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■ *Thementeil*

Theoretische Forschung in der Erziehungswissenschaft – Beiträge zur Konturierung eines Forschungsfelds

■ *Allgemeiner Teil*

Zentrale Begriffe der Schulpädagogik in pädagogischen Nachschlagewerken. Ein empirischer Beitrag zur disziplinären Entwicklung der Schulpädagogik

Mögliche Ausgestaltung der reflexiven Wirtschaftsdidaktik für die Lehrer*innenbildung an allgemeinbildenden Schulen

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Claudia Ruitenberg

Raising the Question

The Nature of Philosophical Questions in Educational Research

Abstract: The article analyses and provides examples of three types of philosophical questions that are commonly used in philosophical research in education: conceptual questions, normative questions, and hermeneutical-phenomenological questions. It also discusses the relation of questions to claims and arguments, and highlights the value of tracing the implicit questions to which claims can be seen to be answers. The article seeks to aid students in philosophy of education in developing their own questions and arguments, and to contribute to a broader understanding and recognition of philosophy of education as a form of educational research.

Keywords: Philosophical Research, Philosophical Methodology, Philosophical Questions, Claims, Arguments

1. Introduction

Most work in philosophy of education is relatively silent on the methods of philosophical research employed in the work. 'Methodology' sections or chapters, so ubiquitous in social science research, are generally absent from philosophy of education. Some overview texts meant to introduce readers to the field do include some comments on philosophical methods. Nel Noddings, in *Philosophy of Education,* introduces the field of philosophy of education by saying: "Its central subject matter is education, and its methods are those of philosophy" (2018, p. xiii). While the book focuses on how philosophers of education have addressed key educational topics such as teaching, curriculum and school reform, and discusses ethics, epistemology, and other branches of philosophy, Noddings does, along the way, point out the methods philosophers are using. For example, she mentions hermeneutic methods (2018, p. 75) as well as phenomenological methods (2018, pp. 69–70), and comments in some more detail on analytic methods:

> Philosophers often […] raise objections or reject certain points. They may argue for new or revised criteria, predict consequences that the original author failed to foresee, probe for suppressed premises, or reject the entire scheme as wrongheaded. Often a particular line of argumentation leads quite naturally into another domain for analysis. Analysis, as we have been discussing it, is central to philosophy. (Noddings, 2018, p. 54)

A handful of (English-language) texts focus explicitly on the methods philosophers of education use. The first is the volume edited by Frieda Heyting, Dieter Lenzen, and John

White (2001), based on an international symposium that took place in 1998 about methodological issues in philosophy of education. Heyting (2001) explains in her introduction to the volume that the contributors were asked not only to demonstrate their use of philosophical methods in relation to the common theme of children's rights, but also to provide a justification for their approach. With reference to Wittgenstein's distinction between smaller philosophical problems and *the* philosophical problem of absolute certainty, Heyting writes, "any method to solve a problem in philosophy raises the question of how, in which way and in what respect this method can be said to represent the way to solve *the* problem" (2001, p. 4).

I continued the methodological conversation in 2009 with a special issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* proposing that it would be worthwhile to discuss philosophical research methods more explicitly in philosophy of education, especially for pedagogical reasons. As I wrote, "faculties and schools of education […] are interdisciplinary environments where students generally do not have the same experience of being immersed in philosophical discourse" as they would in philosophy departments (Ruitenberg, 2009a, p. 316). It is not uncommon for education students pursuing a philosophical inquiry to have little formal education in philosophy. Moreover, they are expected to be able to communicate their work in terms understandable to educational researchers who may be better versed in social science approaches and conventions. While we should, of course, encourage students to read extensively, I believed (and still believe) they can benefit from a more explicit naming of the various "modes of thought and discursive operations" in which philosophers of education engage (2009a, p. 316).

Amanda Fulford and Naomi Hodgson (2016) also emphatically position philosophy of education as a form of research in its own right. The heart of their book on philosophical methods is a collection of excerpts from previously published articles and chapters, followed by a close reading by the respective authors that attends to the ways in which they went about their critique, analysis, argument, and interpretation. Highlighting the fact that writing practices play a central role in the work of philosophy, the contributing authors also comment on specific choices they made in their writing. For example, Stefan Ramaekers and Judith Suissa write that they set up a juxtaposition between "the third-person, scientific account of 'parenting styles'" found in formal and informal parenting guides, policy documents, and the like, and "the nuanced and particular first-person description" (2016, p. 54) of a parent in David Grossman's novel *To the End of the Land.* "Creating this tension," write Ramaekers and Suissa, shows "that the first-person experiential account is irreducible to the neat empirical categories of the third-person scientific account. This also allows us to bring out the ways in which significant philosophical, particularly ethical, questions about being a parent arise from the first-person account itself" (2016, p. 54).

Whether philosophical research methods should or shouldn't be taught in philosophy of education courses or programs remains open to debate. My approach has been pragmatic: the idea of 'philosophical research methods' is an artifice meant to serve a translational purpose in schools and faculties of education in which social science research is the dominant language. In some contexts, it can serve this translational and

pedagogical purpose, while in others it does not offer much added value. I don't want to circumscribe 'philosophy of education' too narrowly. The philosophical questions I will discuss are all questions about concepts, practices, or experiences that are either central to education or that, in the particular question, are discussed in an educational context or manifestation. For example, the concept and practice of 'teaching' is central to education, while the concept of 'controversy,' while not specific or central to education, is discussed in a specifically educational context. In taking this broad perspective on philosophy of education, I take distance from Scott Johnston's (2019) view that questions worth taking up in philosophy of education must be raised by philosophers of education and draw from a lineage of work in philosophy of education. My interest is in whether the question is philosophical (and not, for instance, sociological or psychological) and whether it pertains to educational concepts, practices, or experiences. Whether the question is raised by a scholar whom we should or should not consider a 'philosopher of education' is not my concern here and is, in my view, a question better left to sociologists studying how academic disciplines and fields establish and maintain themselves.

In this contribution I work from the same motivation as I did ten years ago, namely to support students studying philosophy of education and writing graduate philosophical theses in education, but my focus will be more specific, namely on the *questions* philosophers of education seek to answer in their research. While some philosophers of education prefer to refer to their work as 'scholarship' rather than 'research,' I continue to consider philosophy of education a form of educational research. The reasons for this are twofold, and both involve the discursive environment of universities and, in particular, 'research-intensive universities' such as the one where I work. The first is that I do not want to create or exacerbate the impression that philosophers of education do not engage in research in a context in which one of the main recognizable categories of work is 'research' (see Ruitenberg, 2009a, p. 315).

The second reason is specific to English-language environments; as I have argued elsewhere (Ruitenberg, 2009b), I believe it is often salutary, especially for those who do not already function in multiple languages in their daily lives, to make a deliberate effort to defamiliarize a concept central to their work by translating it into another language. The English word 'research' is an illustrative case, as the debate about whether or not philosophy of education should consider itself a form of research shifts when it is translated. The title of this special issue, "Theoretische Forschung in der Erziehungswissenschaft" illustrates this, as both *Forschung* and *Wissenschaft* have a more expansive reach in German than 'research' and 'science' do in English.[1] If the phrase 'philosophical research' is a barrier for entering a discussion on how philosophers of education form questions and arguments, perhaps an excursion into another language in which 'research' does not have the same, limited connotations can lower the barrier.

1 That said, there is sufficient history to the idea of 'philosophical research' in both languages, evidenced by the existence of long-standing academic journals, the *Journal of Philosophical Research* (volume 44 in 2019) and the *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* (volume 73 in 2019).

My aim in this article is to elucidate three types of philosophical questions that are commonly used in philosophical research in education. These are not the only kinds of philosophical question that can be asked – I do not, for instance, include metaphysical questions – but they are three types that, in my experience, capture much of the philosophical research in education. I want to focus on the questions because I have found myself encouraging colleagues (including students) not to move too quickly to a discussion of methods, but rather to spend more time thinking about the nature of the questions they are asking. Taking a cue from Bruno Latour's (2005) – I imagine, composite and fictionalized – conversation with a student, I hope the following composite and fictionalized conversation is illustrative:

Student: I have come to talk to you because I think I want to do philosophical work.
Professor: Interesting. Can you tell me more about the philosophical work you think you want to do?
Student: I'm not exactly sure yet, but I really like to write about ideas.
Professor: What are some of the ideas you have particularly enjoyed writing about?
Student: I'm really interested in teaching, and whether teachers think of it as a job, a career, a profession, or a vocation.
Professor: Is that the kind of question you want to ask in your research, how teachers see teaching?
Student: Yes.
Professor: You know that is an empirical question, right?
Student: What do you mean?
Professor: If you want to know how teachers see teaching, whether they see it as a job, a career, a profession, a vocation, or perhaps something different altogether, you have to go and ask teachers. You can't answer your question unless you go and talk to them, or send them a survey to fill out, or some other way of gathering their views.
Student: But I don't really want to go and interview or survey teachers. I thought I could write about the different ideas about teaching, as vocation and profession and so on.
Professor: You can, but then you have to ask a different kind of question.

I want to step back from the methods with which philosophers of education aim to answer questions, to attend to the questions themselves. In particular, I will focus on three types of philosophical questions that have been asked in and about education: conceptual questions, normative questions, and hermeneutical-phenomenological questions.[2]

2 Two of these types, conceptual questions and normative questions, are also included in Paul Standish's overview of "possible topics for philosophical study" (2010, p. 12). However, since I am more focused on a typology of different *forms* of questions and less on the range of *topics* the questions can be about, I will not discuss categories such as questions about social justice, or questions about particular thinkers.

I will also discuss how questions relate to claims, as philosophy of education writing often takes the form of an argument, which then typically begins from one or more claims. By analyzing these three types of questions, I hope to shed light not only on the value for philosophers of education of attending to the questions – including those informing the central claims in argument-style work – but also on the necessity and inescapability of philosophical questions in all forms of educational research.

Some of the questions I discuss are implicit; that is to say, I identify a question that the author does not raise in question-form. I do so because I believe it is helpful to identify the question to which a scholar seems to provide an answer even if that scholar does not describe the work as providing an answer to a question. In doing so, I take inspiration from Jacques Rancière's (2009) methodological reflection on his own work, in which he identifies, after the fact, the key questions he has sought to raise and answer over the years. He writes:

> A method means a path: not the path that a thinker follows but the path that he/she constructs, that you have to construct to know where you are, to figure out the characteristics of the territory you are going through, the places it allows you to go, the way it obliges you to move, the markers that can help you, the obstacles that get in the way. (Rancière, 2009, p. 114)

Because the method is constructed during the work of philosophical research and not prior to it, it can be seen only in retrospect, as a path that was traced rather than one that was planned and mapped out in advance. The methodological commentaries in Fulford and Hodgson's (2016) collection use this retrospective approach (see also Ruitenberg, 2009a, p. 317). Rancière identifies a number of questions that have guided his work, even if he did not made these questions explicit at the time. For example: "How do we determine what is political in a situation, a gathering, a statement, an action? How can we determine to what extent a 'political organization' does politics?" (2009, p. 118). In a similar manner, I will sometimes identify questions that were not made explicit by an author, in order to show the type of questioning directing the work.

2. Conceptual Questions

The first type of question I want to highlight is the conceptual question, captured by the core form, 'What is [concept X]?' and related variants such as 'What is the nature of [concept X]?' and 'What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for [concept X]?' Conceptual questions are most commonly associated with analytic philosophy, and there are many examples of questions about fundamental educational concepts, such as skill (e. g., Barrow, 1987), indoctrination (e. g., White, 1967/2010), and educatedness itself (e. g., Peters, 1970).

Before I give more detailed examples of work animated by conceptual questions, I should attend to the concept of a 'concept.' Without that, I could give the wrong im-

pression that questions that appear very similar in form – such as 'What is quinoa?' or 'What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for growing quinoa?' – are philosophical questions. Quinoa is not a concept; it is the seed of a plant that can be harvested, cooked, and eaten. 'Agriculture,' however, is a concept. It is an abstract idea that refers to a whole range of practices, policies, tools, and so forth. Robin Barrow and Geoffrey Milburn write: "A concept is an idea or thought, more precisely the abstraction that represents or signifies the unifying principle of various distinct particulars" (1986, p. 47). One of those "distinct particulars" could be a field of quinoa growing on a farm in Peru; another could be a field of canola growing on a farm in Saskatchewan. 'Agriculture' is the idea unifying these distinct particulars.

In the fictitious conversation with the student, "vocation" and "profession" are examples of concepts about which philosophical questions can and have been asked. David Hansen, for example, asks "what an interest in teaching might comprise if it is understood or felt to be a vocation" (1994, p. 261). In order to answer that question, he also has to answer what a vocation is, which he does when he asserts (with reasons) that "vocation describes work that has social value and that provides enduring personal meaning" (1994, p. 266). Asking whether a particular teacher sees her work as a vocation, whether this teacher's sense of teaching as vocation has changed over the course of her career, or whether elementary teachers are more likely to think of their work as a vocation than secondary teachers are all empirical questions that cannot be answered by philosophical work. However, that does not mean that philosophical work cannot be helpful in a 'supporting role' (or, as John Locke put it, as "underlabourer … clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge" (1824, p. xlvii)). After all, having a thorough understanding of the concept that animates an empirical study is important for the conceptual validity of the study, that is, the likelihood that the research done actually provides answers about vocation and not about, say, job satisfaction or altruism. In that sense, I agree with Fulford and Hodgson that the sharp dichotomy between empirical and philosophical forms of research is unhelpful (2016, p. 3). Nonetheless, seeking a robust understanding of a concept does not mean that one is pursuing a philosophical question as one's main form of research. The students I see tend to struggle more with work that does not involve empirical data gathering than with research that requires a philosophical foundation but that finds structure and direction in empirical questions. My focus, therefore, will be on work in which the central questions are philosophical.

A second example of a conceptual question is William Hare's (1979) implicit question, "what is open-mindedness?" While Hare does not (in this book)[3] state this question explicitly, he does answer it as part of his larger project of arguing for open-mindedness as "an attitude which […] it is essential for education to promote" (Hare, 1979, p. ix). As is typical for the careful, step-by-step examination of a concept, Hare first identifies that the concept of "mindedness" in "open-mindedness" (1979, p. 2) refers to an aspect of

3 The question is stated explicitly in Hare, 2005.

thinking (and not, for instance, an aspect of knowledge or a physical trait). He then asks a more focused question to guide his investigation: "What aspect of thinking is qualified when a person is called 'open-minded'?" (Hare, 1979, p. 7). After examining open-mindedness as ability and willingness, as well as related concepts such as rationality, Hare replies that "the trait of open-mindedness qualifies a person's activities in thinking, chiefly his ability and willingness to form and revise his views in the light of evidence and argument" (Hare, 1979, p. 20).

While what have been called "the heydays of conceptual analysis" in philosophy of education may be behind us (Bridges, 1998, p. 241), conceptual questions remain relevant. For example, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), whose programs have been growing in popularity internationally, uses the "Learner Profile," (IBO, 2013) a list of attributes its programs should seek to cultivate. One of those attributes is open-mindedness. The IBO describes being open-minded as follows: "We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience" (IBO, 2013, p. 1). Hare's questions about open-mindedness allow us to think critically about open-mindedness as an attribute, and how it is distinct from other, similar attributes, such as being reflective or being inquiring. More specifically, his questions allow us to see that the IBO's conception of open-mindedness emphasizes cultures, values, and points of view rather than evidence and argument, and to ask further questions about this conception.

3. Normative Questions

As has been foreshadowed, scholars often raise and answer conceptual questions as part of a larger attempt to build a normative argument. In other words, scholars often do not answer conceptual questions for their own sake, but because doing so is a requirement for providing a clear focus of an argument about something they believe should be done, (including thought, said, etc.), should not be done, or should be done differently. To return to the example above, Hare's (1979) conceptual question "What is open-mindedness?" provides clarity for his claim that open-mindedness is an important attitude that ought to be fostered in education. I could also say that Hare makes an argument that is both conceptual and normative, that is, he argues both that the concept of open-mindedness refers to a person's ability and willingness to form and revise their views in the light of evidence and argument, and that an educated person ought to have this ability and willingness (Hare, 1979, p. ix). I will discuss the relation between questions and claims in greater detail in a later section in this paper; for now, I will say only that I have found it helpful to understand questions and claims as each other's mirror image. In Hare's case, the implicit normative question his argument provides an answer to is: What attitude or attitudes does the educated person need to have "with respect to the claims to knowledge which he makes, or to that which he claims to understand"? (1979, p. ix).

Returning to the question-form, then, the second type of question that is frequently posed in philosophy of education is the normative question, captured by the core form, 'What ought …?' and related variants such as 'Should we …?' and 'Under what conditions is it justifiable to …?' Philosophers working in a range of traditions, including those classifiable as analytic or Continental, and those who defy such classification, have asked and continue to ask normative questions in and about education.

A clear example of philosophical research in education that proceeds from questions comes from Michael Hand, who asks, "How are we to decide what to teach as controversial and what to teach as settled? What are the features of a topic that make it an appropriate candidate for nondirective teaching?" (2008, p. 213). While these questions do not take exactly the form of the schematic examples I present above, they can easily be put in this form. Hand asks, essentially: what ought we to teach as controversial and what as settled? After examining both the epistemic criterion and the political criterion for deciding what to teach as controversial, he lands firmly on the former: "the policy we should adopt is to teach as controversial those matters on which contrary views are not contrary to reason, and as settled those matters on which only one view is rationally defensible" (Hand, 2008, p. 228).

A second example of a normative question, on a topic related to the one discussed by Hand, comes from Lauren Bialystok, who asks: "how does education remain 'liberal' and pluralistic while inevitably favouring certain worldviews over others? And how can the emphasis on these views be defended to parents and politicians who disagree with them?" (2014, p. 425). Again, these questions do not take the form of the schematic example, but they can be understood in that form. For example, I might say that Bialystok asks: what views ought we to teach in a pluralistic society without falling prey to either indoctrination or relativism? A different way of phrasing the question would be: how ought we to decide what is illegitimate political "brainwashing" and what is "legitimate political messaging" in Canadian schools? (Bialystok, 2014, p. 429). To answer this question, Bialystok offers five criteria that can guide teachers, administrators, and politicians both in general decisions about curriculum design and when confronted with specific normative questions, such as under what conditions parents should have a right to withdraw their children from classes they find objectionable.

Because education and, especially, schooling is, inevitably, a normative endeavour (see Biesta, 2015), normative questions about educational policies and practices abound. Examples that give an indication of the range of these questions include "Should the public pay for higher education?" (Martin, 2017), "Is education for patriotism morally required, permitted or unacceptable?" (Kodelja, 2011), and "What should we teach children about forgiveness?" (White, 2002).

4. Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Questions

The third type of questions philosophers of education ask are hermeneutical-phenomenological questions, captured by the core form, 'What does it mean to …?' This type of question is most commonly associated with what has been called Continental philosophy.[4] 'Meaning' here refers not to the meaning of a concept, which conceptual questions seek out, but rather to the meaning of a phenomenon or practice in human lives. Without getting overly technical about the terminology, I should explain that, by 'hermeneutical' questions, I mean questions that require interpretation, and whose answers offer truths of a nature different from that sought with logical analysis or the scientific method. In the course of interpreting, the questions require interpreters to grapple with their "hermeneutical situation," that is, the situation that, as interpreters, "we are up to our ears in historical, political, social, religious, sexual, and who knows what other sorts of structures and networks" and that this situation affects our interpretations (Caputo, 2000, p. 12). By "phenomenological" questions, I mean questions that concern themselves with "phenomena, a specialized word for things that appear" (Rocha, 2015, p. 25). Put differently, phenomenological questions are questions about "the way things appear in conscious experience" (Gallagher, 2012, p. 8). I have grouped hermeneutical and phenomenological questions together, even though they do not always go hand in hand.[5] The hyphen in 'hermeneutical-phenomenological' questions can be read as an 'and/or'; grouping the terms together is meant to identify a type of question that does not concern itself with the clarity of concepts, nor with questions about what ought or ought not to be, but with meanings and experiences.

A beautiful example comes from Sara Ahmed, and involves a question that is not, in and of itself, educational but that certainly has a bearing on educational contexts: "What does it mean to be orientated?" (2006, p. 1). Ahmed does not ask what the concept of orientation means, but rather how orientation manifests itself in a human life: "What difference does it make 'what' or 'who' we are orientated toward in the very direction of our desire?" (2006, p. 1). In order to answer this question, Ahmed attends to the experience of being directed, or feeling pulled, in a certain way, toward certain people, objects, or spaces. The experience of having an orientation, or multiple orientations, pertains not only to sexuality, but also to, for instance, a person's ethnic or class background. Gayatri Spivak writes that "education in the Humanities attempts to be an uncoercive rearrangement of desires" (2004, p. 526). By this she means that education in the Humanities ought to offer students not just an enrichment of what they know and are able to do, but a change in what they want. More specifically, in a world divided by colonialism, education in the Humanities should constitute for those who have been marginalized by co-

4 I use the designations 'analytic' and 'Continental' as broad genre references, as there is ongoing debate about the coherence and utility of these designations (see, for example, Prado, 2003).

5 To be more specific: some phenomenological approaches are interpretive (hermeneutical), while others focus on precise description (transcendental).

lonialism an "uncoercive undermining of the class habit of obedience" (Spivak, 2004, p. 562) and a reorienting of the expectation of injustice to a desire for justice. However, the phrase "uncoercive rearrangement of desires" can also be understood as a more general description of education, since education, regardless of the social position of the student, affects not only what students know or able to do, but also what they imagine and want. A rearrangement of desires, then, involves a reorientation of one's attention, will, and, desire from some ideas, objects, and persons to others. When education is understood as reorientation, Ahmed's question "what does it mean to be orientated?" takes on a distinctly educational significance. What does it mean to become reorientated, that is, to come to want a future different from the future one imagined before? This is a hermeneutical question and, from the perspective of one experiencing such a reorienting education, a phenomenological one.

A second example of a hermeneutical-phenomenological question comes from Joris Vlieghe (2013), who asks what it means to engage in the collective, school-based activity of "practicing," for example in repeating the alphabet or times tables together. It is important to note that Vlieghe is not asking a question about the concept of practicing – even though he introduces several conceptual distinctions in the course of his discussion – but rather about the phenomenon and experience of practicing. More precisely, he asks "what these school practices more precisely consist in" (Vlieghe, 2013, p. 192). What are we are doing when we are "practicing," and what does practicing do to us? Like Ahmed's question about orientation, Vlieghe's question is posed not from the perspective of someone outside of the "practice of practicing" (2013, p. 192), contemplating it as an idea, but from the perspective of someone inside the practice of practicing, contemplating the experience. Vlieghe considers practicing not as a simple – and, quite possibly, outdated – means to the end of learning, but as a practice that "has significance in and of itself" (2013, p. 197). His answer to the question of what it means to engage in the school practice of practicing is that it is an experience of being "creatures of possibility":

> We experience that we *can* count or that we *can* multiply (which is precluded when we use the same formulae to solve a mathematical problem). Similarly, we might experience that we *can* move, when performing the most basic and 'meaningless' movement forms (merely stretching, bending, rotating, etc.) during collective callisthenic practice. (Vlieghe, 2013, p. 198, emphasis in original)

As was the case for the other types of questions I discussed, here, too, the question is related to an argument. In Vlieghe's (2013) case, one of the claims he puts forward is that when we consider education only as the means to the end of learning, we lose sight of the intrinsic and existential meaning of educational processes such as practicing. Instead, Vlieghe argues, we should understand education also as a set of practices that shape us through engagement in the practices themselves, regardless of what we learn from them.

5. Questions and Claims

As Fulford and Hodgson, write – and the examples above illustrate – in philosophical research, “the research tends to proceed through argument” (2016, p. 3). In fact, some colleagues seem to consider a recognizable argument the *sine qua non* of philosophy of education, and I distinctly recall the exasperated rhetorical question, “But is there an argument?!” at the end of a conference session that evidently did not meet the questioner’s expectations of an argumentative structure. Arguments tend to proceed from claims, and yet my focus in this article has been on questions rather than claims. One of the reasons is that I do not see a sharp distinction between philosophical work moved along by claims and that moved along by questions. In fact, I believe it is helpful to see research that begins with a philosophical claim and research that begins with a philosophical question as each other’s mirror image. This has everything to do with what I might call the fictive temporality of philosophical writing.

I briefly discussed this fictive temporality in my suggestion that a comment about methodology in philosophy of education work is akin to an artist statement, written after the fact even if it is presented at the beginning of the written text (Ruitenberg, 2009a, pp. 317–318). In philosophy of education, this fictive temporality does not remain limited to comments about philosophical methodology, or paratexts such as the preface or acknowledgements. In empirical research, the typical order of research work is that the researcher first formulates a question, then designs the research with methods that allow this question to be answered, then gathers data, and then analyzes this data in order to find an answer to the question. In the typical research text, the research question is presented before the answer, and this is an honest reflection of the temporal order of the research work. In philosophical work, the order in which a question and answer are presented can be deceptive. To put it differently: whether a philosophical text opens with a question or a claim may be more a rhetorical choice than a reflection of the temporal order of the work.

Sometimes, a question is followed immediately by a claim. For example, in Hansen’s article whose question I quoted earlier, the fuller section in which he presents this question goes as follows:

> In this essay, *I will examine* what an interest in teaching might comprise if it is understood or felt to be a vocation. *I will argue* that the concept embodies both a public and a personal dimension. It presupposes a sense of service or allegiance to others, in the absence of which teaching might become a purely self-serving affair. But the idea also presumes that teaching yields personal meaning and satisfaction. Otherwise, the task may become merely a role whose enactment provides little or no sense of fulfillment. (Hansen, 1994, p. 261, emphasis added)

As a reader, I do not know whether Hansen’s research started from the question that he presents first, or whether it started, perhaps, from a desire to make a claim about the concept of vocation requiring both a public and a personal dimension. However, it makes

no difference to the quality of the argument whether he began with an open question and was not able to articulate a claim until later in the research, or whether he started with a tentative claim that he chose to present as a question later.

By a 'claim' I am referring to what Stephen Toulmin (2003) calls an "assertion"; the term 'claim' highlights that the person

> who makes an assertion puts forward a claim – a claim on our attention and to our belief. […] Whatever the nature of the particular assertion may be […] in each case we can challenge the assertion, and demand to have our attention drawn to the grounds (backing, data, facts, evidence, considerations, features) on which the merits of the assertion are to depend. (Toulmin, 2003, pp. 11–12).

Charles Antaki and Ivan Leudar further clarify:

> Speakers could in principle justify everything they assert, but, of course, they do not do so. […] A claim, then, is a move the validity of which, in discourse, is somehow open to dispute; and claim-backing is a move made by a participant in order to deal with that dispute. (Antaki & Leudar, 1990, p. 280)

The idea that a claim is a discursive move that is "open to dispute" is another way of saying that a claim, if it is worth making in a scholarly argument, already contains a question. The claim is not self-evident and a reader can imagine an opening claim as being followed by a skeptical 'but is that really so?'

Hand's (2008) article illustrates this well. As I have discussed, Hand opens with the questions, "How are we to decide what to teach as controversial and what to teach as settled? What are the features of a topic that make it an appropriate candidate for non-directive teaching?" (2008, p. 213). However, he could also have opened his article with the claim that we should, "teach as controversial those matters on which contrary views are not contrary to reason, and as settled those matters on which only one view is rationally defensible" (Hand, 2008, p. 228), and the reader could have read this claim as followed by the question 'but is that really so?'

As I explained in the introduction, just as the answers to philosophical questions can serve as claims, opening claims can be translated into imagined questions, even if the author never makes these explicit. Even if philosophical work, on the surface, appears to be driven by claims and arguments, these can be traced and translated to implicit questions.

6. Conclusion

As alluded to earlier, the most traditional way of learning how to ask philosophical questions is by learning to recognize philosophical questions and forms of argument in the literature in which one is immersed. Even if modules or courses exist in which students in education can study philosophical methods explicitly, this study will need to include practice in developing attentiveness to the nature of questions and claims in the work they read. Put differently: practice in forming philosophical questions includes reading philosophy of education with a methodological eye, by which I mean an eye to how the author makes and supports claims, or how the author poses and answers questions. Reading with a methodological eye means that "one examines the way […] 'ideas' are produced, the issues they address, the materials they select, the givens they consider significant, the phrasing of their connection, the landscape they map, their way of inventing solutions (or aporias), in short their method" (Rancière, 2009, p. 114). My aim in highlighting different types of questions in philosophy of education has been to aid this process of reading with a methodological eye.

The three types of questions I have discussed do not exhaust the field. One type of question I want to mention even if I do not discuss it in full is 'What if … ?' One function of this phrase is to introduce a thought experiment, for example in a skeptical investigation. The question can then also present itself, or be read, as the phrase, 'let us imagine' or 'let us suppose.' The most famous examples are René Descartes' 'what if my thoughts were directed by an evil genius?'[6] and the more recent variant, Hilary Putnam's "what if we were brains in vats?" (Putnam, 1981). These skeptical thought experiments seek to investigate the reliability of our thoughts. In Putnam's case, for example, questions guiding his inquiry and argument include, "How can 'thought' reach out and grasp what is external?" (1981, p. 2) and "Could we, if we were brains in a vat [in the way Putnam has described], *say* or *think* that we were?" (1981, p. 7, emphasis in original).

Of course, there are other ways in which 'what if … ?' questions can be used, just as there are other types of questions philosophers of education ask in their work. Hopefully, the type of analysis I have demonstrated, of asking what questions animate a text, what purposes these questions serve, and how they relate to claims and, will be helpful to others as they seek to understand how philosophers of education go about their research, and develop their own questions and arguments.

While I have, in this article, focused on the questions rather than the methods with which they are answered, it is not uncommon for preferences for or against certain methods to dictate what questions can or cannot be heard as legitimate scholarly questions. Students are sometimes discouraged from asking philosophical questions if they are in an environment where the only answers that are considered legitimate are those consisting of empirical evidence. My hope is that discussions about methodology in phi-

6 "I will suppose therefore that not God, who is supremely good and the source of truth, but rather some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me" (Descartes, 1984, p. 15).

losophy of education, such as the ones in this special issue, contribute to a broader understanding of educational research and thus a broader support for students who want to pursue philosophical questions in education.

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Zusammenfassung: Der Beitrag analysiert Beispiele für drei Typen philosophischer Fragen, die üblicherweise in philosophischer Bildungsforschung Verwendung finden: konzeptuelle Fragen, normative Fragen und hermeneutisch-phänomenologische Fragen. Darüber hinaus diskutiert der Beitrag die Verbindung von Fragen zu Behauptungen und Argumenten, wobei hervorgehoben wird, dass Behauptungen auch als Antworten auf implizite Fragen verstanden werden können. Der Beitrag versucht, Studierende der Bildungs- und Erziehungsphilosophie bei der Entwicklung eigener Fragen und Argumente zu unterstützen und zu einem breiteren Verständnis von Bildungs- und Erziehungsphilosophie beizutragen, die als Form erziehungswissenschaftlicher Forschung anerkannt wird.

Schlagworte: Philosophische Forschung, philosophische Methodologie, philosophische Fragen, Behauptungen, Argumente

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