

Justus Buchler and the Community of Query

Maughn Rollins Gregory

gregorym@montclair.edu

Abstract

Before he originated the field of philosophy for children, Matthew Lipman spent nearly twenty years teaching at Columbia University and its affiliated colleges under the tutelage of the American philosopher Justus Buchler. In those years Lipman's scholarship focused on Buchler's naturalist metaphysics, which was informed by Buchler's scholarship on the philosophy of Charles Peirce. In this essay I relate Lipman's relationship with Buchler, summarise Buchler's theory of human judgement, and indicate key parts of that theory that influenced Lipman's own theory of judgement and multidimensional thinking. I then discuss the pedagogical turn Buchler made with his theory, including his conception of classroom discussion as a mode of 'community of query,' which became the prototype for Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp's theory of 'community of inquiry' as a protocol of classroom dialogue and a paradigm of philosophical practice and democratic decision-making.

Key words

community of inquiry, judgement, Justus Buchler, Matthew Lipman, proception, query

Introduction

In his autobiography, Matthew Lipman (1923-2010) recalled that, in writing his first philosophical novel for children, his aim was:

to write a text that would allow both teachers and children to engage simultaneously and openly in inquiry at the same time in the classroom ... and in that way consolidate the classroom into a single community containing both children and adults engaged in a single inquiry. About ten years later, borrowing a phrase invented by Charles Peirce, I would call such a group a community of inquiry. (2008, p. 109)

Over the nearly four decades of their professional relationship, Lipman and his close collaborator Ann Margaret Sharp (1942-2010) experimented with, revised, and continually theorised 'community of inquiry' as a protocol of classroom dialogue and

a paradigm of philosophical practice and democratic decision-making. Lipman and Sharp credited the American philosopher, logician, mathematician, and scientist Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) with having propounded the relationship of community to inquiry (see Lipman 1998, p. 278), though the phrase ‘community of inquiry’ does not occur in Peirce’s writings (see Gregory 2022/2023).

In fact, though Lipman may have read Peirce during his undergraduate studies at Stanford and/or his graduate studies at Columbia, the prominence of Peirce in his thinking was a result of his relationship with his mentor and colleague, the American philosopher Justus Buchler (1914-1991). Lipman acknowledged this in an interview he gave just months before his death:

As far as my own history with the term community of inquiry, I attribute its beginning completely to Justus Buchler ... He mentioned the term and of course attributed it to Peirce, in a book of his that I read in 1959 or thereabouts. I told him that I liked it, and he said that for Peirce it was just a working phrase, it was not developed. I said to Justus, this is a term that represents something we need very much. (Lipman 2010, p. 15)

Earlier, Lipman recalled:

It wasn’t only the phrase ‘community of inquiry’ itself that impressed itself upon me at that moment—that would come some ten years later with the reading of Buchler’s [1954] ‘What is a Discussion?’ article. Instead, it was the practice implied by the phrase: that scientists operated under two sets of requirements, one being the requirements of inquiry itself, and the other being the requirements of communal life. (2008, p. 116)

In fact, the phrase ‘community of inquiry’ does not appear in Buchler’s writings, though he used the phrases ‘co-operative inquiry,’ ‘the communal structure of scientific inquiry,’ ‘community of interpreters,’ and ‘community of philosophic understanding,’ and he coined the phrase ‘community of query’ in the 1954 article and in his book *Nature and Judgment* (1955). Lipman later credited Sharp with the idea of reconstructing the Peircean/Buchlerian concept of the community of inquiry into a model of educational practice (see Lipman 2010, pp. 15-16). Lipman and Sharp’s first use of the phrase ‘community of inquiry’ appeared in the article ‘Some Educational Presuppositions of Philosophy for Children’ which they co-authored for the *Oxford*

Review of Education in 1978—which was, in fact, about ten years after Lipman had begun writing his first philosophical novel for children, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*.

Buchler was born in New York City in 1914, his life overlapping that of Peirce by twenty-three days. His 1938 doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, published in 1939 as *Charles Peirce's Empiricism*, was 'the first extensive study of any of [Peirce's] ideas' that followed and utilized the publication of Peirce's *Collected Papers* in 1931–1935 (Goudge 1940, p. 274).¹ The following year Buchler edited the selection of writings that became the standard introduction to Peirce for generations.² Buchler began teaching full-time at Columbia University in 1942, where he became an intellectual leader for the next thirty years. Promoted to the rank of full professor in 1956, he was named the Johnsonian Chair in Philosophy in 1959 and chaired the philosophy department from 1964 to 1967. One of Buchler's most significant contributions, not only to Columbia University but also to higher education in the United States, was his leadership in the development of general education. Buchler participated in Columbia's general education program from the time of his appointment in 1942, and he served as its administrative head from 1950 to 1956.

Lipman took Buchler's course on Locke at Columbia University, during his 1946–1948 undergraduate studies there, following his service in the United States Army during the Second World War. Lipman earned his doctorate at Columbia in 1953, which included a two-year Fulbright scholarship at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1954, Buchler hired Lipman as an instructor of philosophy in Columbia's Department of Philosophy and an instructor of Contemporary Civilization—the core course in Columbia's general education program—in Columbia College, Columbia's College of Engineering, and the College of Pharmacy that was affiliated with the university. Lipman's appointment at the College of Pharmacy led to his eventual tenure and full professorship at that College, where he followed in Buchler's footsteps, becoming the chair of general education.

¹ Volumes 1–6 of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* were published from 1931–1935 by Harvard University Press, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Volumes 7 and 8 were published in 1958, edited by Arthur W Burks.

² Published in 1940 by Routledge and Kegan Paul as *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*, the book was reprinted in 1955 by Dover as *Philosophical Writings of Peirce: Selected and Edited with an Introduction by Justus Buchler*, which edition remains in print.

During his twenty years at Columbia, Lipman's scholarship centred on Buchlerian metaphysics (e.g. Lipman 1959/1991, 1972; see also Lipman 2008, p. 114).³ In 1959 Lipman and Sidney Gelber co-edited a special double issue of the *Journal of Philosophy* dedicated to Buchler. As Lipman recalled, this 'led to the formation of the New York Philosophy Group, a small number of philosophers devoted to the philosophy which Justus set forth in his writings, with Justus himself always present' (Undated, The death of Buchler, p. 1; see also Wallace 2006). Lipman further recalled that

During the period of eight years or so in which the New York Philosophy Group had been holding its monthly meetings, I had been struggling to write something that would be obviously inspired by Justus's work, but yet not the same. I had so little free time for writing, however, that the best I could squeeze out of myself was a single article a year. These I submitted to the Group for discussion. [A]t last I put the articles together as chapters of a book pretentiously entitled *The Structure of Judgment*. When I sent Justus a copy, he wrote back to me, 'Now there are two of us!'. (Undated, The death of Buchler, p. 1)⁴

What Lipman did not fully acknowledge in his interviews or his autobiography, but what is evident throughout his prolific scholarship, is that he was indebted to Buchler for far more than introducing him to the Peircean notion of communal inquiry. The purpose of this essay is genealogical. In addition to relating what is known about the philosophers' relationship, I will summarise Buchler's theory of human judgement and indicate key parts of that theory that influenced Lipman's own theory of judgement and multidimensional thinking. I will then discuss the pedagogical turn Buchler made with his theory, including his conception of classroom discussion as a mode of 'community of query,' which was the prototype for Lipman and Sharp's 'community of inquiry.'

³ Lipman was one of the pre-publication readers/commenters of Buchler's book *The Concept of Method* (1961). In 1959 Lipman received a grant from the Columbia University Committee for Research in the Humanities to do initial research for a study of the metaphysics of experience. In 1967 he received a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, in support of writing on the same topic.

⁴ Lipman's book manuscript, which included his articles published in 1959 and 1972, was not published.

Proception and judgement

Man's being realizes itself in two exhaustive dimensions. In one it assimilates, receiving the impact of all that is related to it. In the other it manipulates, making impact on all that is available to it. (Buchler 1961, p. 89)⁵

Buchler's metaphysics, which occupied Lipman during his decades at Columbia, was one of the most significant achievements in twentieth-century American philosophy. In Gelber's estimation, 'The work of Justus Buchler is systematic philosophy akin to that of Aristotle, Spinoza, Whitehead, and Hegel' (1986, p. 106). Buchler biographer Kathleen A. Wallace opined that 'While Buchler's work has not had wide influence, the daring nature of his system guarantees him a place in the history of philosophy' (2006, p. 21). Buchler developed a naturalist metaphysical system that drew on, but substantially deviated from Peirce's phenomenological semiotics.⁶ Central to that system is the concept of *proception*, an amplification of the concept of experience, encompassing everything a human being 'assimilates' and 'manipulates'. Buchler explained: 'As assimilator, the individual is a witness, a gatherer, a patient, a recipient of the complexes of nature. As manipulator, he is a shaper, a transformer, an initiator, an agent of these complexes' (1955, p. 142).⁷ Thus, writing of the 'all-embracing movement characteristic of the individual life,' Buchler stipulated: 'We shall name the process in question *proception* or the *proceptive* process, and describe the human individual as a *proceiving* individual or *proceiver*' (1955, p. 110, emphases in original).

⁵ Unfortunately, Buchler followed the convention of his time in using male nouns and pronouns to refer to all of humanity.

⁶ Wallace notes that, 'In regard to his themes Buchler was influenced by the classical American philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Josiah Royce, George Santayana, and John Dewey; in regard to philosophical method he drew his inspiration chiefly from Aristotle, Baruch Spinoza, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. As a result, his work, while widely respected, falls outside the mainstream of Anglo-American analytic philosophy' (2006, p. 8). In a letter to Beth J Singer in 1972, Buchler wrote, 'the philosophic influences that I absorbed stem as much from Plato and Aristotle, Spinoza and Locke, as from American thought. All of the influences are piecemeal rather than systematic: a specific insight here, an adaptable concept there, a mode of approach, and emphasis, a happy formulation' (printed in Gelber 1991, p. 13).

⁷ Unlike Dewey's theory of 'experience,' Buchler's theory of proception does not necessarily involve conscious or subconscious awareness. For example, 'when [a man] is slandered by his neighbors, in the total absence of awareness on his part, great changes may take place in his possibilities and relationships, ... yet these occurrences are assimilated into his proceptive direction, sustained by his involved and related self, in utter independence of any "immediate or qualitative experience"' (Buchler 1955, p. 138).

Proception is the process in which a human (or other)⁸ being selectively discriminates certain aspects of the (physical, cultural, linguistic, imaginary, etc.) world available to it and makes interpretive responses that create some kind of meaning. As Buchler wrote:

The interplay of the human individual's activities and dimensions, their unitary direction, constitutes ... *proception*. The term is designed to suggest a moving union of seeking and receiving, of forward propulsion and patient absorption. Proception is the composite, directed activity of the individual. Any instance of his functioning, any event in his history enters into the proceptive direction. (1951, p. 4, emphasis in original)⁹

Every interpretive response we make to the world, Buchler called a judgement. Our judgements discriminate fragments or aspects of the world available to us from our particular situations and perspectives, appraise their potential meaning, and make determinations among that potential of what meaning will be added back to the world.

[T]he human creature ... judges in so far as he exercises the selectiveness or discriminativeness inherent in his constitution; in so far as he actualizes the possibilities that lie in his accumulated traits. He judges continuously, through what he includes and excludes, preserves and destroys, is inclined to and averse to, through what he makes and fails to make, through the ways he acts and refrains from acting, through what he believes and disavows. (Buchler 1974, p. 93)

Against certain pragmatists, Buchler asserted that judgements function, not only for 'the elimination of doubt (Peirce), the resolution of a problem (Dewey), [or] the mitigation of blocked conduct (Mead)' (1951, p. 141). Rather, more broadly and more simply, 'Every judgment ... is an extraction from an environment of something specific to the exclusion of something else' (1951, p. 141).

⁸ 'The primordial selectiveness which underlies the process of judging might well be ascribed to lower animals, as other basic processes often are. What makes human selectiveness or judgment important is not the conditions of its origin but what it can grow into, such as the judgments of method and query' (Buchler 1976c, p. 109). 'If it is insufficiently decisive to regard man as the animal that judges, it may be sufficient to regard him as the animal that cannot help judging in more than one mode' (Buchler 1955, p. 199).

⁹ Compare: 'let "proception" suggest the inseparable union of process with receptivity, of movement in nature with impact by nature, of things shaped with events accepted' (1955, p. 111).

In bringing about some as-yet-undetermined possibility of meaning in the world, a judgement simultaneously reveals some feature of the person making it. As Buchler explained, this is because judgement presupposes human will, in 'the selection of something that concerns us' and human conscience, in 'the estimation of what concerns or is relevant to us. Selection and estimation ... represent the human organism adopting a position from moment to moment and from situation to situation. They represent the individual perpetually judging his world' (1961, p. 67). In this sense, 'The judgment reflects both the impact of [the] universe and the momentum of the self' (Buchler 1955, p. 29). As Lipman expressed the idea, every judgment 'discloses an individual version of one's world, or of some aspect of it, and in so doing, discloses an aspect of oneself. It is a discovery of possibility and an invention of actuality' (1959/1991, pp. 230-231).

For Buchler, judgements emerge 'from the intersection of various processes', including 'the persistent impress of nature at large, which has placed the individual from the outset in a state of relative urgency, to be thenceforth mitigated by judgments' (1955, p. 20). Building on this idea, Lipman described how nature (which, for Buchler, includes everything that exists, including ideas, dreams, and social norms) 'obliges' and 'appropriates' human responses. Thus, 'being human involves susceptibility to natural coercion as well as to natural indebtedness and requiredness ... In one instance we see it as moral obligation; in a second, as esthetic obligation; in a third, as logical obligation' (Lipman 1959/1991, p. 227).¹⁰ In all such cases, 'Nature is subtly and persistently evocative, manifesting a quizzical, enigmatic reserve which often functions as a powerful heuristic to inquiry and other forms of discovery ... It is ... the pervasive enigmaticity of nature which elicits our inquisitiveness and stipulates our curiosity as it is the precariousness of nature which commands our doubt and our constructive responsiveness' (Lipman 1959/1991, p. 232).

For Buchler, every judgement creates a 'product' in the form of something said, made, or done: 'The products of a man's life and history—described most generally as his acts or deeds, his assertions or declarations, and his contrivances—are his judgments ... A machine may function to accomplish labor, a leap may function to evade a missile, a word may function to determine an emotional state. Each of these is a product' (1955,

¹⁰ Compare Buchler (1955): 'In the understanding of the human process, natural or animal obligation is more fundamental than what philosophers isolate as moral obligation. The latter, a special case of the former and therefore existentially continuous with it, is unintelligible when considered separately' (p. 3).

p. 4). 'Human ... judgment is thus co-extensive with all that is produced by the human process as such' (1974, pp. 92-93).

One of Buchler's most important philosophical propositions—and one of those most influential for Lipman—was his tripartite classification of judgements and their products:

Human judgment appears to be of three kinds, which we may call assertive, active and exhibitivive. Assertive judgments include all products of which a certain type of question is ordinarily asked: Is it true or false? Exhibitivive judgments include all products which result from the shaping or arranging of materials (and these materials include manipulatable signs). Active judgments comprise all instances of conduct to which the terms 'act' or 'action' are ordinarily applied. (1951, p. 48).¹¹

Buchler asserted that these three modes of judgment 'are not reducible to one another' (1955, p. 40), though they may be integrated in the same product. He was at pains to undermine the misconception that intelligence is primarily manifest in verbal thought, speech, and writing. On the contrary, he argued that '[p]urposive activity ... may consist not only or not at all in formulated anticipations but in desires, inclinations, feelings, needs, or urges that aim at making or doing and that persist until such an aim for well or ill is consummated' (1961, p. 56). Buchler insisted on the equal 'cognitive value' of the three modes of judgement, warning against 'the error that cognitive value belongs either exclusively or primarily to assertive judgment' (1951, p. 143). Explaining knowledge as 'that process by which an organism gains from its own continuing living or from the world available to it the capacity to produce or to experience in different, unprecedented ways,' he insisted that, '[s]o far as acquisition of knowledge is concerned, acting and making are a means no less than stating' (1955, p. 33). Elsewhere, Buchler asserted that '[d]istinctive and pursuable kinds of knowledge may be yielded by methods of making and doing as well as by methods of saying' (1961, p. 116).

Lipman proclaimed that 'Buchler's analysis of human experience in terms of three major modes of judgment—acting, asserting, and arranging—ushers [us] into a

¹¹ Buchler acknowledged that 'Peirce ... from time to time, especially in his later work, included feeling and effort (muscular or psychic effort), along with thought, as ingredients of "interpretation"' (1955, p. 155).

philosophical worldview of unusual comprehensiveness and richness' (1977, p. 287). He observed that 'the plurality of modes of judgment is a reflection of the fact that nature is susceptible to various types of appraisal and pronouncement. In short: nature is not univocal but equivocal—hence a plurality of modes of judgment is possible' (1959/1991, p. 233). Elsewhere, Lipman explained judgment as 'a determination—of thinking, of speech, of action, or of creation. A gesture, such as the wave of a hand, can be a judgment; a metaphor like "John is a worm" is a judgment; an equation like $e = mc^2$ is a judgment' (1991, p. 116). Significantly, on a television appearance in 1989 in which Lipman introduced philosophy for children, he responded to the question, 'What is philosophy?' by saying, 'To me, it's improving reasoning and judgment with regard to the way people make and speak and do things' (1989, time 02:17).

Perhaps more significantly, Buchler's tripartite structure of human judgement was the genesis of Lipman's tripartite structure of thinking: critical, creative, and caring. Lipman often made this derivation explicit: 'Just as there are three modes of judgment—making, saying and doing—so there are three modes of thinking—critical, creative and caring' (Undated, Fragment 5, pp. 6-7). He 'commend[ed] the three-part division of thinking (as well as judgment) into the saying, making and doing equivalents of the critical, the creative and the caring' (1995a, p. 7). Like Buchler, Lipman insisted that creativity (e.g. imagining, inventing, expressing) and caring (e.g. appreciating, consoling, demanding) are cognitive capacities, not to be conflated with thinking *about* creativity and thinking *about* caring (see Lipman 2003). Indeed, Lipman's scholarship on thinking and reasoning should be read in light of Buchler's capacious conception of those concepts as encompassing action and exhibition as well as assertion.

An important difference between Buchler's elucidation of judgement and Lipman's elucidation of thinking is Lipman's theory of caring thinking, which, for him, is not directly a mode of action:

Critical thinking homes in on the construction of assertions, i.e., truth claims. Creative thinking results in the fabrication of meanings, even where meaning is not the intent of the meaning-maker. Caring, on the other hand, is the recognition of values, of importance, the acknowledgment of mattering or worth ... Caring does not act; instead, it is the force that informs our acts; for were we wholly indifferent and

apathetic, we might as well do nothing as something. (Undated, Fragment 4, p. 2)

However, the relationship between caring thinking and action is strengthened in passages where Lipman associates caring thinking with the Good as a regulative ideal, as in this table he constructed (1995b, p. 62):

<i>as regulative ideals</i>	the True	the Beautiful	the Good
<i>as branches of philosophy</i>	epistemology	aesthetics	ethics
<i>as divisions of inquiry</i>	the theoretical sciences	the productive sciences	the practical sciences
<i>as cognitive objectives</i> ¹²	analytical	synthetic	evaluative
<i>as modes of judgment</i> ¹³	saying	making	doing
<i>as modes of thinking</i>	critical	creative	caring

Compare Buchler's statement that '[j]udgment in any mode is susceptible of further or secondary 'judgment,' formal appraisal, commonly ... true or false (assertive), good or bad (exhibitive), right or wrong (active)' (1955, p. 27-28). Indeed, Lipman's theory of caring thinking was informed by Buchler's explicit association of active judgement with morality. Buchler wrote that both individuals and societies develop 'guiding moral tones' in the continuity of their moral choices or active judgments in moral situations: 'that of the individual reflecting [their] proceptive direction, that of society reflecting the accumulated structure of its institutions' (1951, p. 40; see also 1966/1990, p. 222).

In Buchler's philosophy, judgements are purposive, intelligent responses to the perils and opportunities a person confronts, immediately or in imaginative anticipation. Neither a sneeze nor an allergic reaction is a judgement in this sense; both a laugh and a scream of fear are judgements. Judgements can be instantaneous—skilful or hapless—reactions to circumstances that nevertheless interpret their meaning. Moment-by-moment physical moves on the basketball court are judgements, as are tapping your foot to music before you know you're doing so. The alternative to judgement is not unreflective reaction but physical compulsion, like reacting to a knee hammer test—though Buchler was cautious about this distinction, referring to 'the continuum of judgment' (1976c, p. 106). In any case, 'purposive' and 'intelligent' do

¹² Lipman put a footnote here with reference to Bloom 1984.

¹³ Lipman put a footnote here with reference to Buchler 1951.

not equate to reflective or considered. Thus, Buchler argued that '[a] major historic misconception with regard to judgment is that it is necessarily deliberative. But human judgment cannot be limited to occasions of intention or voluntary choice ... [P]roducts arising under conditions in which a man is entirely unconscious may yet be his products, for they may be attributed to what he has become' (1974, p. 93). He notes that 'the way a man is judging the world around him ... may not be present to his awareness,' and urges us to avoid the 'disastrous equation of selection with conscious selection, of discrimination with deliberate discrimination, of attitudinal postures with voluntarily chosen outlooks' (1974, p. 94). 'Moreover,' he explained, 'any of the three [modes of judgment] may be manifested as intentional or unintentional, as taking place consciously or unconsciously' (1976c, p. 108).

Query, inquiry and community

Buchler distinguished unconscious and reactive judgements from deliberate, reflective judgements by referring to the latter as *query*. Thus, while '[m]any of our judgments are responses and not products of reflexive query or even faithful mirrors of our "experience"' (1951, p. 54), 'products of *query* ... comprise the judgments of the arts and of the sciences, and in general all judgments that emanate from deliberative invention' (1951, p. 159, emphasis in original). Further:

[T]he process underlying those products that are of the greatest consequence in the inventive life of man ... we shall call *query* ... A yawn, an exclamation, a crumpled piece of paper, a philosophic concept, and a madrigal are alike human products ... but only those which are methodically wrought are products of query. In query the individual ... is engaged at least in a process of reflexive (self-directed) communication. (1955, p. 7, emphasis in original)

Buchler provided a 'skeletal framework' of the concept of method: 'Whoever is said to act methodically (1) chooses a mode of conduct (2) to be directed in a given way (3) to a particular set of circumstances (4) for the attainment of a result' (1961, p. 32). He explained, though, that while all query is methodical, not all method constitutes query:

Query is that form of human experience which originates partly in a compound of imagination and wonder ... Although query occurs only in a methodic framework, its traits are not reducible solely to methodic traits ... Query is more prodigal than method as such ... Method can be

indifferent, and can serve any cause. Query implies a type of moral direction. (1961, p. 114-115)

Buchler maintained that query has an 'interrogative character,' as when scientists 'put questions to nature' and an architect 'questions the available possibilities' (1955, pp. 61, 62). He explained that '[t]he process of interrogation is a process of discovery bred by probing' (1955, p. 73) and that query 'is the interrogative spirit methodically directed' (1955, p. 66). Elsewhere, he characterised query as 'the human effort to make the interrogative temper bear fruit' (1961, p. 85). Thus, in every episode of query there is a 'transition from an indecisive to a decisive state—from an interrogative state to an ordered growth of judgment' (1955, p. 62). This explains Buchler's description of 'query as entailing a spoilation of possibilities' (1976a, p. 50).

Buchler insisted that 'the interrogative spirit is not limited to the regulation of doubt and belief; and it is for this reason that query is not limited to inquiry' (1955, p. 73). He reserved the term 'inquiry' to refer to reflective *assertive* judgements, insisting that active judgements (e.g. those made in an athletic event) and *exhibitive* judgements (e.g. those made in producing a work of art) may be equally methodical, equally the result of a person's reflexive self-communication. Thus, 'if the habit of judgment is not limited to the mind or the mouth, then neither can the process of judging methodically or interconnectedly be limited to "thought" or "inquiry"' (1955, p. 53). 'Query is the genus of which inquiry is a species' (1955, p. 7). '[A]rtistic query is exhibitive, and ... action and assertion emerge from active and assertive query when they emerge from query at all' (1955, p. 70). Indeed, Buchler held that it is 'unlikely that any enterprise of query is in only one mode of judging' (1955, p. 70). In this regard, he faulted 'The pragmatists,' who, in 'emphasizing the active character of belief, neglect the judicative character of action, and even more, the judicative character of contrivance' (1955, p. 32). He noted, further, that situations addressed by query are not necessarily problematic or even indeterminate, in the sense of having 'a dilemmic urgency that awaits mitigation, as if ... a bad state needed to be replaced by a good one' (1955, pp. 72-73).

In a similar vein, Buchler lamented 'the tendency ... to identify the process of reason with the process of *assertive query* only' (1955, pp. 96, emphasis in original) and 'the consequent arrogation of knowledge to assertion or inquiry alone' (1955, pp. 97). He argued that '[t]he attribute of reason must be applicable to the whole of human production and not merely to the forms of talk and thought' (1955, p. 98). That understanding amplifies the meaning of this passage: 'Reason is a form of love, as love

(in an equally just perspective) is a form of reason. It is love of inventive communication. Nothing is more foundational for all value than query, and reason is devotion to query' (Buchler 1951, p. 169).

Notably, Buchler held that philosophy partakes of all three modes of judgement:

[I]t should be clear that in my occasional use of the phrase "philosophic inquiry" I cannot possibly be referring to philosophy *solely* as inquiry, but to philosophy in *so far as* it is inquiry. In the same way, the expression "the art of philosophy" would not imply that philosophy is solely an art, but would refer only to the artistic aspect of philosophy. (1976b, p. 141, emphases in original)

Among the assertive functions of philosophy, Buchler mentioned 'the articulation of important concepts, principles, and symbols; the comparison of disciplines and methods; the weighing of philosophic evidence; [and] the criticism and organization of arguments' (1976b, p. 139). Philosophy involves exhibitiv query in that philosophers necessarily 'show as well as tell' by 'perforce exhibit[ing] a structure of concepts' (1961, p. 165, 166). Thus, Buchler noted that 'a philosophy constructs ... it brings together a number of categories and develops them by analogy and metaphor and definition', and this 'process of construction lays emphasis on "seeing" the meaning and on "feeling" the impact of the conceptual configuration' (1951, p. 122). In addition, for Buchler, some exhibitiv elements in philosophical structures, such as the myths of Plato, have no assertive function, 'but plainly help to determine for other concepts or substantive elements their character as parts of a perspective' (1955, p. 181; see also 1951, pp. 123-124). The *active* dimension of philosophy becomes evident when we consider that '[a]rt, science, and philosophy are (at least) protracted action, and they each subdivide into habits and techniques of action ... We question as much by our actions as by our words' (1955, pp. 63-64). In addition, Buchler insisted that 'philosophy is a form of active judgment ... in its practical, moral, and educational aspects' (1976b, pp. 139-140). He praised the Socratic-Platonic method of philosophy because 'it renders its products not by simple affirmation but assertively, exhibitively, and actively, in subtle proportions. It is in a sense the paragon of query, being masterful in all the modes of judgment' (1955, p. 77).

For Buchler, then, judgement-products may be actions, assertions, or contrivances, and in either case may be conscious or subconscious, instantaneous or protracted, reactive or reflective (query), and in the latter case, are motivated by a spirit of

interrogation, are susceptible of reason, and may provide conditions for knowledge.¹⁴ They may also be individual or communal. Buchler related judgement and community in three ways. First, 'The individual in himself constitutes a community, the reflexive or proceptive community' (1951, p. 39). This is so in two ways. First, Buchler employed the notion from Peirce and Plato of internal dialogue. He noted that Peirce 'demonstrated that even the thought process of the individual mind is a kind of communication with oneself, a dialogue in which the mind assumes two roles' (1939, p. 403). He explained that '[i]n query the individual becomes his own interrogator and advocate—he is engaged at least in a process of reflexive (self-directed) communication' (1955, p. 7). Importantly, this reflexive communication is not necessarily in the assertive mode. Buchler explains that in appreciating a work of art, a person 'responds not merely by satisfaction but by appropriating the product for the reflexive community. He understands more, not necessarily in that ... he grasps new "facts," but in the sense that the augmentation of his judgment widens his power of assimilation' (1951, p. 79). Second, one's judgements are necessarily informed by the ideas, norms, and institutions of one's social community. Thus, '[l]ogically and genetically, the [individual] reflexive community presupposes a social community' (Buchler 1951, p. 39). As Buchler observed, 'All human judgment, even the most private and inconsequential, depends indirectly on natural conditions, including social products' (1955, p. 8). This is possible because '[c]ommon perspectives are available for the individual's participation; an aggregate of accumulated perspectives is available as a heritage for his assimilation' (1955, p. 168). Buchler noted that 'social trends are [often] absorbed by individuals without deliberate acceptance' (1976c, p. 105).

Social community constitutes another relationship Buchler articulated between judgement and community. Every human community generates common perspectives or judgements shared or distributed among its members. Indeed, Buchler defined community as 'a class of proceivers (necessary condition) for whom a given natural complex functions as a dominant procept (sufficient condition)' (1951, p. 39). He defined 'perspective' as 'that kind of order in which a given set of natural complexes function as procepts for a given proceiver or (distributively) for a *community of proceivers*' (1951, p. 124, emphasis added). Buchler went so far as to suggest that 'Rationality could be defined as the willingness to discover other perspectives, to attain community of perspective, and to reconcile community with

¹⁴ 'Clearly, no judgment merely as judgment is knowledge. It can only be the condition for knowledge to be acquired, if it is acquired at all' (Buchler 1976c, p. 104).

[personal] conviction' (Buchler 1951, p. 116). He explained that '[i]n communication new perspectives are socially defined and present perspectives are socially explored, and this is true whether the form taken by the communication is one of collaboration or strife' (1955, p. 169). In this regard, he observed that philosophers necessarily recommend their categories and principles to other philosophers in the hope of achieving a 'community of philosophic understanding' (1951, p. 132), and that the meaning derived from a product of philosophy is 'heavily dependent upon the experiential range and collaborative power of the interpreting community' (1961, p. 51). Indeed, for Buchler, the individual reflexive community and the social community of perspective make each other possible: 'Judgment is a necessary condition of continuing community, as sheer social togetherness is a necessary condition of judgment' (1955, p. 57). He explained that '[t]hrough each product the individual is literally multiplied. In [self-]reflexive communication he multiplies the dimensions of his individuality, in social communication he makes possible new life and growth. But it is in the very occurrence of the product that self-transcendence is potential' (1951, p. 53).

Buchler distinguished shared or distributed judgements from collective judgements formed in a process of collaborative query. 'Query is so often collaborative and communal,' he wrote, 'it flourishes so frequently under conditions of social intercourse, that we can easily overlook the similarity of such conditions to those prevailing in individual or reflexive query' (1955, p. 65). Buchler observed that some judgement-products are irreducibly social, in that 'the genesis of these products cannot be convincingly or satisfactorily explained even by adding together the accounts of many individuals each functioning in his environment, since the activity of a number of individuals considered distributively is different from the activity of the same individuals considered collectively or as part of a configuration' (1955, p. 6). He gave 'a money system' as an example of distributed individual functioning and 'a work of art or science' as an example of collective functioning. Buchler coined the phrase 'community of query' to designate this third relationship between judgment and community, giving, as one example, 'the query-situation of political action and deliberation [concerning] certain social changes' (1955, p. 78).

Buchler explained that 'a product of query passes, at its completion, from a reflexive [individual] community to a social community; or, if truly a collaborative product, from a smaller to a larger social community. In query it is not possible to be possessive' (1955, p. 82). Indeed, following Peirce, he maintained that not only products of query, but every judgement 'offers itself, as product, for interpretation and appraisal' (1951,

p. 52). Buchler used the verb 'ramify' to describe how judgement-products are elaborated by subsequent judgement-products, by the same person and/or by others in communication with them—just as the former judgement-products are themselves ramifications of prior judgement-products. Thus, '[t]he ramifications realize the substance of the product, which, plainly, may far exceed the existence and the ken of the producer,' just as 'the product, itself at least potentially ramified, stems from a ramified relationship' (1955, p. 5, 6). Second-order judgements may be reactive rather than reflective, but Buchler explained that '[e]very judgment implicitly seeks justification because of the commitment incurred by the proceiver in judging' (1951, p. 141). No judgement can be 'regarded as indiscriminately acceptable or valuationally equal' (1951, p. 110). Buchler used the term 'validation' to refer to the process by which 'a judgment is rendered secure within a given perspective,' meaning that 'there is no reason, desire, or need to alter it' (1951, p. 158), though 'no process of validation can be final in any absolute sense' (1951, p. 164). Indeed, Buchler maintained that, while 'the great majority of products originate and die inconsequentially in this or that proceptive domain ... [t]he product is an event in time; the judgment is eternal in that the circumstances of its origin do not comprehend its entire being. There can be no assurance that any judgment is mortal or infertile' (1951, p. 53). 'The principle that there always are questions beyond the questions that have been asked ... preserves the momentum of life and query' (1966/1990, p. 8).

Buchler's most important bequest to philosophy for children was not, directly, his theory of judgement, but the pedagogical turn he gave to that theory, in his leadership of general education at Columbia University and in his article 'What is a Discussion?' published in *The Journal of General Education* (1954). In fact, the phrase 'community of query' appeared in that article, where it describes a certain kind of classroom dialogue, a year before it appeared in Buchler's book *Nature and Judgment* (1955; quoted in this section), where it describes collaborative query more generally.

Query in education

Buchler's leadership of general education at Columbia University was scholarly as well as administrative. He wrote a number of essays on general and liberal arts education, in which he transformed a number of elements from his metaphysical system into pedagogical principles. Thus, in an article he co-authored with Lawrence H Chamberlain, Buchler commended the notion, 'expressed in detail by such early Columbia teachers as John Dewey' (1952, p. 167) that students should not be treated as empty minds, but as active inquirers. They described Columbia's general education

program as ‘imaginative interdisciplinary reading and discussion’ (1952, pp. 166-169) and stressed that general education should privilege intellectual awakening over content.¹⁵ They observed that ‘scholarly interests are *created* and potentialities *awakened* by a varied and intellectually exciting curriculum’ (1952, pp. 166-167, emphases in original). Buchler described this kind of awakening in humanistic terms:

The essential idea, the continuity of education and experience, of learning and life, of one discipline with other disciplines, is a fertile one. It is central to the Columbia process of liberal education and to the conviction ... that the principal obligation of the College is to help develop the student into a more complete human being. (1954b, p. 52)

In his book on method, Buchler notes that ‘In certain methods of teaching, which proceed by proliferating issues and multiplying options, the student may emerge with a large number of indecisive ideas. But it can be argued that precisely this type of process intensifies and interrelates the resources of the student’ (1961, p. 50).

This type of process was instituted at Columbia by making small group discussion the primary method of instruction for its ‘core curriculum,’ described by Roosevelt Montás as ‘a set of courses in literary and philosophical classics—as well as art, music, and science—in which all students study and discuss a prescribed list of works that begins in antiquity and moves chronologically to the present’ (2021, p. 4). Chamberlain and Buchler reported that, since its inception at Columbia in 1919, general education courses were conducted as ‘small group discussion,’ and that ‘[c]ollaborative inquiry among colleagues has ever since remained continuous with common inquiry in the classroom’ (1952, p. 168).

The anchor course of Columbia’s core curriculum is Contemporary Civilization (CC), a two-year sequence which ‘examines texts in moral and political philosophy’ (Montás 2021, p. 29). It is perhaps significant that the course’s emphasis on reading and discussing primary sources began in 1941, the year before Buchler began teaching at Columbia. Buchler’s later administrative title was ‘Chairman of the Contemporary Civilization Staff’. In a report to the Columbia College Dean, Buchler recorded that

¹⁵ In his book on method, Buchler quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Treatise on Method*: ‘the education of the intellect, by awakening the *method* of self-development, was [Plato’s] proposed object, not any specific information that can be conveyed into it from without’ (quoted without specific reference in Buchler 1961, p. 44, emphasis in original). Buchler adds that ‘The Platonic dialogues most often culminate suspensively, but their unitary function is to be found in the inviolate spirit of their attack’ (1961, p. 50).

'CC ... is one of the large unifying undertakings in the educational life of the university. Annually it is studied by about thirteen hundred students in over fifty sections, and is taught by about thirty-five members' (1956, p. 1). Buchler described the 'technique of discussion' utilised in this course as follows:

CC sections met in groups of about twenty-five students, each group taught by a single instructor who remained with it throughout the academic year. Discussion, from the beginning, was the rule within the classroom: the twenty-five persons were to be students, not listeners. The instructor, though necessarily a chairman and guide, was to be an inquirer, not a preacher. He was there not to deliver a message for the day but to preserve the sense of order, balance, and continuity and to exhibit the critical attitude. (1954b, pp. 56-57)¹⁶

Buchler described the 'CC type' of teacher as 'the most valuable type the College and the University can have. Their scholarly interests are both special and broad; they are devoted to CC and to whatever they teach; they have keen interest in students as learners and as human beings' (1956, p. 6). Perhaps fortunately for Lipman, who began teaching at Columbia at the age of thirty, Buchler noted that 'I consider a talented young man superior to a tired luminary, at least for our purposes' (1956, p. 5).

Before he was hired at Columbia, Lipman was given an emergency appointment to teach philosophy at Brooklyn College in New York City.¹⁷ He recalled, 'My method of teaching ... was derived completely from what I had learned as a student at Columbia: spend about 20 minutes of each session making some general interpretive remarks about the reading in question, and then spend the rest of the time in class discussion' (2012, p. 24). From 1954–1957 Lipman employed the 'technique of discussion' in teaching CC at Columbia College under Buchler's tutelage. Thereafter, he replicated the course at the College of Pharmacy affiliated with the university, at the Mannes College of Music, and at the City College of New York. As chair of general education

¹⁶ Later in this essay, Buchler elaborated: 'Any type of course whatever can be liable to the vice of superficiality or can acquire the merit of thoroughness. For the property of thoroughness belongs to a method, an organization, an art of selection and presentation not to a subject matter or a level of generality' (1954b, p. 112).

¹⁷ Lipman explained: 'The previous instructor, a senior professor just a semester away from retirement, had invoked his Constitutional right not to testify before the dreaded McCarthy Committee on un-American Activities of the U.S. House of Representatives. For this he was arbitrarily fired by the President of Brooklyn College, and I was pressed into immediate service with virtually no time for preparation' (2012, p. 24).

in the College of Pharmacy, he implemented a new course, Contemporary Civilization C, to help pharmacy students address 'The role which the professional worker is expected to fill in today's society; his responsibilities, limits, and potentials' (College of Pharmacy 1965, p. 16). Perhaps more significantly, Lipman participated in the regular discussions with other CC faculty, led by Buchler, including 'the sociologist C. Wright Mills, the social historian Benjamin Nelson, and the philosophers [John Herman] Randall [Jr.], [Ernest] Nagel, and Herbert Schneider' (Wallace 2006, p. 9). As Gelber recalled:

True to Buchler's perception of the self-corrective character of query, the CC program was never a 'finished' product. As chair of the weekly luncheons held for the entire teaching staff, Buchler was the catalyst, requiring open discussion of ideas and issues pertaining to the CC curriculum. A wide range of disciplines were represented: philosophy, economics, history, political science, religion, sociology and anthropology. Buchler was recognized by his colleagues as the figure most responsible for seeing CC as a continuing intellectual challenge, compelling its participants to wrestle with the complex interactions of the social, political, economic, religious and ideological factors shaping our civilization. (1991, pp. 7-8)

The primary purpose of these luncheons—held in the Columbia Faculty Club since the program's inception in 1919—was to decide on the syllabi for the A and B year-long courses, which each person teaching them was required to follow. Changes in the syllabi were reflected in periodic revisions to the textbook of source materials *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West*, edited by a committee of the CC staff (chaired by Buchler in 1946).¹⁸ Buchler wrote of these luncheons:

From the end of World War I until shortly after the end of World War II, CC—especially in its weekly luncheons—was one of the few domains within the University where older and younger men could mingle personally and intellectually. Within such an atmosphere the older men could feel conscious of transmitting a tradition, while the younger men

¹⁸ The committee Buchler chaired to edit the second edition of that source book intended 'that students will find [it] a work of useful reference in their later college studies and that it will become a welcome addition to their permanent libraries' (Buchler et al. 1946, p. vi).

could feel the importance of inheriting and perpetuating this tradition.

The esprit de corps was remarkable. (1956, pp. 5-6, emphasis in original)

Buchler believed that Columbia doctoral students who taught CC, ‘prize the experience ... with obvious enthusiasm to staff discussion and classroom work ... They know that CC *augments* their resources. They know that it cannot help making their dissertation a better one than it would otherwise have been, and that it makes the specialist a better specialist’ (1956, p. 4, emphasis in original). More significantly, Buchler himself considered that ‘[t]he teaching, reading, editing and ... administering of CC (the great staff, the discussions, the *esprit*) was *the* most fundamental intellectual experience of my life ... I think it is true to say that without it I would not have arrived at my sense of what constitutes human utterance’ (quoted in Gebler 1991, p. 13, emphasis in original).¹⁹

The import of this last statement is brought home by the fact that Buchler equated ‘utterance’ with ‘judgment’ (see Buchler 1951, p. viii, 51). The statement indicates that the relationship among Buchler’s metaphysics, his educational philosophy, and his pedagogy was one of mutual influence. Buchler saw that the process of inquiry—understood by Peirce as his followers as the creation of new knowledge—is essentially the same as the process of learning. Thus, he wrote: ‘It may be true ... that men by nature desire to know ... [T]he real problem, at least for colleges, is whether men desire to learn and whether, among those who do, there is any sense of what actual inquiry or discovery entails’ (1954a, p. 7).

Discussion as query

Buchler’s most systematic treatment of the method of small group discussion came in his 1954 essay ‘What is a Discussion?’ which Lipman reprinted in the first issue of *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children* (1979) and which he quoted in both editions of his magnum opus, *Thinking in Education* (1991, 2003). The most important ideas in this article are (1) that ‘The first major job of a teacher, and maybe in the last analysis the only one, is to implant the spirit and the experience of inquiry—or, better, of query, if I may import a term I have used elsewhere to designate probing in the widest possible sense’ (1954a, p. 7); (2) that, whereas ‘the lecture cannot ... reproduce

¹⁹ Similarly, in 1956 Buchler stated to the Columbia College Dean that ‘in my nineteen years of teaching at this University I have found no experience so rewarding as CC, in all of its aspects. The intellectual self-scrutiny that CC imposes is uniquely salutary, and I suspect that I am now, academically at least, less of a sinner than I once was’ (1956, p. 16).

the conditions of actual inquiry' (1954a, p. 12), classroom discussion can; and (3) the nature of teacher and student involvement in discussion as query.

The value that Buchler placed on discussion is pedagogical: students learn better, though perhaps less in terms of content, from discussions conducted as inquiries, than from lectures. Buchler used his conceptions of 'assimilation' and 'manipulation,' and the phrases 'ideational awareness' and 'ideational sensibility' to describe the pedagogical aim of classroom discussions: 'The first consideration, then, that imposes itself when we try to clarify ourselves about the meaning of the discussion procedure, is the role of this procedure in fostering ideational awareness and in dissipating the machine-like conception of query' (1954a, p. 8). Buchler made a constructivist proposition that this is not something that can be 'transmitted' to students by lecture-as-delivery-machine, but something they must produce themselves:

Ideational sensibility does not arrive in the form of sudden illumination ... Now in the lecture, as we ordinarily understand it, a product is transmitted. In the discussion, a product is established. Quantitatively speaking, 'more' can be transmitted by lecture than can be established by discussion. But more can be assimilated of what is established than of what is transmitted. In the lecture the wheels have been greased, the mechanism operates, and the product is inherited, God willing. In the discussion the product is necessarily earned, through halting personal labor. By the standards of social efficiency, one method appears to be rational and fluid; the other, primitive, wasteful, circuitous. But this is the crux of the matter. Ideational awareness in the student requires precisely the perception on his part that there is no analogy whatever between entrepreneurial productivity and the productivity of query. (1954a, pp. 8-9)

Buchler distinguished this kind of intellectual labour from the kind a student has typically performed in 'precollegiate' schooling, where, '[f]or about seventeen years he has been trained to believe that the technological system is ubiquitous', with 'professors as quizmasters who occasionally deliver parcels of knowledge to government and industry, but who regularly heave such parcels at the student and expect them to be heaved back on judgment day', cautioning that in college 'he has four years in which to modify his sensibility' (1954a, p. 9). Buchler stated provocatively that the 'venial sin [of lecturing] is that, at best, it communicates to and not with students,' and that '[i]ts mortal sin is that it prevents teachers from learning

while they teach' (1954a, p. 13). There is nothing in the essay to indicate that Buchler thought younger students incapable of 'assimilating' genuine 'ideational awareness' through discussion and, given his encouragement of Lipman's work in philosophy for children, it is likely that he had simply not considered that possibility before Lipman suggested it to him.

Buchler reiterated his constructivist proposition in explaining that '[i]f the discussion method is superior to the lecture method, this is not because of its degree of activity but because the establishment of a product of inquiry by students is more fundamental to the deepening of their powers than their acceptance of such a product, and because the assimilation of ideas is more important than the compilation of ideas' (1954a, p. 9). He made this point even more emphatically when he explained that even students too shy to participate in discussions other than by listening nevertheless have the chance to follow the process of inquiry and thereby assimilate meaning themselves:

The silent student in the discussion, fully as much as the vocal one, witnesses and experiences the manipulation of subject matter from its initial circumstances. He observes pitfalls as they occur in student probing and not merely as they are formulated in the more finished perspective of the lecturer. He experiences the natural history of query, sometimes with his guts as well as with his intellect. The lecturer can re-enact problematic experience dramatically; but in discussion the student is party to the original. (1954a, p. 12)

Buchler was well-versed in George Herbert Mead's social psychology and John Dewey's pragmatist epistemology and philosophy of educational experience, both of which drew on Peirce's semiology. Because of his interest in psychology, Lipman was able to draw on Jean Piaget's theory of active knowledge and of the social psychology of Lev Vygotsky and Vasily Davydov to more substantially theorise the community of inquiry as an operationalisation of social epistemology and learning (see Lipman 1996, 2001).

Buchler offered criteria or 'differentia' to distinguish classroom discussions framed as queries from other types and circumstances of discussion, and in particular from casual social discussion. One such criterion is purpose. Thus, in his first-ever use of the salient phrase, he stated: 'The club discussion is a discrete occasion of comradeship. The classroom discussion is a persisting community of query' (1954a, p. 10). Buchler explained 'discussion as community of query' as being 'committed to the establishment of a product' (1954a, p. 11), in contrast to the purposes of discussion in

social clubs, which he took to be entertainment, camaraderie, and democratic socialisation: 'Club members, who discuss what their luncheon speaker has told them about traffic deaths, religion, or an African safari, bring to the meeting no moral commitment toward query. They come with no substantive preparation ... They are present to be entertained, to evince interest in the world about them, to be "stimulated" a little, to be "civic-minded"' (1954a, pp. 9-10). Buchler chided teachers and students who misunderstand the purpose of classroom discussion as 'not primarily to subserve inquiry but primarily to promote "democracy" or to generate fraternal feeling' (1954a, p. 9). (Though, for Buchler, these ends are products of judgement, in the context classroom discussion he calls for products of query.)

Another distinguishing criterion of discussion as query is the intellectual commitments of its contributors. While participants in casual social discussion 'have no responsibility for the framing of ideas', 'are inherently distrustful of the abstract, of the effort to generalize, of "big words,"' and have 'no moral commitment toward query' (1954a, p. 9), participants in discussion, by implication, have and do all of those things. They demonstrate 'ingenuousness, ... insight, [and] mad spontaneity' (1954a, p. 11). In doing so, they are able to 'penetrate the crust of common sense' and 'transcend the particularities of gossip' (1954a, p. 10). 'Given sufficiently challenging fare, accorded a status of reasonable equality within the confines of the classroom,' Buchler asserted, 'students have begun the revolution of awareness' (1954a, p. 11).

However, though Buchler referred to the 'method of discussion' he did not recommend a particular protocol, other than to state that 'the quality of the talk is more important than its quantity' and that 'participating can mean raising questions [and reflecting silently] as well as expressing viewpoints' (1954a, p. 12). He also indicated that '[c]lassroom discussion is a continuing enterprise, with a content that is sequential and, above all, cumulative' (1954a, p. 9). These sequential and cumulative aspects continue over multiple sessions of classroom dialogue, as any particular episode of discussion 'presupposes products earlier achieved, evolving interests, and future obligations. It is not a one-act play giving way to another on the morrow. The specific techniques and procedures can vary greatly from day to day' (1954a, p. 10).

Nor did Buchler prescribe the behaviours of the teacher in a discussion, though he saw the teacher's role as vital: 'How can the instructor be the midwife of ideas if he merely looks on at their dubious birth? ... Withdrawing him from the group or leaving his body is like withdrawing the books from the library or tearing out the odd-numbered pages in order to improve the guessing power of the students' (1954a, p.

14). The few pieces of advice he gave are vague, such as that the teacher should ‘utilize his cognitive authority without flaunting it’ and must ‘be not only a positive contributor but an exemplar of discussion’ (1954a, p. 14). In another essay published the same year, on liberal arts education, Buchler provided more recommendations:

The teacher of CC ... will exhibit the importance of generalization, at the same time that he questions ruthlessly all generalizations which the discussion brings forth. He will aim to arouse in his students the historical sense; to develop in them some power of critical discrimination; to nourish a sense of complexity. He will not aim at completeness or exhaustiveness. He will try to keep his discussions constructive, yet tentative; imaginative, yet free of gratuitous speculation. Above all, and with the greatest thoroughness possible, he will try to inculcate the desire to find out more. (1954b, p. 112)

In fact, Buchler intentionally avoided more particular pedagogical recommendations that might be taken as formulae to replace pedagogical judgement. He described himself as being ‘a little suspicious of strict canons for the “art of teaching” or of legislation as to what is or is not authentic discussion’ (1954a, p. 11), and declared that ‘[n]either pedagogical maxims nor an unseen hand can replace the variable, but ever responsive, judgment of the teacher’ (1954a, p. 12). Rather than a protocol, Buchler indicated two broad ‘aims and values’ of college education as ‘guideposts for the conduct of discussion’: ‘the actualization of the student’s powers for query and the widening of his imagination,’ noting that ‘[o]ne can scarcely take exception to any particular discussion technique if it does promote these values’ (1954a, p. 11).

Drawing on his theory of judgement, Buchler stipulated that discussion as query aims to produce judgement-products, but he helpfully clarified that, ‘[t]o establish a product is in itself a very modest process. It implies, of course, not the exhaustion of a subject but progress in the ascertainment of complexities’ (1954a, p. 11). He warned teachers not to confuse ‘a product of query and a conclusion of query’—the latter being an unrealistic expectation for most episodes of classroom discussion—or to confuse ‘a definitive conclusion and a functional or provisional conclusion’ (1954a, p. 14), the former being unrealistic in most episodes of query in or out of the classroom. This was, no doubt, the source of Lipman’s distinction between ‘generic’, ‘mediating’ and ‘culminating’ judgements in the course of inquiry (1991, p. 164). Employing his tripartite model of judgement, Buchler explained:

For the product need not take the form of an assertive conclusion. It may be an enumeration of possible views, or a fuller definition of a problem, or a growth of appreciative awareness. It may be more of an envisioning or of an exhibiting than of an affirming. The product is the concrete achievement of the hour ... Students may have no right to demand final answers, but they certainly have a right to expect some sense of intellectual motion or some feeling of discernment. (1954a, p. 15)

In any case, the pedagogical significance of a product is twofold: 'in the discussion, not only is a product established collaboratively; it is experienced in its life-cycle as well as in its consummation' (Buchler 1954a, p. 13).

The explanations and arguments summarised thus far comprise Buchler's defence of classroom discussion against two criticisms made by academics: that what students experience in discussion is 'a loose [i.e. inefficient] form of learning' and that it is 'a charitable or hospitable [i.e. non-rigorous] form of learning' (1954a, p. 10). Buchler was more concerned about a criticism made by non-academics: that classroom discussion is an "'immature" stage of discussion, to be distinguished from the plain-spoken sessions of men of affairs' (1954a, p. 10). Buchler repudiated this criticism as a form of infantilism: the idea that student discussion cannot be rigorous, substantive, or original, because '[k]ids train for adulthood. Men of affairs, having obviated or superseded the jargon of the books, talk about reality' (1954a, p. 10). Significantly, Buchler described the harm this attitude causes students, not only in pedagogical terms but also in moral terms: 'The simplest way to paralyze the student is to regard him as a kid on trial and not as an earnest inquirer. I take it that the moral relation between the instructor and the twenty-odd students in the classroom is as much an ingredient of the discussion process as the discourse itself is' (1954a, p. 10). For Buchler, then, it is not only the nature of query that enables students to assimilate meanings for themselves, but also the moral relationship between the teacher and the students: that the teacher treat students not as in 'passage from kidhood to adulthood', but as persons of full stature. Further, Buchler warned that, '[q]uite apart from the attitudes of individual teachers, there are ways in which the college as such may ... perpetuate infantilism,' such as by focusing classroom discussion on the content of radio panels (1954a, p. 10).

Buchler called the infantilisation of students a 'cultural fable,' and a 'cultural myth,' (1954a, p. 10), which he attributed to '[t]he average citizen, thoroughly unaware of his [own] alienation from query' (1954a, p. 10). The implication of that telling remark is

that students in discussion as query are not merely learning their subject matter but are engaging in more vital human practice even than adult 'men of affairs' who discuss 'reality' 'with no moral commitment toward query'. Thus, in the preface to *Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West*, Buchler's committee stated that 'the primary aim' of that course was 'to develop the student's critical understanding of his society' (1946, p. v). They explained: 'Reflection by the student upon society and history supplies both a pattern and a perspective for intelligent control. Such reflection is impossible apart from the traditions of human thinking. A civilized person has a past and must be conscious of his own roots and growth in order to participate intelligently in his society' (1946, p. v). Chamberlain and Buchler connected this pedagogical aim to democracy:

Deeper consciousness and greater self consciousness on the part of large numbers of people, in whatever station, is the current desideratum. The threats of authoritarianism, ideational and political, are not likely to be counteracted by a scholarly aristocracy. They may be arrested by a sufficiently large number of reflective men who can assume the enormous responsibilities of the democratic process. (1952, p. 169)

Buchler understood that an educator 'can do little about disenchanting fellow citizens,' but urged that '[h]e can do a great deal about seeing to it that the cultural myth [of infantilism] does not infiltrate the college and take possession of his own soul' (1954a, p. 10).

To summarise, Buchler held that not only was query the only activity by means of which (young adult) students can actually 'assimilate' ideas, but also that the skills of query and the disposition to use it in situations that call for it are the most important aims of education, for the sake of personal growth and of democratic citizenship. Buchler also held that classroom discussion of a certain kind qualifies as query as genuine as that conducted by disciplinary scholars—in spite of the fact that '[t]he undergraduate classroom never will be the scene of grandiose research' (1954a, p. 11). Such a classroom discussion is facilitated by a teacher who exemplifies rigorous query and provokes student thought, largely through questioning, all the while making a series of pedagogical judgements rather than following a formula. Students in such a discussion take responsibility for framing ideas, penetrate the crust of common sense, and utilise abstract thinking. Such a discussion results in products including the enumeration of possible views and a fuller definition of the problem. Buchler further

held that young adults should not be condescended to as 'kids on trial' but respected as full-fledged persons.

Philosophy for Children

In 1971 Buchler moved to the State University of New York at Stony Brook on Long Island, with the title of Distinguished Professor of Philosophy. There he played a major role in developing the graduate program in philosophy. The following year he and his wife, the philosopher Evelyn Shirk, were among the founders of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. That was the year Lipman moved to Montclair State College, where he and Sharp co-founded the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children in 1974. Lipman recalled that Buchler 'felt he was being forced against the wall by the steamroller of Anglo-American analytical philosophy [at Columbia], while on the other hand, Stony Brook was committed to a multidimensional approach (e.g. naturalism, empiricism, phenomenology, existentialism, linguistic analysis, etc.)' (Undated, 'The death of Buchler', p. 3). In fact, the Philosophy Department at Stony Brook asked Lipman to apply for the position of chair, perhaps at Buchler's behest, 'but I was too deeply immersed in P4C [philosophy for children] at Montclair State to think of such a drastic move' (Undated, 'The death of Buchler', p. 3).

While living and working in Montclair, Lipman continued participating with the New York Philosophy Group and maintained regular communication with Buchler, who endorsed Lipman's new project:

Unlike many or most philosophers, Justus greeted Philosophy for Children with open arms. He read each book as it came out, and commented at one point that it represented 'a going-back to the roots of philosophy.' When I was planning the first issue of *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children* [1979], I wanted very much to have a contribution from [Buchler]. He didn't think he could do something new, and his article, 'What is a Discussion?' had been written with undergraduates in mind. I asked him if he would trust me to employ the term 'students' wherever the reference to undergraduates came up, and when this small operation was completed, he agreed with me, gleefully I thought, that the article had suffered no damage because discussions are discussions, whatever the age group involved. (Lipman, Undated 'The death of Buchler', p. 2)

In fact, Lipman's edits went well beyond replacing references to college undergraduates with 'students.' He substituted the word 'school' for 'college' throughout the article and deleted sentences and whole paragraphs describing colleges in detail. He substituted the words 'people' and 'non-educators' for 'academic men'; 'educator' for 'academic man'; 'children' for 'Freshmen'; 'TV' for 'radio'; and the phrase 'children discussing fairness or friendship or personal identity' for 'Freshmen discussing Hobbes or Adam Smith or Burke'. By 1979 Lipman and Sharp had enough experience conducting philosophical discussions in school classrooms that Lipman was comfortable applying Buchler's analysis of college classroom discussion to their experience.

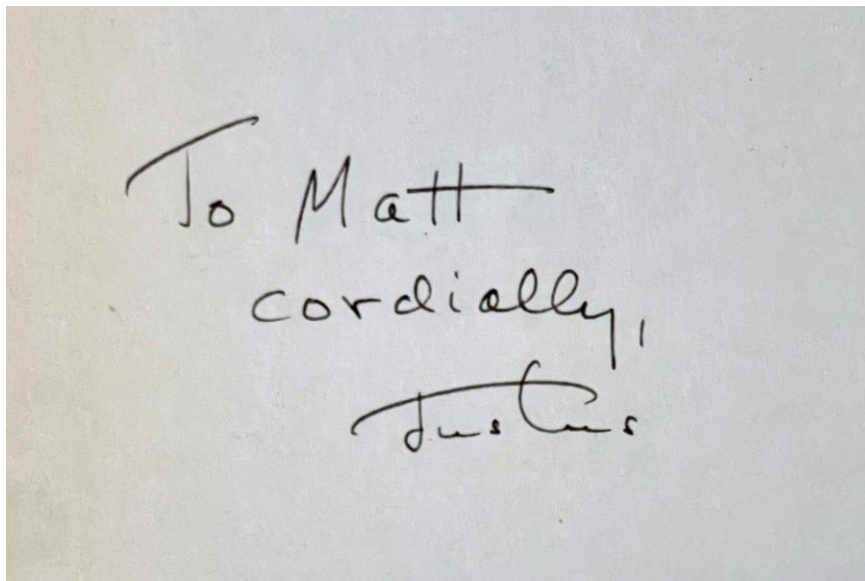
Lipman also omitted all indications that Buchler was describing discussion in social science classes, ignoring Buchler's explicit caveat: 'Nor can I say exactly to what extent conclusions about teaching in the domain loosely known as the "social sciences" may be valid for other domains. In any case, it is of the social sciences that I shall be thinking when I venture some generalizations about the discussion method' (1954a, p. 7). Presumably, Lipman assumed that readers of *Thinking* would associate the article with philosophy discussions, and in fact, the CC course Buchler directed, and which he had in mind writing the article, covered philosophy as well as social sciences.

In 1975 the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy sponsored a symposium on Buchler's philosophy at Fairfield University in Connecticut. The proceedings, including Buchler's responses, were published in a special issue of the *Southern Journal of Philosophy* (14:1) in 1976. Shortly after that, the first of a series of strokes immobilised Buchler's right arm. He eventually resumed teaching but told the New York Philosophy Group that his book, *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* (1966), would be his last. 'We wondered how he could be so sure,' Lipman recalled, but a more serious stroke forced Buchler to retire in 1981 and '[e]ventually another stroke paralyzed [sic] him and left him in a coma, in which he remained for many years, never regaining consciousness' (Lipman, Undated 'The death of Buchler', p. 3).²⁰ In 1990 a new edition of *Metaphysics of Natural Complexes* was published, supplemented, as Buchler had wished, with two articles published since the first edition, three of his responses from the 1974 symposium, and another, unpublished article. When Buchler

²⁰ Evelyn Shirk described Buchler's harrowing, systematic debilitation in her 1991 book *After the Stroke*.

died in 1991, Lipman arranged with his wife to have Buchler's books donated to Montclair State University.²¹

In this essay I have not traced the connections between Buchler's scholarship and that of Lipman or Sharp in detail. I have tried to establish that their theorising of the community of inquiry, and Lipman's theory of human judgement and multidimensional thinking were, to use Buchler's term, substantial, original ramifications of Buchler's theories of judgement and of discussion as query, just as Buchler's theories were substantial, original ramifications of Peirce's theory of inquiry. Buchler gave his theory of judgement a pedagogical turn and Lipman and Sharp's theory of inquiry made the further turn to childhood. Indeed, it is remarkable that Lipman's 1979 edits to Buchler's 1954 article makes Buchler's pedagogical and moral arguments against infantilism applicable to young children. It is equally remarkable that Buchler apparently agreed with this. These edits are particularly significant for understanding Lipman's philosophy of childhood and his conception of the role of philosophy in the education of children.



Inscription by Justus Buchler in Matthew Lipman's copy of his book *Nature and Judgment*.

²¹ Confirmed in an email to the author from Roland Garrett, then chair of the philosophy department at Montclair. 318 books containing underlining and/or marginal notes by Buchler are preserved in a special collection at Montclair's Harry S Sprague Library. Other books not already held by the library were added to its stacks. The remaining books filled four floor-to-ceiling bookcases in the seminar room of the then Department of Philosophy and Religion.

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