic	Intentional <i>(self)</i>	Non-intentional <i>(other)</i>	s u b j e c t u a l
Agentive	Idiocentric <i>(I)</i>	Allocentric <i>(you)</i>	
Sociative	Monadic <i>(me)</i>	Omadic <i>(we)</i>	
Temporal	Present-oriented <i>(now)</i>	Past/Future Oriented <i>(then)</i>	l o c a t i o n a l
Spatial	Edotic <i>(here)</i>	Ekeitic <i>(there)</i>	
Alethic	Actual <i>(true)</i>	Counter-factual <i>(false)</i>	
Proximal Distal			

Source: Author

discussion

The ease, or willingness, with which one is able to decenter in a given deictic field does not entail that one is similarly able to, or equally adept at, decentering in another field. Likewise, *within* particular perspective-taking types, the ease with which one is able to decenter in one direction, is not indicative of one's capacity or propensity to decenter in the opposing direction. I can indulge quite freely in future-oriented perspective-taking, particularly when my own, or my families' prudential interest might be at stake, but lack the same motivational

pull or urgency or possess the same cognitive agility in, or comprehension of, circumstances where past-oriented perspective-taking might be required. Furthermore, the more distal an event or that a subject might reside from my deictic centre, the more difficult it would be for me to imagine.

So how, then, might a more nuanced understanding of perspective-taking types better assist P4wC/CoPI facilitation in cultivating decentric thinking?

Dialogic programs I would argue, would do well to provide children with learning opportunities that help to better elicit the full suite of perspective-taking types. This could be achieved through the use of curricular programs incorporating provocations, stimulus materials and inquiry questions (student-generated or teacher-generated), engagement with which would require the activation and deployment of children's full suite of decentric modes of thought.

A more purposeful consideration of stimulus materials and procedural questioning techniques, namely, those that deliberately invite decentration, would ensure children exercised, and potentially develop, their perspective-taking competencies, and, in turn, decentric thinking.

a perspectivist-focused model of p4wc/copi facilitation

So how can P4wC/CoPI practitioners keen in developing young people's decentric thinking, arguably central to the development of their critical thinking capability, help to better cultivate perspective-taking competency? The answer, I suggest, resides in learning activities that deliberately invite the exercise of perspective-taking types, as well as combination of types. P4wC practitioners are well positioned to do this; namely, through the use of carefully selected texts and provocations (questions and stimulus material) whose consideration or resolution, at least in part, requires the application of participants' perspective-taking competencies. I am arguing in favor of a *perspectivist model of CoI facilitation*; one that seeks to develop children's full suite of perspective-taking types through the careful selection and application of CoI subject matter in its curriculum. And there is no shortage of potential philosophical materials to choose from. Let us look briefly at two.

Consider for example, Barry Lam's highly acclaimed *Hi Phi Nation* Series 1, Episode 1 podcast, *The Wishes of the Dead* (Jan. 24, 2017). Here 'Lam follows the story of the Hershey fortune to show how a 19th century industrialist constructed the oddest business structure to ensure that his idiosyncratic wishes would be fulfilled hundreds of years after his death.' Founder of the Hershey Chocolate Company, Milton Hershey (1857-1945) donated a sizeable portion of his vast fortune, valued at 60 million dollars in 1923, to a charitable trust to fund the creation of an orphan school in Hershey Pennsylvania in perpetuity, and originally intended for the accommodation and education of exclusively fit white male orphans. Now valued at 17.4 billion dollars, far more than would ever be needed for the running of one school, and an amount that could otherwise be used to help countless others, the podcast raises interesting moral and legal questions around the fulfillment of the wishes of the dead. More specifically, the story lures the listener to imaginatively substitute themselves in the shoes of the long-deceased Hershey (a case of past-oriented perspective-taking), before trying to decide on the level of moral weight to be given to his wishes, and then balancing them against the potential fulfilment of the competing wishes of those residing in the present.

The example pits surrogate present preferences that engender what Hershey would have wanted to happen at that past time (then) with the current wishes (now) of those living in the present. An attempt at a solution necessitates the exercise of a level of perspective-taking agility, and therefore decentric thinking, across time.

Further still, a facilitator could, in the same CoI session, introduce examples that reside at the opposite end of the temporal perspective-taking spectrum, potentially as a means of challenging children to test (apply and evaluate) the rigor (consistency) of their moral standpoints as they apply them (sincerely) onto wholly different contexts. For example, if, as some might conceivably argue, that the wishes of deceased persons carry no, or diminished, weight, then should the same thinking be applied when considering the wishes of those that are yet to be born? Think, say, of the wishes of 'potential' people, namely those of the unborn, as is sometimes introduced in debates on abortion. If there exists a morally relevant difference, what is it? If not, why not?

And nor does one necessarily need to look to such offbeat examples. For instance, what weight, if any, ought one to give to a parent's dying wish that upon their passing, the family home not be sold, but where the proceeds could be used to greatly alleviate the financial stresses of all their surviving children and their families, if, instead, the said property *were* sold? Lam's non-fictional narratives, and our lived experiences alike, provide fertile ground for children to flex their perspective-taking competencies across diverse deictic fields, as positions are tested for consistency and sincerity.

Equally instructive are philosophical provocations that pit one perspective-taking type against another and which, for the astute facilitator, can prove especially fruitful in helping to either better illuminate the source of disagreement between discussants, or to help generate disagreement, depending on one's aim/s.

Consider, for example, recent debates around climate change. Climate activists, not uncommonly, draw our attention to the plight of those temporally distal to us, such as our children's children, and who are likely to be disproportionately more affected than, say ourselves, particularly those in the West, who some argue, are the main culprits for this human induced phenomenon. Whereas, those opposed, not uncommonly, choose to flex their perspective-taking competencies spatially by imagining the inevitable financial consequences that would immediately befall humanity in the mainly developing world, were resource-producing nations to suddenly cease the mining and exportation of carbon energy sources.

Whilst the above examples merely scratch the surface of what a perspectivist-focused P4wC/CoPI approach could look like, importantly the role of the teacher-facilitator remains the same, including the need I would argue to avoid directive thinking by remaining philosophically neutral.

Clearly much work still needs to be done in developing teachers' skills in better cultivating perspective-taking competency in children. As an advocate and practitioner of P4wC/CoPI and other dialogic pedagogies across the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors in Australia, and residing in a state where teachers are required to be able to identify, develop, implement, assess and report on a range of critical thinking and ethical thinking competencies, the development of

perspective-taking and its potential role in promoting decentric thinking deserves attention.

conclusion

Decentering, in any of the six deictic fields considered in this paper, like any other competency must be practiced. The benefits that could potentially be accrued, might not be too dissimilar to Gopnik and Tenenbaum (2007) findings where extended play in childhood was shown to assist the development of problem-solving skills by aiding causal and counterfactual thinking. Clearly more research is required on this front to better understand the correlation between the development of perspective-taking competency, decentration and the promotion of empathetic thinking.

Allowing avenues for children to reflect, assess and report on the development of their own, and each other's, perspective-taking competencies, as well as empathy and other social and emotional skills, during or after P4wC/CoPI sessions, would allow both teacher and discussants to monitor learning progress made. Such practices are already commonplace in P4wC/CoPI and should constitute an important part of any good facilitator's pedagogical skillset. Likewise, researchers interested in better understanding the actual impact that dialogic strategies like P4wC/CoPI might have in cultivating perspective-taking competency, as well as empathetic and decentric thinking, would do well to consider whether current instruments and approaches adequately capture the full suite of perspective-taking types and which, I have argued are commonly interlaced. Equally important for researchers and practitioners would be an in depth understanding of the respective enablers and inhibitors that contribute to, or hinder, their proper functioning and development.

At what point in an inquiry should facilitators introduce, perspective-taking inducing questions and provocations? How should a potential facilitator navigate discussions where they themselves may not be the most adept at such perspective taking? That is, is it a problem if communities are 'better' at performing these tasks than the adults leading their philosophical thought? Admittedly I raise these wonderings not because I presume to know the answers, (which I do not) but as pedagogical provocations that warrant careful consideration.

Perspective-taking types, I have argued, can be categorised into two: subjectual and locational forms of decentric thinking, depending on their frames of reference. Different perspective-taking types implicate different categories of decentric thinking, are bi-directional, and each of which require the application of different kinds of cognitive proficiencies and dexterities. I argued that epistemic closeness, that is the degree of epistemic familiarity that a thinking subject might have when perspective-taking, changes depending on how proximal or distal a person or event happens to reside from one's deictic centre. Likewise acts of perspective-taking that involve agential leaping, that is, mental acts that involve simulating the beliefs, desires and ratiocination, etc., of a wholly different thinking subject, are more cognitively challenging than those that do not. Similarly, when thinking alethically, modal leaping, the mental act of stepping outside the actual world and into wholly different, though equally possible, worlds, brings with it its own complexities and affordances.

Finally, when discussing the three locational types of decentric thinking, temporal, spatial and alethic, we named the inability or refusal to step outside one's deictic centre, chronocentrism, topocentrism and alethocentrism respectively. Egocentric thinking, it would appear, is not confined to any one deictic field, but can manifest across any one, or more of these, restricting one's degree of cognitive movement, and almost always to the detriment of the thinking subject.

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