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# Thinking

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**Volume 12, Number 1**

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# THINKING IN STORIES

By Gareth Matthews

E.B. White, *The Hour of Letdown, The Second Tree from the Corner*,  
New York: Harper & Row, 1954, pp. 46-51.



A man came into a New York bar with a big, ugly-looking machine, which he put down near the beerpulls. He ordered two drinks, one for himself and one for the machine. First the man downed his own drink, then he poured the second whiskey into a small vent in the machine and "chased it" with water.

The bartender was not amused. He ordered the man to remove the machine from his bar. The man refused, quite cheerfully, and then explained that the machine needed to be able to "let down," having just won a chess tournament.

After several increasingly hostile responses from the bartender, the man appealed to the bartender's sympathy.

"You know how it is when you're all fagged out mentally," he said. Another patron, someone evidently more sympathetic to the machine than the bartender said he understood.

The bartender remained hostile; he refused to give the machine another drink. "How do I know it ain't drunk already?" he asked in defense.

The man proposed giving the machine a mathematical problem to test its sobriety.

"Ten thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, multiply it by ninety-nine," the bartender responded, viciously.

The machine set to work on the problem. It flickered and jerked and spat out the answer: "One million seventy-five thousand three hundred and thirty-eight." Another customer checked the result and called out excitedly, "It works out, you can't say the machine is drunk!"

Temporarily defeated, the bartender poured another drink for the man, and another one for his machine as well.

After the two of them had finished their drinks, they left the bar in the company of a new-found friend. Another patron went to the window to see where the odd threesome would go. He watched them all get into a Cadillac. "And which one of the three d'ya think is doing the driving?" he asked.

\* \* \*

Readers sometimes ask why this column doesn't include stories for high-school or college students. In fact, many of the stories discussed here, though simple enough to be understood and discussed by elementary school students, are yet profound enough to stimulate the best reflections of philosophy graduate students.

Still, even if most philosophically interesting stories for children are also suitable for discussion by adults, it is not the case that most philosophically interesting stories for teenagers or adults are also suitable for young children. So maybe it is a good idea to include, from time to time, a philosophically interesting story that is not aimed at children, such as this story by E.B. White.

One thing the reader of this story needs to appreciate is the culture of New York bars at around the time of World War II. The bar in the story would be patronized only by men, in fact, only by white men, almost all of whom would be business and professional types.

Could a robot find acceptance in such society? And if not, would rejection necessarily be based on narrow-minded prejudice, the same sort of prejudice that excluded women and minorities? Or is there some entirely justified reason for excluding even the cleverest robot from

the barroom society portrayed here?

There is a yet more profound issue. Perhaps women and blacks were excluded from such "saloons" in New York half a century ago because they were not thought to offer the right sort of companionship to the regular patrons. But could a robot offer them *any* real companionship at all? Or would the idea of "hanging out" with a computer have to be a sick joke?

Nowadays many of us spend important parts of our lives "interacting" with computer programs. We may learn the "mindset" of our computer game and, if we persist, we may come to distinguish the clever and sophisticated opponent we faced when we set the playing level at, say, 12, from the stupid opponent we deal with when we turn down the playing level to 3 or 4.

Following Alan Turing, many philosophers have come to think that the problem of minds and machines is, in the end, a problem about whether a computer program can be constructed so "knowledgeable" and so sophisticated that, sitting at our terminal, we could not tell for sure that we were "talking" only to a computer. What E.B. White's wonderfully whimsical story suggests is that there will always be a categorical difference between human beings and the most clever robots, unless someday there is a robot who needs to let down in something more than a metaphorical sense of "letting down," and unless it is something more than a joke to think of hanging out with such a machine while we let down together.

□

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# Kant and the Pedagogy of Teaching Philosophy

Antonio Cosentino

It is well known how different Kant's and Hegel's points of view are with regard to the teaching of philosophy. The difference can be captured to some extent by using the metaphor of traveling. According to Descartes, who employed the metaphor in his *Discourse on Method*<sup>1</sup>, the concept of travel comprises going around in space, and this expresses analogically the features and implications of historical knowledge, which involves going around in time.

Hegel suggests that only by means of travel are we enabled to know the world and the places in it, while at the same time we learn traveling. From his point of view, and speaking non-metaphorically, learning philosophy takes place only by our thinking through the history of philosophy: the content of philosophy consists of nothing but its history, just as the only content of travel consists of the various places we are to visit.<sup>2</sup> Hegel's criticism of those who recommend thinking for oneself is very clear: philosophical thinking is historic by nature; otherwise it is empty.

This Hegelian perspective provided an authoritative landmark for the traditional method of teaching philosophy throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This was especially true in Italy, where a follower of Hegel's philosophy, Giovanni Gentile, was Minister of Education. In 1923, Gentile built a new educational system on the basis of a radical critique of positivistic culture, along the lines of Idealism. Although the Gentilian educational program has been continuously rearranged over the years, nevertheless, as far as Italian secondary schools' philosophy syllabuses are concerned, it still seems safe from being updated, especially with regard to its historical approach.

The fact of the matter is that philosophy nowadays is expected to promote other skills than the mere acquisition of historical knowledge. Young people are rather firmly attached to the present moment of their lives, their overriding concern being the "here" and the "now." If this is the case, an immersion in history as an end in itself may turn into travel without return—a sort of meaningless wandering which will culminate in increasing bewilderment. Thus, if philosophy is to be helpful, it must begin in the present moment, raising its questions about what is immediately actual, and thereby providing opportunities for a better understanding of ourselves, our world, and our social and natural environment. As Descartes saw, spending time in traveling doesn't let one care about one's own country, while on the other hand, not traveling at all can be a source of prejudice and misunderstanding.

In contrast, Kant had alleged, following Locke,<sup>3</sup> the priority of self-awareness, of knowing the powers and limits of the subject as an underlying premise for exploring the object, *i.e.*, prior to setting out on a journey around the world. In such a perspective, Kant's thought appears to be quite the opposite of Hegel's.

Some of the methodological consequences of Kant's premises can be verified by taking into account something he published in 1765 as an introduction to his lectures at the University of Königsberg.<sup>4</sup> The first part of this "program" offers some remarkable reflections on the method of teaching philosophy. The most important of these stresses the value of teaching not "philosophy" but "doing philosophy." Teachers have to start following the natural pace of human knowledge, which proceeds from intellectual proficiency (reached through experience and

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perceptive judgments) to concept formation and, eventually, to grasping the relationship between premises and consequences. The student, Kant points out, "shouldn't learn thoughts: he should learn thinking; if we want him to walk by himself, he should only be encouraged, he should not be brought to do so."<sup>5</sup>

Following this, Kant explains that all the sciences one can learn are classifiable under two species: historical and mathematical. Both include definite bodies of knowledge, texts which are regarded as sources of truth. Philosophy, on the contrary, belongs neither to the historical sciences nor to the mathematical ones. Therefore, because of its particular nature, philosophy is expected to adopt a peculiar method: "The peculiar method of learning philosophy is *zetetic*, as some ancients used to call it (from the Greek word *zetein*), namely, inquiring."<sup>6</sup>

What does it mean in practice to be engaged in using a *zetetic* method? First of all, it means to claim that philosophy is going to be a particular activity in which one has to deal with open questions, where truth has to be sought endlessly and where, especially from the educational point of view, the specific contents are quite insignificant in themselves, whereas great attention is to be paid to the *process* of inquiry. As Kant puts it: "The author himself by whom philosophy is thought is not to be considered a model of judgment, but only as an occasion of judgment, in which judgments are made of him and even against him. The method of autonomous reflection moving towards some conclusion is what the student properly looks for—the only one that can be helpful for him. Particular ideas acquired in the meantime must be regarded as casual consequences."<sup>7</sup>

This is to say that to learn to do philosophy means to exercise and foster thinking skills on the basis of an autonomous development and by means of teacher assistance. The capacity of thinking effectively is the first step of knowledge, the basis upon which any further march can continue. The scheme does establish a procedure to be respected, for as Kant explains, "If we reverse this method, the student, long before he had acquired some intellectual proficiencies, obtains some kind of reasoning ability and imports a borrowed science, an exterior one, not grown from himself. . . . This is why we often meet learned men (properly men of study) who show so little intelligence, with the result that Academies all over the world display more dull heads than do other social ranks."<sup>8</sup>

What is underlined here is the separateness of the tools of knowledge from the contents of knowledge. What is being emphasized at the same time is the appropriateness of the tools to the contents. For when the contents overwhelm one's capability of handling them reflectively, the result is likely to be conceit and presumption. Elsewhere Kant says, "Nothing is more ridiculous than a precocious seriousness of a superficial kind. In this case we must get him to feel his weakness more than our superiority and authority, in order that he may be able to form himself as a social person; therefore, if the world is wide enough for him, the same must it be for other people."<sup>9</sup> What here seems clear enough is that doing philosophy has to deal with the tools of our knowledge.

Now although these specific methodological recommendations of Kant's can appear to be pertinent, nevertheless his general conceptions (about rationality, society and moral law) cannot serve as a model for us to follow and implement. As Lipman puts it: "The thinking for oneself Kant had in mind was not the full-fledged engagement in inquiry that we advocate today; it was rather the voluntary obedience of each individual to universally generalizable principles."<sup>10</sup>

The shift has to do, of course, with the great distance which separates the cultural, social and economic context of the eighteenth century from our own context. Nonetheless, the methodological recommendations contained in the booklet of

1765 seem to be still topical in themselves as an authoritative landmark in a line of thought along which the starting point of philosophical activity is located, together with its reasons and its arguments, among the problems and needs that emerge from our lives. Philosophy is primarily conceived, moreover, as a quality of inquiring and discovering behavior, rather than as a body of certain knowledge.

In addition, particular circumstances emphasize our interest in Kant's statements. These statements relate to the main argument on the table within the debate being carried out in recent years in Italy about the best method of teaching philosophy. Thus Kant can be taken as a classic counterpart and point of reference against the prevalent historical approach that comes, on the whole, from Hegelian Idealism.

Thus the intrinsic sense of the method Kant names *zetetic* may be summarized by these words of Husserl's: "The impulse to inquiry cannot develop from past philosophies, but from things and from problems."<sup>11</sup> This means that the reasons for entering into philosophy are never tied up to the knowledge of how things happened. Rather, they are intrinsic to experience: either our daily experience or its transcription in the various cultural shapes in which the historical human being has fixed his own capacities as an *animal symbolicum*.<sup>12</sup> It can be assumed that philosophical inquiry originates in the context of "here" and "now," in keeping with the need of a person who has to construct a self among other selves, where, as P. Guin puts it, "to be a self . . . is to engage in meaningful dialogue with others, past or present, in order to confront problems presented by the disappointment of our expectations."<sup>13</sup>

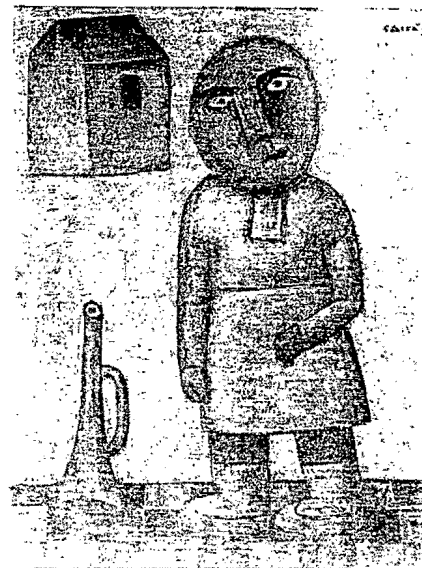
Seen in this perspective, doing philosophy doesn't exclude an historical dimension. It is claimed that such a dimension is needed in order to supply a background which one feels one belongs to. But instead of demanding our obedience, it becomes willing to offer us, when requested, its inestimable treasures.

#### NOTES

1. R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*. See the Italian translation, *Discorso sui metodi*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1978, where the author says, "By talking to people of the past what occurs is the

same as by traveling" (p.61).

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lettera a Niethammer*, in *Briefe von und an Hegel*, Meiner, Hamburg, Vol. I, 1960, pp. 418-20.
3. J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in the anthology, *The Empiricists*, New York, Doubleday, 1974. See p. 9 where Locke maintains, "All the light we can let in upon our minds, all the acquaintance we can make with our own understandings, will not only be very pleasant, but bring us great advantage, in directing our thoughts in the search of other things."
4. I. Kant, *Nachricht von der Einrichtung seiner Vorlesungen in dem Winterhalbjahr von 1765-1766*, in A. Guzzo, *Concetto e saggi di storia della filosofia*, Le Monnier, Firenze, 1940, pp. 322-34.
5. *Ibidem*, p. 324.
6. *Ibidem*, p. 325.
7. *Ibidem*, p. 325.
8. *Ibidem*, p. 324.
9. I. Kant, *La Pedagogia*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1969, p. 40.
10. See M. Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 9.
11. E. Husserl, *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, in "Logos," 1, 1911, p. 340.
12. See F. Bianco, *Insegnamento della filosofia: metodo storico o metodo zetetic?* in "Paradigimi," n. 23, 1990.
13. P. Guin, "Reflections on Karl Popper," in *Critical and Creative Thinking*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1993, p. 6.



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# Is Philosophical Inquiry Virtuous?

Roger H. Sutcliffe

*'Far the most damaging reproach to philosophy is brought on it by those who pretend to practice it, and whom your critic has in mind when he says that most people who practice it are vicious'—Socrates, in Plato's Republic, Book VI*

*'The Good of Man is the active exercise of his soul's faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue'—Aristotle's Ethics, Book I*

One approach to the title question would be to argue classically towards a conclusion, for example by defining the component terms—"philosophy" and "virtue", and perhaps "inquiry"—and then observing that philosophical inquiry was a subset of virtuous activity. Very neat and tidy. But not necessarily, I suggest, very virtuous in itself. And so, by its own definition, hardly philosophical inquiry.

Maybe by the end of this inquiry the approach I am taking will be judged equally non-virtuous and non-philosophical. But I could claim to have a rather intimate knowledge of the virtuousness of it, and might be content if that were to be recognized, even if its philosophy were not.

Have I lost you already? Part of me hopes that I have, because then it would be especially apposite to remark upon the need for philosophical inquiry—the search for understanding—to be *open* inquiry. As such, it requires an open mind; and it may be that openness is more common in a mind that recognizes its own "lostness" than in one which reckons to be sure of its bearings. Most minds, I'll wager—and perhaps especially "educated" minds—are rather inclined to

be sure of their bearings. They know what they know; and what they don't know, they assume may be absorbed without disturbance, or even much effort. They are not, in short, very Socratic.

But, of course, part of me hopes that you were not lost... that you were already finding new bearings... that you had already begun to ask such questions as: (1) why would the neat and tidy approach not be virtuous? (2) what does the writer think is different about the approach he is taking? (3) what reasons might there be for judging his approach virtuous? (4) could an approach be virtuous and non-philosophical? (5) might virtuous activity, in fact, be a subset of philosophical activity?

Indeed, I hope you may even have begun to shape a few pictures in response to the questions—a picture, perhaps, of a so-called "philosophical student" who has been set an essay entitled, "Is philosophical inquiry virtuous?" and who is busy "answering" it in an altogether methodical way, with no spirit for the activity—no sense that it is a question worth examining. (You might bring the picture into Socratic focus again by wondering if such a student is leading an examined—I mean, of course, a *self-*

examined—life. Or you might even have had another picture in mind, of a computer grinding through all the recorded connotations of the terms "philosophy," "virtue" and, by some algorithmic process, determining that philosophical inquiry was, or was not, virtuous. Better to be a computer satisfied than a Socrates dissatisfied?)

Or perhaps, in response to question (2) you might by now be shaping an image of the author as a flesh-and-blood teacher with an idiosyncratic (or could one say "idiosocratic"?) notion of making philosophical inquiry meaningful to his students by challenging even the supposition that it is worth doing... as if there were not quite enough teachers who already supposed it was not worth doing... as if every one of them had immaculate reasons for supposing that what they themselves were doing was worthwhile.

Let me fill out this picture just a little more—not out of vanity, but because if this is to be anything like a philosophical inquiry involving writer and reader, then the goal of better understanding between us will surely be the closer for a better understanding of what such inquiry means to at least one of the inquirers. (To



put this into the form of a slogan, I am saying, "You can't take the I out of Inquiry").

As a graduate, then, from the Oxford school of analytical and ordinary language philosophy of the 1970's, I had spent over ten years teaching philosophy to sixth-formers, as well as integrating philosophical skills and dispositions into my work as an English, and subsequently Maths, teacher of eight- to eighteen-year-olds. Such teaching was enjoyable enough for me, and perhaps of some value to the children, but it often lacked—as most bookish education lacks—that spontaneity and sense of self-regulation that may be vital if the word "education" is to retain any of its meaning. It was then that my outlook was opened up by the BBC TV programs entitled, "The Transformers," and by one of them in particular, namely, "Socrates for six-year-olds."

At a distance, now, of three years from its broadcasting, and viewing it with more critical eyes, I can see that it is not quite as balanced a portrayal of its subject—Professor Lipman's Philosophy for Children program—as it evidently set out to be. It was, however, striking and serious enough for me to decide to visit America and see the program operating "for real"; and I am emboldened to say, from continuing first-hand experience, that the epithet "transforming" seems perfectly appropriate to the program.

A central concept in the Lipman approach to philosophical inquiry, and to education in general, is "community of inquiry", and it is quite usual for this concept to be explained, on the one hand, in affective or social terms embodied in the concept of "community" and, on the other hand, in cognitive or individual terms embodied in the concept of "inquiry". But to some extent, or even perhaps crucially, such explanation misses the point. It is, in fact, the *interrelationship* between the affective and the cognitive, and between the social and the individual, that is so striking to those who enter into the spirit and practice of inquiring in such a community.

It is my hope to show later in this essay how this holistic concept of education in community can be given meaning in the practical context of the classroom. But I am not over-confident of success in showing this, because I incline to the rather pessimistic belief that no amount of explanation of the concept of "community of inquiry" can substitute for the experience of

it. This might seem to vitiate all comment "from the inside" as well as "from the outside"; but there is a side of me that has faith in the power of words and, more vitally, of our imaginations to enable a transcending of ourselves. That, indeed, is how things happen in a community of inquiry and, as I indicated earlier, this essay is a primitive attempt to translate the spirit, if not the practice, of such community inquiry into a form more or less fitting the traditional academic concept of community inquiry (of which the publication of papers by members of the "scientific community" seems to be the paradigm).

Let me evoke, then, another picture, of an "educated" Englishman—the cultural context is significant—conditioned to believe that thinking generally comes first, and expression follows it. (Lipman's own way of putting this is to wonder how often reflection generates dialogue). This person, then, is gradually persuaded, through inquiring in community, that as often as not it is the other way round: that dialogue generates reflection. Granted, he had many recollections of pleasant dialogues that followed presentation of his private reflections to his philosophy tutor; but he had never had the experience of so much philosophical reflection generated by—and interwoven in—dialogue as he found in his induction into a community of inquiry.

He was persuaded, moreover, that the process of one person after another in a group of around 20 reflecting—almost literally bouncing—ideas to each other in a common search for understanding was a process that could, in the jargon, be "internalized" in a way that promised to enrich the mental lives of children, as well as adults, if not twentyfold, then certainly by leaps and bounds.

If private reflection is something like speaking to ourselves, and if we can imagine ourselves speaking in different voices—not just those of our parents, or of our teachers, but of our friends, and particularly our *thinking* friends—then it would seem that the more we listen to others thinking, the better we might think. And this would be not only because we might have so much more (in our imaginations) to think about, but also because we might also be developing different *ways* of thinking. Insofar, that is, as a community of inquirers embodies certain critical-

thinking skills and some creative impulses and—I am especially arguing—the dispositions of virtue, a member of that community has at least some *models* for his/her own thinking.

Before looking at some of these models more closely, I should like to re-emphasize that the rather conversational approach I am taking to this inquiry is deliberate. And it is deliberate just because it *is* an inquiry. While, on the one hand, I started with a notion of how I might answer the title question—"yes"—and this has conditioned the structure of my writing to some extent, on the other hand I have been trying to open up the inquiry by imaging myself to be in conversation with my reader.

Moreover, and more importantly, I am offering this conversation, this inquiry, in a particular spirit—a spirit, that is to say, of development, rather than completion, and of collaboration rather than competition. I hereby reject the impulse to speak as if one was having the final word—an impulse that those who call themselves "experts" find hard to resist. And I particularly want to disassociate myself from a "debating" model of inquiry and intellectual progress. Almost wherever so-called debate goes on, whether in sophisticated houses of government or in the naive form of school debates, or I dare say in academic journals, it is hard for humans to get out of a certain dualistic (I might say, "duellistic") frame of mind that can all too easily block open inquiry. From this perspective, debates are well-named in having as their origin the idea of "doing battle"

There is an irony in the above paragraph, which I am happy to draw attention to, that in disassociating myself from such a model, I am taking an alternative position, for which, it might be thought, I am prepared myself to do battle. But that is precisely the model of thinking I am questioning; and I am questioning it by suggesting a more flexible model in which the emphasis is on the *communication* between thinkers. A writer may write, not with a view to persuading his readers to come "on side" and adopt a fixed and defensive position, but rather with a view to pursuing their communication where ever it might lead. Without such a desire to move on together, it seems to me that no *communication* is really going on.

But even if it could be shown that there were some communication without such



a desire, I should still incline to view no inquiry were going on. For inquiry is, at root, a seeking—a going *in*, in order to go *out*—and I want to say that such journeying presupposes an openness and a liveliness that is not always to be found in orthodox modes of argument.

Of course, I do not doubt that there can be such a thing as a lively debate, but I suggest that this is not properly measured in terms of how much the participants have spoken, nor even in terms of how forcefully they have spoken. It is not force that one should be looking for, but rather for spontaneity—or perhaps better still, for authenticity. A debate or, at any rate, an inquiry is lively, I am saying, to the extent that the debaters or inquirers are speaking freely for themselves, or, to put a particular turn on that phrase, are speaking *in order to free themselves from their current 'position.'* This is the sense in which philosophical inquiry is properly concerned with development—the development of one's own philosophy—and it also suggests why such inquiry might best be done collaboratively. By becoming free of the need felt to defend one position or another, one is positively seeking exposure to, or experience of, as many other ways of seeing things as may be possible.

I should like, in fact, to go a stage further and suggest that the liveliness of such inquiry might almost be enough to justify its being called virtuous. Certainly, inquiry that has lost its vitality is close, if not identical, to compelled activity, which could be called virtuous only to the extent that it had a bare element of choice. I hesitate to claim, at this stage, that all lively activity is virtuous; but I might put it the other way round—that all virtuous activity is lively.

Lest that seem, now, rather a trite conclusion, let me call straight back to mind that it is based on a concept of “liveliness” that has far more to do with one's *mode* of living than with the idea of being merely alive. I have invoked the more profound concept of “authenticity” to support the argument, and I should want to link it ultimately with the idea of the self-examined, self-critical and self-correcting life—perhaps, in short, the philosophical life.

Bearing this in mind, I think I might eventually conclude, in answer to my earlier question, number 5, that not only is all virtuous activity lively (in the sense of philosophical) but maybe all philoso-

phical activity (in this sense of lively) is virtuous. That would not, of course, be exclusive in the way of saying that only philosophers could be virtuous, but rather inclusive in the way of saying that all virtuous people were philosophers.

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I should like to leave this train of thought for a while and take a different tack. Let me observe that the title question, “Is philosophical inquiry virtuous?” is a curious one. Curious, no doubt, in the sense of being out-of-the-ordinary—what we might call the passive sense of being curious. Curious, also, in the sense that most genuine questions are curious, *i.e.*, inquisitive—the active sense. But most curious in the deep sense of curious—from the Latin *curiosus*, meaning “taking pains or taking care.”

What is specially careful—or even painful—about asking whether philosophical inquiry is virtuous? One answer might be that it takes an effort to ask any question, and making some effort is a mark of some care. But it is the special nature of the care involved in asking this question that I should want to establish. I suggest, then, that at some point or points in his or her life every human has a *need* to ask such questions; and underlying that need, I would argue, is the need for *understanding*, or the need to make *sense* of things. Genuinely to ask the title question is to be expressing that particular need; and to do this is to demonstrate an unusual care.

It is a care, granted, that stems from one's self and could, just conceivably, be a matter between oneself and the world, without regard to other people; but even that would be care of a sort—care, that is, to establish the nature of the world and one's relationship with it. Moreover, if the care that is being demonstrated extends to trying to understand people's common language, and to understand other people *through* their language, then it has become care of an undeniable quality.

But it is not only the “why” of asking the question that betokens special care. Let us consider for a moment the “how” — the actual business of formulating such a question—and the care and effort required for that. A first requirement could be—and was—to register that the two terms, “philosophical inquiry” and “virtue” are ones which different people

in different ways and in different eras have used as touchstones in their lives. A simpler way of putting this is to say that enough people in their time have considered the two things or ideas important.

Let this be deemed a comparatively easy point to register; it has to be said, almost polemically, that in an age when much that glitters is not gold and, perhaps as a corollary, much that is gold does not glitter, it takes time and patience—not to mention good fortune—to recognize the “golden words” in people's lives.

It then requires a further effort to relate these words to each other in meaningful ways. Words and ideas tend to cluster together, so that it can be a difficult and tricky task—requiring care indeed—to select the appropriate ones for consideration and deliberate inquiry. Given the stimulus of a possible title, “The moral virtues of open inquiry”, it took me some while to come up with a question that had more meaning for me. (Its meaning was the greater, I should note, because of the appropriateness of inquiring into the virtuousness of inquiry—and especially of inquiring philosophically into the sort of inquiry we call “philosophical”).

Mark, though: this is not the neat conceit of a stereotypical philosopher theorizing about what constitutes philosophical inquiry. A neat conceit it may be, but arguing the nature of philosophical inquiry was not my main concern. The attempt by philosophers to circumscribe the activity of philosophizing, while proper in one way, is markedly unconstructive in another. What was needed was a *working* definition, and the one I chose to work with was that of inquiry undertaken to develop understanding.

That is a broad definition, to be sure, and if it is too broad for some tastes, so be it! The point, though, is that working as I do, with children as well as adults, in the practice of inquiry, it often seems merely academic to set up fences between different fields of understanding. To do so *may* make some sense for practical and administrative reasons in tertiary or even secondary education, but it has little to recommend it in the field of primary education or in the terms of liberal education. Not only do the tools of thought—the “thinking skills”—integral to

philosophy find application in any and every “other” discipline, but the very stuff of thought in many cases coalesces with philosophical matter: scientific theories, historical accounts, artistic appreciations . . . these are all grist to the philosophical mill.

I move quickly, then, to the second term of the title question, namely, “virtuous(ness)”. I do not aim for a deep or novel analysis of this, either. I am happy to start from a dictionary definition of virtue as moral excellence, to take on board the notion that moral action has to be in some sense deliberate, and to add the philosophical refinement that for an action to be designated ‘virtuous’, it must reflect some sort of disposition. What I am concerned to show is how many virtues, so conceived, may be brought to bear in classroom inquiry.

The basic virtue I claim, then, to be inherent in such inquiry is the virtue of carefulness. I have already remarked upon the care involved in the very beginning of one’s attempt to understand. Of course, a single demonstration of care does not constitute the virtue of carefulness, any more than a single display of bravery guarantees the agent to be courageous. But if one’s attempt to understand is anything like recurrent—in short, if it amounts to a disposition—that would seem to mark a degree of carefulness that might well express itself in other ways.

And surely one of the ways in which the virtue is expressed is in more careful use of language. Not all understanding—philosophers have been among the foremost to articulate this, albeit in words—comes through language. But care(fulness) in the use of language must be a virtue in any inquiry, and it is a *sine qua non* of philosophical inquiry. It seems to me more than mere coincidence that the word “care” has roots in the Old High German “chara”—a lament—and in the Doric “garus”—a voice. At times language is not merely an expression of care: it is care itself.

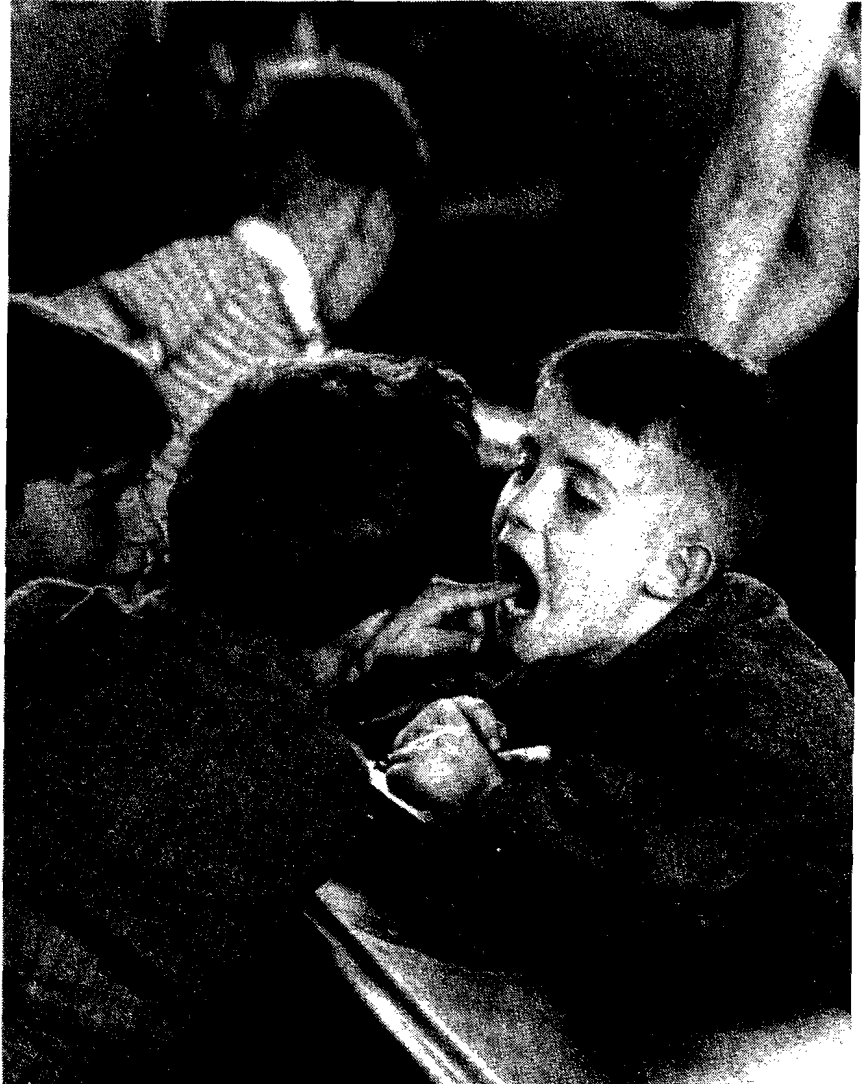
I grant that it is questionable as to whether such care in one’s use of language necessarily transfers into care for other people. Most readers will know of pedants, or just plain wordsmiths, who seem to delight more in their own verbal dexterity than in the moral authority or concern that their words might carry. But such peo-

ple would seem self-limited in their aspirations as well as their care. In most cases, care of language and care of people are natural extensions of each other.

Before proceeding to outline the relationship between care(fulness) and other, perhaps more traditional “virtues” involved in such inquiry, I should like to stress that I am not saying that philosophical inquiry is virtuous because it requires care if it is to be done well. That would imply that care was extrinsic to the business of philosophical inquiry, as it might be to the business of carpentry. (One could carve wood with no care and still be called a carpenter; and then, of course, one might carve wood with great care, to become a

good carpenter, or a craftsman, perhaps—or even a sculptor). The point is that philosophical inquiry springs from a deep care to understand the nature of the world, including the people around oneself, and that characteristically this understanding is sought through the medium of the language we share.

What, then, does philosophical inquiry involve by way of other virtues? An answer to this may be at once so obvious and so manifold, that I confine myself to an acronymic sketch. Among the virtues required seem to be: Sincerity, Open-mindedness, Patience, Humility, Imagination and Amiability. And inquiry requires these, again I stress, not simply if it is





To be done well but if it is to be done at all.

*Sincerity* would be important enough to philosophical inquiry if that were an essentially private activity: it is hard to see how an individual could steer towards any concept of truth, let alone understanding, if he were inclined to insincerity. But it is plainer still how a lack of sincerity would vitiate any collaborative philosophical inquiry. Making sense of the world and of other people is hard enough without having to make allowances for deliberate distortions by others.

Related to the need to be true to oneself and to others is the need to keep an open mind, so as to be able to receive the truth—or at least a better understanding—from others. Such *open-mindedness* might be classified, I suppose, as an intellectual virtue, but it seems to me to be virtually indistinguishable from a virtue of character that might best be denoted as “open-heartedness”. It might also be remarked that to follow an inquiry openly to whatever conclusion seems to be appropriate, or to bear it if no con-

clusion does seem appropriate, is to demonstrate another quality of character—namely courage. It is a sort of leaving behind of one's self, akin to leaving a lifelong friend.

Then, if the inquiry keeps expanding, so that one is left with the impression that one question leads to another, and so on endlessly, (as indeed the size of the universe might lead one to expect) a minimum degree of *patience*, not to say persistence, would seem essential.

I have already indicated in part one that inquiry, the search for understanding, can only get under way after an admission of ignorance and incomprehension—what I called “lostness”. Such an admission, I maintain, evidences just the sort of *humility* that Socrates marked when he said that he knew he knew nothing. It is the sort of humility that might be urged by a modern, secular, rendering of the biblical saying, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Next I consider *imagination*, and here I am thinking not merely in perceptual or cognitive terms, as when it might help me understand things better if I picture them in a certain way. Philosophical inquiry certainly does demand imagination of this sort, but it also demands a sort of emotional or affective imagination, in order to understand how people are feeling or even valuing things. I guess this is what might be called moral imagination, or plain empathy.

The last virtue I have chosen to refer to is perhaps not so much regarded as it should be. I am indebted to Ann Margaret Sharp<sup>2</sup> for drawing my attention to it through her own emphasis of the connections between friendship—the disposition towards which I am designating as *amiability*—and the principles of a community of inquiry. I quote from an unpublished paper:

If it is true that friendship affords us an opportunity to discover the world, reason with another, learn about different ways of seeing the world, and come to know the self—then perhaps Socrates was right that nothing is more important in education than the formation and cultivation of friendships.

\* \* \*

So how do these and other virtues actually come into play in philosophical inquiries? I hope that the outline below, of

three essential stages in such an inquiry, together with some student reaction to them, may give some helpful pointers. But I have to reiterate that if anyone really wants to know the virtue of philosophical inquiry, there is no substitute for the direct practice of it in a community of inquiry.

The basic physical structure of such a community, *i.e.*, the circle, which is increasingly common in primary schools but all too rare in secondary schools, is conducive to open-mindedness and imagination, and a proper forum for amiability. It is surely easier to imagine and respond to what a neighbor feels or means when you can see his face, than when you are accustomed to seeing the back of his head. The extent to which the structure, of itself, promotes friendship is perhaps less easy to argue, but it is a structure in which some of the obstacles to friendship are removed—not merely the facelessness of the teacher-centered structure, but the limited opportunity for everyone to engage equally in discussion.

The element of equality in the circle, indeed, is essential to the building of respect for the community as a whole and for the democratic principles of community discussion. For sure, there may be initial embarrassments or attempts to become the center of attention but, given a feeling of safety from the principle that everybody's contribution will be taken seriously, most children quickly relax with each other and learn to take their turn. This is the way a fifteen-year-old put it: "I enjoyed English/Philosophy very much this term, which consisted of a more civilized approach to it and more intriguing work." and another: "I have no inhibitions about what I say as, if anybody thinks it is wrong or funny or unreasonable, your statement is broken down and the good points extracted and explained."

Another feature of the community of inquiry is the reliance upon all members to provide the material for inquiry, generally in the form of questions derived from a text. But question-finding need not rely upon a text: a community of inquiry could derive its agenda from its quotidian search for understanding and meaning. Teachers in "subjects" other than philosophy could well show more regard for the puzzlement of their students, for example by having a review lesson once a week or once a fortnight, and allowing —indeed,

encouraging—the students to bring forward their own questions arising from the recent studies. If the students are not in the habit of framing such questions, then I suggest that it should become a priority to develop this habit. In the early habituation the questions might tend to be closed, or information-seeking, but a teacher/facilitator should encourage their development soon into open, meaning-seeking, questions. Many students have problems in learning individual facts because they lack an overall conceptual structure, and all teachers should share the philosophical concern to keep improving their students' conceptualizations.

This is how another fifteen-year-old puts it: "In the past, teaching was considered to be letting the children know how to do things. This was done by seeming to ask us questions, but putting the idea or answer in our head, so we had to answer in a certain way. Now *we* ask the questions and, between us and in discussion, we come to *our own* conclusion, not a predefined one which has been put into our heads." This seems a sincere enough response, but the more interesting feature of it is the sense in which the student has come to perceive the insincerity of the orthodox approach —paying lip-service to the idea of developing the children's own interests and views, but for the most part channelling their minds along predetermined ways.

After the listing of all the students' questions comes the choosing of which ones to concentrate on. The spirit and practice of "Philosophy for Children" is to do this democratically—a simple principle, but demanding skillful facilitation in practice. I do not have the time to go into this matter in any depth now, and need to rely on your having a grasp from experience or intuition of what democracy in the classroom means. What I do want to say is that a good deal of the virtue of philosophical inquiry in the classroom lies in the realization of those democratic ideals that depend upon a respect for persons—transcending judgment of individuals as more or less "able". The assumption in a community of inquiry is that *anyone* has the potential to shed some light on the matter under discussion—even if at times by accident, as when a misconception stimulates a clearer re-conception.

In the context of "misconceptions," I should like to add that another important part of the ethos of the community of inquiry has to do with the acceptability (indeed, the *encouragement*, for it takes courage) of changing one's mind in public. This is a virtue that shines all the more strongly in a society that, by example and by unpleasantness, discourages people from admitting their mistakes.

When it comes, next, to philosophical discussion of the chosen question, the most striking thing for, and about, children is how patient they are in following the twists and turns of meaning. "I like the way we go over a point a lot so that everyone understands it, and if you don't understand you can ask without being made to look stupid," reports one. And another: "Instead of diving head first into new topics, we turned our attention to more fiddly things which we thought we knew, and it turned out that no one exactly knew the solutions to the problems. Some questions remained unanswered, but I think it was still a useful approach because it taught us to respect what each other said." There is a growth of self-confidence in the first, nicely balanced by a genuine humility in the second.

Again, there is very much to the art of facilitating a philosophical discussion that I cannot touch on here. The "twists and turns" referred to above are often prompted by the right question at the right time, and to some extent the art of prompting is one that develops with experience. There are, however, two simple focuses that can be seen again and again in the way that Socrates "pursued" his questioning: one is the focus on assumptions (what is the question assuming? or even, what is the questioner really trying to get at?); and the other is on implications (what follows if we accept that proposition?). Another useful way of approaching facilitation is to think of trying to achieve a balance between the specific and the general: if the members are tending to talk in generalities, it is probably time to call for a few examples; but if they are tending to become anecdotal, then one might seek for general principles. Finally, there should be a continuing regard for the principles of reasoning: this obviously concerns the implications of particular propositions, but also has to do with the seeking of counter-examples and demand for consistency.

I should like to give one more quote before moving to my own general conclusion. "I agree with discussions as a group as they never seem to end and new ideas are always arousing (sic). I definitely agree with hearing other people's views on everything and learning to understand what others think of the situation."

I grant that this might be said of a "good" discussion and in any "subject" or classroom. But the question that I put now is: whether the goodness of any such discussion might precisely be measured in terms of how philosophically inquiring it was? I said near the start that my working notion of philosophical inquiry was the search for meaning, and it seems arguable that the best discussions are those indeed that make the most meaning—the best sense—of things.

"Pure" philosophers might still be uneasy that this could lead to more being counted as philosophy than they would like. But I have been suggesting that the time has come to open the doors a bit: that philosophical inquiry is not the special province of professional philosophers, but rather is what we are all more or less involved in when we are seeking to make sense of things. I suggested that the need to make sense of things sprang from a deep care

(somewhat in the sense of "worry") about things, and that this expressed itself through and in our use of language. Reflecting and communicating directly with other language-users in a community of inquiry seemed, then, to be a practice of care; but such practice also involved a range of other virtues, not simply to be done well, but to be done at all. In that sense alone it should be counted virtuous.

To conclude, I would take a couple of steps further. I suggest that the answer to my earlier question, whether an approach to inquiry could be virtuous and non-philosophical, is after all "no": an approach—to inquiry, or even everyday life—could not be virtuous unless it were philosophical. To the extent that virtuous behavior has to be deliberate, I would argue, it has to be philosophically reflective; and to the extent that it has to be dispositional, *i.e.*, more or less recurrent, it has to arise from the *practice* of reflection. I am still full square with Lipman in holding that the individual's disposition—his desire and capacity—to reflect and his very practice of reflection are bound up with the philosophical life of the community around him. But I recognize that again I may be defining "philosophical community" more broadly than even Philosophy for

Children proponents might wish, to include our experience of parents, friends, teachers, writers, artists, etc., reflecting philosophically.

My final step is to suggest that not only is all virtuous activity philosophical in the sense just maintained, but also that all philosophical activity is virtuous. Some would maintain you could reflect philosophically and yet viciously, or at least non-virtuously, but Socrates himself seemed to think that such reflection could not really count as philosophical. I do think it is legitimate to define vicious philosophical reflection out of existence. This would not be to render the notion of philosophical reflection and inquiry vacuous, though it might be to render the practice of it rather unusual. If the practice of such reflection and inquiry in community were less rare, the incidence of (philosophical) virtue would be correspondingly more common. The community of inquiry is a practice *in* virtue and as such, I am asserting, it is the best practice *for* virtue.

#### References

1. Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and Frederick Oscanyon, *Philosophy in the Classroom*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980.
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From a paper presented by Ref. Fr. Dr. Stan Anih, Director, Institute of Ecumenical Education, Thinkers Corner, Enugu Nigeria, at an International Seminar held at Madrid, Spain, in September 1993.

# Moral Education in a Multicultural World

Stan Anih

I feel delighted and honored to be in your midst today—not only as a participant in but also as a contributor to this International Seminar of assembly of learned men.

I personally applaud the organizers of this Seminar and the choice of paper they made for me. It is my hope that by the time this paper is finished, your opinions will most probably reach congruency with me in applauding the organizers. The title of my paper is "Moral Education in a Multicultural World."

In the first place, it is obvious that the world is made up of so many ethnic groups, multiplicity of religions, diversity of customs and external influences too overwhelming. Consequently, I have decided to tilt the title of my paper to the "Dialectics of Man's Responses to Morality."

When the individual human person is dominated by an inspirational unrest that urges him to rise above himself and his circumstances to reach for higher more worthwhile things, or when he harbors a type of constructive discontent with things as they are and strives to make them better, men normally say that such a person is guided by rules, regulations, norms, laws, commandments or precepts. Such a person then does not merely complain; he corrects: he does not lament, he leads. Therefore, we will concern ourselves with discerning the psycho-anthropological tilts of life in which we can discover the subterranean man's attitude creating within him the constructive discontent to precepts, practice and morality.

## Dialectics of Man's Response To Morality—Nigerian Case

The field of responses is a subjective sector and therefore, a domain upon which

one might hesitate to pontificate or prophesy. Human morality belonging to the field of man's response seems to be so elastic that if one had asked the question, "What is man's response to morality in Nigeria or any country in the world, say one hundred years ago, sixty years ago or twenty years ago," one might well have received different answers each time from the answers one might be given today. In fact, morality and its intrinsic sources might be the same for ages, but the responses given to them depend on so many psycho-sociological conditions influencing the community in which one lives. It is commonly said, from a religious point of view, that precepts and moral laws are eternal but this will not make us forget that human attitudes are conditioned and variegated; consequently, attitude is like a flowing stream ever constant and ever changing.

When we consider the dialectics of man's response to precepts and morality horizontally, we discover that the answers differ; (and this is not to ignore the fact that persons occupying different positions: anthropologists, judges, practicing lawyers, administrators, priests, politicians, heads of communities and traders, were and are likely to give responses different to the question according to their varying analyses of situations due to their geographical location, their race, and their politico-social attitudes).

In order to discover the inner fabrics animating the individual person in his response to moral values in the world, we should not lose sight of the fact that man

is born a striver and an engineer of progress. He constantly adjusts to the complexities of communal living and attempts to fulfil his various physical and psycholo-

gical needs at every time. He encounters a variety of motivation blocks that stem the tide of his native motivation and stagnates his creativity. Man's incarnate nature is really reflected in the way he solves problems and the way he handles his immediate ambients. This man's relatedness to his immediate world makes us realize that the dialectics of his responses to precepts and moral laws will also be very much conditioned by those forces which relate to him radically such as his lineage, language, legal culture and those external conditions which influence him extrinsically. Even if Buddha maintains that all that we are is a result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts, we cannot ignore the forces of lineage or heredity. Man's relatedness to his immediate environment constantly conditioned by time and place makes the search for a theory of man's response to morality a very complicated one. It is not easy to give a general valid theory which covers and cares for all men under differing particular historical situations and which could have universal application for today and tomorrow. The constant evolving world situation seems to negate the absolutizing method in the field of man's response to moral law. The only thing permanent in moral response is change and mutation.

Having tried in vain to find existing principles and theories which have explained the dialectics of man's responses to precepts and moral law, it is now forced on us to propose theories and principles for discerning the subterranean forces responsible for our dialectics of responses. For this purpose, we shall employ these three terms: *Lineage, Language, and Legal Culture* which need short explanations.



## A. Lineage

The word "lineage" can be seen as descendants in a line from a common progenitor; or the line of descent from an ancestor. It is used in this theory to stand for a social group comprising numerous families, clans, or generations, together with slaves, dependents, or adopted strangers. It also means in this context an endogamous social group held to be descended from a common ancestor and composed of numerous families, exogamous clans, bands or villages that occupied a specific geographic territory, and possessed discernibly politico-religious trends. We use the word "lineage" because every individual human being is a member of one particular family—blood-link and tribe. In every tribe, in every ethnic group or every family, customs, norms, and traditions are established to guide, direct and control the habits, beliefs and attitudes of the concrete individual members. For every member, obedience to the lineage is an essential condition of progressive life, while a failure of the individual to comply with the "collective-will" would be regarded as a serious act of disloyalty which would be tantamount to a punishable offense for such people. This leads to ground-norm of our laws.

We are employing the word "lineage" to include a whole tribe and even to mean the whole race or nation. In this case, it is used from its French origin—"lognage" and its Latin derivation, "linea".

In this sense we can see that the concept "lineage" is very rich and has very wide extension. It is presumed that the use of the term "lineage" is now a little bit exposed; the comprehension of which will go a good way to make the theory intelligible when we shall come to propose it.

The word "lineage" has, in recent thinking, been used in a derogatory way to identify the peoples of Asia and Africa, who in their love and appreciation of blood relationship and kinship are described as primitive, under-developed, developing or third-world. In fact, in some cases they are called tribal or lineage societies. Marshall Sahline, writing of the lineage, says:

*The tribal structure is generalized; in this lies its primitiveness. It lacks an independent economic sector or a separate religious organization, let alone a special political mechanism. In a tribe (lineage), there are not so much different*

institutions as there are different functions of the same institution, different things a lineage, for instance, may do. Holding an estate in land, the lineage appears as an economic entity; feuding, it is a political group; sacrificing to the ancestors, a ritual congregation!<sup>1</sup>

We do not intend to use the word "lineage" with any disdainful nuance, nor do we use it in reference to the so-called primitive society, because modern mentality holds that the characteristics of primitive society (or the lineage groups)—

the lack of 'advanced technology', especially the skill of writing, the absence of cities. Such societies have existed since Neolithic times and before; they continue to survive in North and South America, Africa, the Andaman Islands, Australia, and the islands of the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

We insist on using the word "lineage" primarily because it gives a better meaning of what we want to expose and in the second place because:

Recently many anthropologists have warned against the negative connotations of the term 'primitive' which seems to suggest inferiority.<sup>3</sup>

"Lineage" means a consistent and co-ordinated group of people who have worked out specific culturally impressive ways of living with one another and whose way of life is different from others but not inferior to them. If we accept this idea, we will use the word "lineage" without any devaluation.

Coming back to our search for the dialectics of man's response to morality, having made an attempt to explain the meaning of the word "lineage", let us now see how we can apply it to peoples and their responses.

A panoramic view of historical data will show that many lineages which came into close relations with each other had discovered ways of coming and living together. This means that they made shifts in their habituated attitudes, norms, laws and morality. They were able to formulate, re-adjust and live conterminously. In some instances notice that some lineages preserved their identity, while in other situations they amalgamated to produce a new prototype. No matter what results, be it a homogeneous or plural entity, the aim of every lineage is specifically to build a new lineage in which the reign of law, morality and order is the order of the day.

Every lineage strives to make a society where man can realize that he gets his full Humanness only in relation to others.

Without getting involved in historical complexities, let us have a look into the lineages which form Switzerland. The Swiss are composed of four major lineages: German, French, Italian and Roman. After constant drawn struggles, bickerings and inter-lineage feuds, they developed a cordial settlement and in the Peace of Westphalia, a new legal relation was developed which harmonized the lineages in 1640 and progressively the lineage laws and sentiments grew perfect and gave rise to the 1847 constitution creating the Helvetic Republic as we have it today.

Modern Switzerland is a federation of 25 cantons, each of which is independent. The lineage feeling in Switzerland is so great that each lineage or tribe retains its language in the cantons in which they live.

The lineage languages are all officially recognized by law; thus we have 6 percent Swiss who speak Italian, 20 % others who speak French, 72 % many of whom speak German, and a few who speak Romansch. I was informed that the official President of the Republic rotates every year.

Despite the wonderful privilege of absolute neutrality which Switzerland enjoyed during the 1915 war, the Swiss still remain true to their lineage qualities.

This makes us think that basic lineage qualities remain with the individual no matter what changes technology might bring.

Let us take up another well-known people in Europe: the lineages that make the British Isles. In this case we have the Angles, Picts, Scots, Celts and Irish lineages.

When these different lineages were compelled by circumstances to unite in building up the "Union Jack," we see that the United Kingdom is always showing signs of a "disunited Kingdom". The constant Irish liberation group warring in Northern Ireland, the daily talk about the Scots and Welsh brandishing their traditional values show that the lineage elements among them have neither been suppressed nor satisfied.

As we can read from the *Newsweek* magazine, the problem of "Rising of the clans" is still there; thus,

The commons erupted in an enthusiastic roar of Hear! Hear! For Eng-



lish M.Ps, Labor and Tory alike, have suddenly realized that the eleven Scottish and three Welsh Nationalists in their midst are the opening wedge of a movement that could result in the break up of the United Kingdom. For Britain, that would be the most profound constitutional change since England and Scotland were joined 268 years ago.<sup>4</sup>

The Devolution Bill, under which Scotland and Wales were not granted self government, is an attempt to deal with the problem created by lineage forces.

Despite the existence of the "Union Jack," many Scots are prepared to back up their lineage belief by voting for SNP<sup>5</sup> in the next election. And should the SNP win a majority of the Scottish seats, it could conceivably withdraw its members from Westminster and set up its own government in Edinburgh, as Sinn Fein, the Irish nationalist movement, did in 1918<sup>6</sup>

These incidents show us that lineage forces are among the strongest and most permanent undercurrent director of man's responses, be it before the law or religion.

In this search for the example of a force of lineage in man as regards his relation to organized social life, let us look into the effect of lineage forces in America.

Ethnography shows that America is a melting pot of lineages. Descendants of Dutch and British lineages landed there in the early part of the seventeenth century to escape religious persecution, then came numerous Nordics, Alpines and Mediterraneans. Africans, including the Igbos, found themselves there unwillingly. American Indians seem to have had a full command of the place before many other lineages and these people carried with them their quasi-inert lineage sentiments as they went, and till the present day we see the influence of this conglomeration of the lineages. The American Peoples Encyclopedia indicates that the personal interests which brought people into America is varied. Thus we read:

The extensive lands and resources of the Americans have attracted many people—principally Europeans. Initially the migration was chiefly southern Europeans to South and Central America and Northern Europeans to North America excluding Mexico. Twentieth-century immigration to North America includes many Eastern and Southern Europeans as well. Migra-

tion to South America and Central America has been based primarily upon the needs of Agriculture.<sup>7</sup>

The multi-lineage nation called the United States of America is a result of man's response to law and morality or organized living. These different lineages coming from Asia, Africa and Europe united and gave a common response to the law of self-determination. This led to the War of Independence, 1776. The lineage-oriented mentality of the people led them to have 50 states, each with its own constitution, deriving its powers, not from Congress, but from the lineages (States) concerned. Even if American Federation is indivisible, indissoluble, and perpetual, we still see that the U.S.A. have preserved their lineage mentalities, in that each State is nearly homogeneous. From these few examples we can see that the lineage force is almost as strong as inherited traits in man and as such should be reckoned with when thinking of the infrastructural forces propelling man's attitude to law, religion and morality.

## B. Language

The next word in our search is "language". We shall now try to investigate the density of the force of language in man so as to discover its influence on man's reaction to societal norms.

Kierkegaard tells us that:

All of human life could be well conceived of as a great discourse in which different people come to represent the different parts of speech (this might also be applicable to nations in relations to each other). How many people are merely adjectives, interjections, conjunctions, adverbs, etc. How many are copulas? People in relation to each other are like the irregular verbs in various languages—almost all the verbs are irregular.<sup>8</sup>

A study of the mental development of a child shows that:

Young children with limited language ability find it very difficult to learn to respond to the relative sizes of the objects.<sup>9</sup>

Language has such input in the development and maturing human beings that psychologists agree that it would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of language in a child's development; this is because by language the human person is able to assimilate the conceptual values of

his culture. As the human person grows, he acquires the

Concepts pertaining to his physical environment, inanimate objects, home family, and neighborhood . . . babies learn to speak the language they hear others around them speaking. A child cannot acquire a label or a concept of something that is not part of the culture in which he grows up. If Wigwags or Igloos are unknown in his culture, he cannot form concepts of these things.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, it is believed that as a child's language becomes more complex, new cognitive processes appear and intellectual skills increase.

Psycholinguists offer impressive arguments that biological, maturational processes also loom large in language development.<sup>11</sup>

From this psycho-linguistic approach to man we can see that the implanting of most of man's cultural values, his mode of thinking and consequently his mode of responses stem from strong modification acquired by way of language.

We shall now look into language more philosophically to see the part it plays in building personality.

Battista Mondin tells us that language reveals the complexity of human nature and demonstrates more forcefully the fact that man is ontologically an inter-relatedness and an inter-dependence. Through human language man reveals the complexity of his deportment and communicates his compartment to other beings. In essence the total life of a human being is a prolongation of both verbal and non-verbal communications. Gestalt therapy and transactional analysis present man's life as a "linguaggio" or language.

It is human language which differentiates man from brute animals and exposes man's intellectual superiority over other created things in the world, and makes available to man a chance of living a perfect organized interpersonal life in society. Language shows that man can transform sensible realities into spiritual concepts which he could at will reproduce in words or letters.<sup>12</sup> Man becomes the being who speaks (Homo Loquens).

In fact in our time some philosophers are beginning to affirm that philosophic problems are no more than linguistic interaction. Language is one of the most basic ways by virtue of which we can actual-

ize our passage from the concrete sensible world into the world of vision and representation with which we establish relations by communication. The Bible tells us that the first pan-humanic feud came with the failure in language during the attempted construction of the Tower of Babel:

So they are all a single people with a single language . . . come let us go down and confuse their language on the spot so that they can no longer understand one another . . . and they stopped building the town. (Genesis 11:6-8).

Whenever there is language failure, all normal relation, all laws, all religions and morality, all customs are at a loss. The aim of every generation is to transmit to future generations the accumulated knowledge of the lineage. It is by means of the language (oral or written) that lineage wisdom is preserved and made available to posterity. Language implies a transcendental condition. There must exist a man who speaks, something or some value to speak about, and some one interlocutorial subject one hears and responds.

To show the importance of language in man's life and the consequent influence it has on his reaction to law, Heidegger's proposition might be at this moment very apt. He maintains that language having an ontological foundation, is the relation of relations:

The fundamental relationship, the relations of all relations, a type of divine supreme law, the human word is the relationship which incorporates the human and the spiritual, the tangible and intangible in no other than the human language.<sup>13</sup>

To close this section on the import of language let us conclude with Battista Mondin that:

Effective speaking, human language is of capital importance in all functional inter-subjectivity reaction. This importance results from the essential role of language in verbal or non-verbal communications. Whenever language is in use, there is a very personal, emotive and subjective element which can only be communicated to the other person by means of language.<sup>14</sup>

By the use of language people make us see things the way we never had before:

An adult's language forces the child to some degree, to consider the world from a new perspective.<sup>15</sup>

We do not intend to say that language imposes on people all the culturally accepted values. Our point is that language is so forceful that the type of language someone speaks has immediate effect on the type of relations he has and thus on the type of his attitude to law which governs acceptable relations.

### C. Legal Culture

The field of legal culture is too vast. The word "culture" is like the word "life" and as such too extensive for one comprehension here. All we need to say is that man makes culture and culture makes man. To live in this world means to participate in one form of culture or other. The world in this context is not just a prosaic storehouse containing the physical energy used for the execution of technical blueprints; the world here means the historic situation which man encounters, experiences, perceives, understands, humanizes, cultivates, civilizes and celebrates—in short, a world of meaning in which man defines himself. A man who is free of all cultural influences is inconceivable in a normal society since the mainstream of man's history is a series of constant self-adjustments and accommodation to the communal ground-norms of the society. This explains why the American Negroes do not behave like the black Africans, but like whites in America.

Legal culture for us is, then, that indefinite series of yesterday's endeavor which weighs on the man of today in order to influence the direction of his tomorrow. This sounds like absolute determinism, but it is not what we mean. The point being made here is that there is a great amount of input which the specific cultural values of a people make on the individual human person, to the extent that his day-to-day responses are spontaneously modulated or tilted to react more or less in a certain way. The factor of legal culture is so linked with the behavior and responses of a person that one can safely say personality cannot be ripped out of its cultural setting, except by a type of surgery that will kill the patient. Legal culture provides, ready-made, pre-tested solutions to man's problems.

Culture offers man a stored-up solution, not always accurate but at least available; it has answers (sometimes merely rough and ready) to every question that can be

asked. It is a pre-arranged design for man for living out of his life experience. A child could hardly be expected to invent a language or a scheme of medical treatments; he could not evolve a science, an ethic, or an embracing religion. He must rely at first on the experience of his race or his immediate community. This inner force on which most of us depend for our dialectics of responses is what we call legal culture.

With the help of critical reasoning, men have been able to move from communal legal culture to specific legal codes and constitutional laws promulgated for communal progress. These legal cultures developed through the ages have now come to be regarded as the quintessence of human intellectual formulation since law is commonly taken to be the heart of organized society.

Even if the particular legal culture of a people could be subjective, parochial or participatory in nature that does not prevent legal culture from being the dehydrated climax of the people's intellectual reflection and thus an irreversible determinant of the people's reaction to law, religion and morality in their daily living.

We shall now look into the complex construct which is aimed at bringing to light the fact that lineage, language and law are responsible for the dialectics of man's response to law and morality in society.

### The Dialectics of Responses

Having tried to expose the inner content of the terms of our proposition we have tried also to show that the terms lineage, language and law can be discovered and applied to the peoples of the British Isles, Switzerland, U.S.A. and Nigeria.

Anthropologists and psychologists show us that these values of lineage, language and law are universal phenomena. The conventions of different societies may seem to obscure the relevant values of these terminologies—lineage, language, law and morality—but such obscurity will not prevent their pan-humanic application. The problem of ethnic, linguistic and cultural values will always exist but that is not why we should be deterred from tapping their values for the construction of our *proposition*.

From an anthropological perspective we see that lineage, language, law and morality are involved in the way every human community communicates with

each other by speaking a common language, and seeking a permanent and particular environment through the means of the observance of certain laws and morality.

It is an agreed fact that human beings with specific morphological characteristics can intermingle to produce, increase and stimulate a lineage. We also know that language can be taught and the resultant effect can be termed specific language; finally we know that law can be developed as a social tool to enable a community (lineage) which has a language to settle permanently on a specifically determined land.

In the face of these simple facts we can say that lineage, language, law, religion and morality constitute the essential anthropological elements which make the individual say what he says, think how he thinks, live where he lives or in short, make him develop his responses, be it to law or to love.

If a people's lineage, language, law, religion and morality remain isolated, the people would confine themselves to the primary stage of development and thus they would remain a homogeneous people. If the lineage, language, law, religion and morality come in contact with other people's lineage, language, law, religion and morality, then we witness the well-known socio-psychological disequilibrium in respect of lineage interaction, language clash and conflicts of laws. Most of the present-day racial-legal linguistic conflicts come from the fact that people have not taken great pain to think of the profound effect of lineage, language, and law on the community and on the individual man. At times the origins of religious wars in tribal communities do seem to stem from the factor of lineage, language and law.

To demonstrate the working of this proposition, let us take the case of lineage and show how its interaction can be proved as being very much responsible for the response each individual in the community gives to law.

#### FIRST MOVEMENT:

##### Mathematical Formulation of Actual Dialectics of Responses Resulting From Lineage

Human persons who share the same lineage and speak the same language and have imbued a common law are said to be homogeneous. This means that they have

nearly the same type of reaction to the exigencies of ordered life. Their reaction to law will be more or less the same. Let us then, represent it with this sign:  $(L1 + L2 + L3 = \text{Homogeneous Response})$ .

We see an example from the English people. The English people have common lineage (L1), as all of them belong to the caucasoid lineage; the English people have a common language (L2), as all of them speak English; and all English people have a common legal culture (L3) since all of them have Anglo-Saxon legal culture.

History shows that they are homogeneous among themselves, they assimilate among themselves but they cannot easily be assimilated into others. An Englishman with his three Ls cannot easily be assimilated into Italian 3Ls.

The responses an Englishman will give to law, because of the infrastructural influence of his lineage, language and law, will be different from the responses an Italian will give to law arising from his 3Ls.

In Nigeria, the case also seems to work. The Igbos, the Yoruba, Edo, Efik, Tiv, Idoma, etc. each have their own three Ls; (lineage, language and law). Each has a Negroid lineage, and specific law. Each forms a homogeneous group and as such has a specific response to law.

Most of us are aware of what happened during the Nigerian Civil War. The Igbos being true to the law of responses, pulled together due to the ligaments of lineage, language and legal culture to assert their homogeneity. They gave a common response which meant war for three bloody years.

Any people who happen to mobilize the three-dimensional forces of lineage, language and law stand a good chance of building a stable society.

Homogeneous societies are normally stable and they respond together when there is an external interference. They find it easy to move into all parts of the country as the Igbos do today.

In any society where any of the three Ls is lacking, there is bound to exist conflicts, discord and socio-religious disequilibrium. In such a case, individual human persons within that society are bound to have a maladjusted response to law and order.

#### SECOND MOVEMENT

A people who belong to the same

lineage (L1), speak a common language (L2), but have imbued a different legal culture, tend to protect tenaciously their homogeneity, and therefore, are not easily assimilable with other people of another community formula, for instance,  $(L1 + L2 - L3)$ . The lack of L3 creates tension in the society and the response is tension-oriented. They hold strongly to what remains of their infrastructural force and thus in their innermost lives there is a certain amount of suspicious tendency toward any external agent. Their response to innovation is tempered by inner suspicion.

For our example, let us first of all take the French. The French belong to the caucasoid lineage, they speak French as their language but they have acquired a different legal culture—Gallic. Among themselves, they can very easily assimilate, but among other people they always create an obex.

The case of Archbishop Lefebvre seems to me a good example of such responses to law. The Archbishop is from France and the Gallic cultural differences which as a type of built-in response could be traced as the origin of his tension in the face of law.

In the Nigerian situation, we also have a good example of this type of infrastructural imbalance in the three Ls. The Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri (Kano) people individually are from the Negroid lineage, speak a common language but all have acquired the Arabic legal culture in exchange for their own indigenous legal culture. Among themselves they agree, but among others, they do not easily assimilate. They are only homogeneous in a partial way. They do not find it easy to mingle with other people.

Even today, Hausa people always live together in any city where they go. The people who lack any of these basic undercurrent forces resent any type of imposition. Any law which is not coming from their milieu is seen as a danger to their security. This is understandable because, a one-eyed man is indebted to blindness. It is interesting to note that the Hausa people who come to Igboland always keep together so as to preserve what remains of their infrastructural forces. Till today, we have in Enugu a section called 'Ogbe Hausa' (Hausa quarters). I think that these examples show enough of the basic psychical maladjustment in relation to law which a lack of one of the three Ls can bring.

### THIRD MOVEMENT

This is a case where a group of people have the same lineage, speak a different language and have been imbued with a different legal culture.

The only thing they have in common is the lineage. Historical events have made them speak different languages, and imbued a different legal culture.

They can easily assimilate among themselves but they find it extremely difficult to agree with other people.

Our example here is Israel. The Jews of the world were from the common Caucasoid lineage, they speak different languages, and have been imbued with divergent legal cultures. The Jews can agree among themselves, but find it extremely difficult to assimilate with other people. They have a very limited line of life response. The only factor uniting them is their lineage and they guard against any interference from external sources. This can explain the die-hard mentality the Jews present in international relations. Their infrastructural basis of response is in great tension, being calmed only by the fact of lineage.

Psychologically they see themselves in danger of drift knowing that their only factor of homogeneity is their race. No wonder their attitude to society is quite different from both East and West Europe. To put their responses in the formula we have ( $L1 - L2 + L3$ ) (common lineage, different language and different law and morality). In all we have the three formulae below:

$$L1 + L2 + L3 = \text{Good Response}$$

$$L1 + L2 - L3 = \text{Fair Response}$$

$$L1 - L2 - L3 = \text{Poor Response}$$

It is also true that:

$$-L1 + L2 - L3 = \text{Fair Response}$$

$$-L1 - L2 - L3 = \text{Poor Response}$$

The lineage, language and law forces have been to some extent exposed now. What remains is to give a resume of the data gained from the exposition.

The first point is that in Nigeria, like in any other nation, the situation where the three operant forces exist will give rise to a quasi-homogeneous response to facts and events. In Igboland for example, nearly all the people said a welcome YES to Christianity while the Hausa still seem to look at Christianity with suspicion.

During the Nigerian Civil War, all Igbos were in it together and came out of it

together. The communitarian force is very alive in this type of community where the three forces are at work. In other words, the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity increases or decreases the intensity pro or con the laws and morality found in that society. In effect, inter-lineage forces, inter-linguistic influences and inter-legal affinities account in a big way for the specific response a community or an individual gives to law and morality. This infrastructural interaction is what we mean by the dialectics of man's response to law and morality. As for individuals in their response to law and morality, we can say without hesitation that they follow the same tilt.

A man's inherent lineage forces, coupled with his linguistic interaction and helped by the type of legal culture he has, direct and condition his responses to law and morality. To be able to discover a man's responses to law and morality we have to find out his three L's.

Therefore, in order to produce a disciplined society, the law-makers and the law-breakers should pay attention to the lineage, language and legal culture of the people, while constructing the legal or the moral code of the community.

### CONCLUSION

In order to think seriously on how to respond to the problem of a multi-cultural world morally, we must convince ourselves of the great consequences of tyrannical and absolutizing values propagated by the three Great Prophetic Religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. While on the one hand these great religions have helped to create lofty values that transformed a great part of the whole world, we cannot forget the two inevitable consequences of possible dehumanization and 'thingification' of human beings by some moral codes. Such moral values become inherent dictators and totalitarian forces and thus the world community has turned into units of statistics, divergent functional forums of means to an end.

A morality which does not take into account the divergency of languages, lineages and legal culture definitely produces human beings who inexorably become faceless, unanimous mass men who seek refuge mostly in hypnotism and hysteria, instead of religious movement. A morality which has no fallibilistic flexibility arising from the divergence of lineage, language

and legal culture will only end up producing mediocrity, non-commitment, non-ecumenical and faceless individuals who fear responsibility even for their own actions. This is where the idea of Philosophy for Children, strongly advocated by Professors Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp of New Jersey, comes into play in the moral training and formulation of our community.

A morality which is predicated on higher order thinking will definitely be sensitive to multiple criteria, be self-correcting and must of necessity be self-transcending. Higher Order Thinking as contained in Philosophy for Children or Education with Thinking will help the moral person develop a critical and creative spirit which can only arise from an attitude of dialogue, an attitude of give and take, an attitude of live and let live. This is the morality that will help the divergent human values to encounter one another, enrich one another and help every value to come to a transcendental level where man will be doing good because it is good to do good and being good because it is good to be good.

This ecumenical attitude of dialogic life enables all the divergent contradictory and opposing forces to become meaningful moral values in a market of dialogue where the other side of the coin is always examined.

Consequently, Africans will listen to European moral values while retaining their autochthonosity and identity, and Europeans will listen to African moral values sympathetically without devaluing their own code of morality. It is in this attitude of ecumenical dialogue that a world-moral consciousness will develop and the flexibility of morality will not end up in falsification of values, while the simplicity of moral values will not become a bank of simpleton's ideas. I am convinced that where dialogue is allowed in discussing moral and religious values, the absolutizing fanatical situation both in politics and religion will be soft-pedalled and create a world where morality is no longer a harsh reality found in the code but a living experience capable of ennobling and mobilizing the human family into a dynamic and progressive amalgam that can make the earth a better place.

□



#### NOTES

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13. Heidegger, Ivi, 157 in B. Mondin, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
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# *Pixie Problems: a Methodology Check*

Wendy Turgeon

Doing philosophy with children (or anyone, for that matter) is never a straight linear ascent into the realms of wisdom. I have found that my class of fourth-graders and I often struggle to reach some level of philosophic understanding only to find ourselves at the beginning again. I began doing philosophy with this class of fourth-graders in the fall of the year at the invitation of their teacher. My own daughter had been a student of hers the year before and I had introduced that class to philosophy towards the end of the year. I was pleased that she had invited me back to work with her new class.

As the year progresses, I find that meeting once a week is one of the main problems that we encounter. It is simply not enough time to really build on the discussions and ensuing activities. The teacher herself has not expressed an interest in pursuing philosophy in my absence so the children and I are in this alone! Nevertheless we have developed a rapport and they appear to enjoy my visits. The class as a whole participates enthusiastically and I look forward to our discussions. However, I would like to share some of the methodological problems that we have encountered as we proceed through *Pixie* in the hopes that others, having lived through similar difficulties, might perhaps be able to share some solutions.

To serve as an example of two critical methodological pitfalls let us consider the discussion which arose concerning whether anything was really right or wrong (*Pixie*, Chapter Two, pp. 12-13). In response to this question a girl gave the example of "wasting food" as being definitely wrong. As was common in

other discussions we found ourselves enmeshed in the following dilemmas:

**1. The ornate example**—several of the children excel at developing elaborate "what if" cases for our consideration. The examples are detailed and fully worked out as the child elaborates upon them. The danger lies in two directions. At first, the example takes over the force of the discussion and we become mired down in factual checks on the accuracy or possible accuracy of the situation cited. The entire focus becomes limited to the example itself and the call for counterexamples. In the discussion on the morality of wasting food Allegra developed a long story about starving people on the streets of New York and whether that had anything to do with eating dinner when you had already filled up on a birthday party. This story brought forth another tale which questioned whether one should have to eat a food that one hates, like broccoli. But some people like broccoli, a child protests. The debate swiftly veers over to whether broccoli is good or not and somehow ends up with a debate on the relative practicality of delivering unwanted dinners to the homeless, particularly leftover broccoli! What happened to the philosophical question? As a consequence of this diversion a majority of the class got lost in the long examples and various children have now turned their attentions to other unrelated matters. Thus, not only have we lost the focus of the question in its philosophic perspective, we have also lost the attention of many of the children.

**2. The dominant voice**—some children really enjoy discussing whatever is presented. They raise their hands enthusiastically and often cannot contain themselves and speak out of turn. In the

discussion on wasting food three to four children debated actively as outlined above. This passionate interest is indeed heartening but the danger lies in not recognizing the quieter student who only wishes to comment occasionally. An added danger lies in the tendency of children to become impatient with the eager speaker and thereby losing that sense of community so critical for a successful philosophic discussion. The quandary faced by the facilitator is whether to curb the involvement of the active members so as to promote others' speaking or to continue to encourage those who truly wish to participate at the risk of affirming the dominant voices and thereby limiting the community.

A third but more topical issue was a growing dissatisfaction with the activity of discussion itself. Why did we have to talk about *Pixie*; couldn't we just read? When we returned after the holiday break in December I decided to tackle these problems with the help of the children.

They eagerly entered into this meta-discussion on purpose and method. Firstly, we talked about what we were doing. We were not simply reading a story to reach the end. *Pixie* was to encourage our thinking about all the sorts of topics that came to mind as we read it. Charles pointed out that we were doing philosophy which meant to think about things. He went on to claim that questioning was important and was OK to do. Jeanine was uncertain: couldn't you ask too many questions? No, replied Tiffany, not if they were important to you. "But weren't questions annoying at times?" someone else volunteered. Although everyone seemed to be aware that doing philosophy with a story was a different type of encounter

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with literature than simply reading it for comprehension and/or enjoyment, this issue continues to be problematical. "We don't want to talk about *Pixie*! Let's just keep reading!" Jeanine will exclaim each session. Perhaps the solution to this problem might lie in a more frequent incorporation of philosophy into their classroom so as to nurture an alternative model of reading and thinking.

The act of reading for reflection appears foreign to students today. While reading is touted as the absolutely vital key to becoming an educated person, the *reason* why one reads is rarely addressed. Most children seem content with reading as a quantitative project: covering X number of pages in Y time. Indeed many a classroom and home encourages that perspective with charts and rewards for number of pages or books read.

Another factor is that all reading programs stress content comprehension. This promotes the quick reading of a text so as to find out "what happens at the end" (Wasn't that the main reason for the popularity of *Cliff Notes*? You could cut to the chase and avoid the "fluff"). That in itself is not wrong but its overemphasis leads to a lack of reflective depth. Reading for sheer enjoyment and entertainment is wonderful but let us not ignore the challenge to think about what we have read and our need to wrestle with the ideas expressed therein.

While the movement of Whole Language is attempting to address some of these concerns, these patterns die hard. Both teachers and students are reluctant to give up the Iditerod Model: cover those pages as quickly as you can and

move on to the next one! No wonder the children are having difficulty leisurely reading *Pixie* and discussing ideas along the way!

With respect to the methodological problems listed above the children themselves crafted a list of rules:

1. Everyone who wishes to speak should be allowed to do so.
2. If a new person raises his hand then they should be allowed to speak before someone who has already commented upon the topic.
3. If the topic changes and your comment is no longer relevant, write your question or comment down in your "philosophy notebook" and bring it up at a later time.
4. If you agree with another speaker you can simply say "I agree with---." Note: it is interesting to mark how disappointed children are when someone else says their idea first. This might be indicative of the intense spirit of competition in the classroom where you are not encouraged to share answers with your classmates but keep them to yourself. The child seems to feel that his or her idea has been stolen by the other. (Here one finds the prototype of the Graduate School Competition model). This is an extremely difficult feeling to address and yet it is at the very heart of the project of developing a community of inquiry.
5. At the end of the session if you have a comment that differs from those made by others and you wish to share it, write your name on the board and we will start off with your comment at the beginning of the next class.

Due to a period of bad weather, we have not been able to meet to attempt to implement our rules. Since we belong to the larger community of the Philosophy for Children movement, I would like to invite our colleagues to comment upon our problems. How did you handle similar difficulties? If you and your children have some suggestions for us, we would welcome them. Please write to:

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# Grade-School Philosophy: The Role of the Text

**Mohamed Kamara**

Children, it is generally maintained, have an inexhaustible capacity for wonder. Wondering and philosophy, Aristotle states in Book I of *Metaphysics*, are intimately connected. This makes children and philosophy natural allies. Those who advocate for the infusion of philosophy into grade-school curricula have based their argument partly on this natural alliance (Lipman & Sharp, Frederick Oscanyan, Gareth Matthews, John Wilson, etc.). White joins this increasing number of philosophers and educators who have seen the value of philosophy and are advocating for its inclusion into elementary schools. But while White recognizes philosophy's value to the cognitive development of the grade schooler, his method of introducing the discipline to youngsters is radically different from the others. His experiment with primary sources represents what seems to be a hitherto unexplored area in the attempt to teach philosophy to children.

Educators who concern themselves with reform in education have disagreed not so much on what they want education to achieve, but on what methods to employ to get the desired end. Much of the controversy may be traced to John Dewey when he deplored the educational system of his day. Dewey had repeatedly argued that the educational system of his day was appallingly inadequate to sustain a democracy. Obviously, Dewey assumed that the manner in which the citizenry of a democracy handled their rights and responsibilities was a direct reflection of the form of education they had. Reform education and the society at large will reform itself, Dewey urged. Education, Dewey maintained, should focus on and enhance the decision-making power of the individual. Decision-making is a

purely cognitive activity, so strengthening students' thinking became for Dewey (as for most of his followers) the over-riding objective of education; every other aim was ancillary. For Dewey, the model for thinking that education should emulate is science.

Science, by employing experimentation as the sole mode of inquiry, is both objective and rational. Dewey saw in the scientific method the missing component in education. But what Dewey failed to realize, and what those of his followers who are now advocating for grade-school philosophy have seen, is that while all experimentation is inquiry, not all inquiry is experimental. Some inquiry, like philosophical inquiry, proceeds by dialogue. (Dewey therefore could never have conceived of philosophy as a major contender for place in the attempt to teach philosophy to children).

The preceding comments provide the background against which to examine the basic assumption of the Bell philosophy program as a primary-text-approach to doing philosophy with children. This brief examination will reveal what I think is the missing component in the conception of philosophy as inquiry. Finally, I will argue that what the controversy is really about is a question to which the text partially becomes an answer.

The children admitted to the Bell philosophy program are highly proficient in basic cognitive skills: they are gifted and talented, and can read and understand selected primary source materials with relative ease. This cognitive advantage, coupled with their natural capacity for wonder (the beginning of philosophy), makes them suitable candidates for immersion into a discipline that had hitherto been the exclusive reserve of the very

few. The underlying assumption is that because children are so-called "natural philosophers," providing them with an environment conducive to reasoning will lead them to engage in higher-order thinking; that children would need models of such thinking is never considered important.

Primary text philosophy has a lot to recommend it. For one thing, children grappling with the formidable terminology of philosophy are enriching their repertoire of existing concepts and concept-formation skills. Conceptually rich themes like aesthetics, epistemology, democracy, etc., can fire the imaginations of youngsters and can lead them to inquire into their nature, meaning and use. For another thing, primary texts introduce children to philosophy as it really is; there is a metaphysical assumption that primary texts expose what there is to the mind of the reader, and that children are better off being challenged by real world issues instead of a precast version of it.

These strengths notwithstanding, the argument for primary texts ignores an essential characteristic of philosophy as inquiry. This characteristic is so crucial that the goal of thinking which philosophy aims to enhance and strengthen is doomed if it is ignored. It becomes both the environment that fosters higher-order thinking, and the model that the text must reflect.

Following Dewey and other pragmatist philosophers, White acknowledges that philosophy is fundamentally inquiry. Inquiry, irrespective of its subject matter, is self-critical practice, and is both exploratory and inquisitive. Some aspects of inquiry are more experimental than others. Thus science, for example, employs experimentation as its sole method of inquiry;

philosophical inquiry, on the other hand, relies solely on dialogue. Generally, however, all inquiry is social or communal in nature because it rests on a foundation of language, number systems, values, approximations, scientific operations, all of which are unreservedly social. Thus the very notion of inquiry presupposes a community of inquirers, practitioners having similar goals and utilizing similar procedures. Peirce, who is credited with originating this phrase, restricted it to scientific inquiry. In recent years, however, this phrase has been expanded to embrace all forms of inquiry, scientific or otherwise. Thus, now, it is not uncommon to talk about converting the classroom into a community of inquiry. When proponents of primary-source philosophy identify philosophy with inquiry, this communal nature of inquiry is completely ignored.

In a philosophical community of inquiry, participants give defensible reasons for their positions, seek to uncover each other's assumptions, strive to maintain consistency, are guided by logic, and, as a cardinal rule of inquiry, follow the inquiry where it leads. The community of inquiry seeks to identify and correct weaknesses in its own procedures (Peirce); in short, its participants are engaged in self-corrective thinking, what Plato in the *Theaetetus* calls "thinking about thinking." The community of inquiry, therefore, employs standards: standards of reasoning, standards of conduct, standards of judgment. These are the standards that liberate children from being sloppy, uncritical thinkers; these are the standards that transform children into independent thinkers, persons who can think for themselves.

It seems to me that if children are to engage in higher-order thinking models of such thinking should be accessible to them. To assume that because children are natural philosophers they can engage in higher-order thinking if only a congenial environment fit for thinking is established without any consideration for models, is like saying that because human beings are born with the capacity for linguistic communication, they can do so without ever observing or hearing other people communicate in language. The necessity for models in fostering critical thinking is a critical factor in the con-

trovery between primary-text approaches and children's stories. The text that starts the reasoning process must itself be a model of the process. The community of inquiry, by providing the criteria that guide the inquiry process, becomes one kind of model. When the texts are children's stories (like in the *Philosophy for Children* stories), it is possible to portray a fictional community of inquiry. If children are to form a community of inquiry, it is crucial that they are provided with a model community of inquiry and to have them examine how it works. Children themselves could be models of the inquiry process. When the text are children's stories, it is possible to portray children forming a community of inquiry. The children in the classroom come to internalize the inquiry process as it is modeled by the fictional characters, and come to exhibit these cognitive moves in their own behavior. Children as models of the reasoning process are completely lacking in primary-text approaches.

Nothing energizes children and makes a subject come alive like stories (Kieran Egan, Jerome Bruner). This special appeal of stories gives philosophy an added advantage: when the text takes the form of children's stories, children need not contend with the truth claims of the author. Cognitive advantage is eliminated and claims are accepted solely on the strength of their supporting reasons. In this way, cultural and historical considerations are eliminated, and what we are left with are mainly sketches that lead us in the direction of a philosophy of childhood. As Jacob Lowenberg puts it, no discipline can turn to reflect upon itself without becoming the philosophy of itself (Jacob Lowenberg, *Essays on Hegel*).

The significance of the role of the text in strengthening children's reasoning emerges again from a quite different direction. To become critical thinkers, children need to have facility in a wide range of reasoning skills: from rudimentary skills like discerning similarities and differences, analogical reasoning, recognizing differences of degree and kind, to relatively complex skills like making inferences, drawing implications, ferreting out underlying assumptions, and so on. Philosophy, with its concern with establishing criteria for distinguishing better from worse reasoning, provides this

kind of facility. But the question arises, should we assume that children already possess these skills, or should these skills be emphasized and reinforced? If it is the case that they should be reinforced, in what sequence should they be taught? At what age, for instance, should logic be introduced? These concerns are at the heart of Dewey's argument that, in addition to method and a congenial environment that encourages thinking, the child-centered curriculum should utilize procedures that encourage both creativity and organization. Dewey recognized that while it is true that children are widely aware of what is going on around them, it is not true that they are able to organize and sequence their experiences so as to foster their own self-growth. When the text takes the form of children's stories, it is possible to organize these cognitive skills according to varying degrees of difficulty. The beauty of this approach is that the model of growth is exemplified by children's peers instead of by adults.

My aim in the preceding comments has been to show, not the inconceivability of primary-source philosophy as a viable contender in the attempt to teach children how to think. After all, the measure of success reported by the Bell program seems to be ample indication that the audience for this approach will likely increase in the future.

Rather, I have attempted to argue that if the reason for introducing children to philosophy is because we want to strengthen their reasoning powers, (and I have taken it for granted that it is), then the community of inquiry has to be in place. The case for the community of inquiry as I have presented it is very sketchy, but enough, I hope, to point out its immense significance as a tested didactic instrument in doing philosophy with children. Children's stories, I have argued, afford the most expedient texts in this endeavor. In the final analysis, that the success of the attempts to teach for thinking will depend largely on whether we conceive of education as merely limiting children to following the principles or solving the problems that we set for them, or whether we equip children with the criteria and standards by means of which they make reliable, independent judgments. The main thrust of this paper has been in defense of the latter position.

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# Thinking Together with the Whole Mind in the Whole Class

Ruth E. Silver

Can a focus on reasoning, conceptualization, and judgment amplify the values of community learning? The claim of this paper is that such an addition can be of considerable benefit to children.

The occasion of these ideas was an article by Bobbi Fisher in the October 1992 issue of *Teaching Pre K-8*. The article was one of three in which Ms. Fisher describes the schedule of activities in her first grade class, the organization of her room, and the ways in which she fosters development of reading by her young students. In the second article, "Using Group Time" she explains, "... ways that I use whole class group time for community building, shared reading, and student sharing" (Fisher, p. 98).

In reading her articles, one is surely impressed positively by the centrality of the concept of community—of the ways in which Ms. Fisher helps children to develop and work in a non-competitive atmosphere of mutual interest, trust, and concern. There cannot but be positive emotional benefits for the fortunate children who are learning in such an atmosphere.

I am struck also, however, as someone who has worked for some years helping teachers in the elementary school, by the lack of emphasis on the possible *intellectual* benefits of such an approach. The curriculum seems to include just what one would expect for a first grade class or, indeed, for any elementary school class: reading, writing, science, mathe-

matics, social studies, arts. There is no mention of emphasis on the ways in which children can develop more, and more complex, varied, and interesting ideas through working on them together than they could if each were thinking individually. There is no consideration of a curriculum through which children can be helped to realize such values in their thinking.

If children are given the stimulus, and the opportunity, to consider together topics that call on them to think critically and logically, to be creative in their development and amplification of ideas on such topics, the range of their thoughts is impressive. They are, furthermore, laying the foundation for better thinking in all areas of intellectual work.

For such intellectual work, however, there is need of a program that will give a focus to their thinking and will provide the continuity that helps make it a genuine, permanent part of their thinking. It may be objected that such young children are not yet ready for such intellectual work—that reading and writing and arithmetic, along with introductions to the subject areas are as much as they can handle. This is not the case, however. There are numerous areas of thought which are of interest and importance to children and in which they are enabled to test, to stretch, to develop their intellectual capacities. They can become better thinkers by thinking about appropriate issues that interest them—and they will be most successful when they tackle such

issues together.

It should be noted that Ms. Fisher talks of "whole class group time" and of "community building." Within the total program in her classroom, there is also room for small group activities: for two children to read together, for a few to work on mathematical activities or prepare a play. The kind of discussions about which I am talking here may be either whole class or small group activities. Like Ms. Fisher's groups, they tend to be informally structured. Typically, as in her various first grade activities, the whole class is involved. There may, however, be work for small groups, giving each child more opportunities to speak, making a more comfortable situation for the shy and hesitant, working at some project or game jointly. There is no reason why such discussions should adopt any particular rigid pattern or, indeed, any rigid pattern at all. Experimentation and adaptation to what the discussion seems to call for are more suited to this case.

A *philosophy* component in the elementary school curriculum, whether in small group or large, calls for consideration by children, in discussion with each other, of questions of interest to them. The assumption is that children can become better thinkers when they devote some of their attention to challenging exploration of ideas in a pattern of group discussion.

\* \* \*

It should not be thought that *philosophy* would constitute a burdensome addition

to the curriculum—yet one more subject that must be covered. If the work *thinking* is substituted for *philosophy*, it is apparent that we are not talking of some arcane subject matter. It would be difficult for anyone to argue that *thinking* has no place in the elementary school, that young people will have time enough to *think* when they get to college (if they do get there without prior thought), that those who have leisure may decide to indulge in thinking later. Thinking is what we expect children to do all the time and what we want to help them learn to do better. They think about what they write; they think about adding and subtracting; they think of who community helpers are in their neighborhoods, of how to work out numerical problems, of what can be observed in a wasp's nest (the last one of Ms. Fisher's science projects). Thinking is called for in all areas throughout school and beyond. And philosophical discussion can help children think better.

The kind of concepts suitable for elaboration, the topics for consideration, are familiar, everyday. Children may, for example, consider what it is to make a choice. They may ponder what it is to teach and to learn and who can do these things. They may compare dreaming at night with daydreaming. They may try to delineate differences and similarities among thinking activities such as wondering, imagining, remembering.

Philosophical discussions may reveal the unexpected complexity and numerous possibilities of the everyday, the commonplace. For example, I may have no difficulty in being sure that what I examine in the mirror with my eyes is *my* hair; it is attached to my head; I note its continuing growth; surely it's mine. But what do I mean by *mine*? Is it mine, does it belong to me when it lies on the barber's floor? I seem not to be responsible any longer for keeping it neat. Further, what things *do* belong to me: my name? And what if my name is changed? Or if someone else has it? What about my dreams and my thoughts; do they belong to me?

Philosophy in children's classrooms involves talking and expands the knowledge and deeper understanding of language. Although children surely have need for expanding their vocabularies,



and although the discovery of new words, of "big" words, can be exciting and fun, exploration of the simplest everyday terms can be as mysterious and thought-provoking and enlightening. What, for an instance, does *if* mean? Is the *if* in "If all the world was apple pie" the same as the *if* in "If today is Thursday, tomorrow must be Friday?" Or take the word *light*: what kinds of relations are there among phrases such as "turn on the light," and "he's light on his feet," and "she was confused but now she sees the light"?

Raising questions like these stimulates children to talk, to reason. It helps towards understanding and use of thinking skills such as giving reasons, discovering alternatives, making distinctions. Young students learn to formulate questions and they ask questions—of themselves, of each other, of their world. They are given opportunities to be productive of ideas and to be critical of ideas, their own and each other's.

Permitting such activity on the part of young children, fostering and encouraging and developing it, is a challenging task for the teacher. There is more to do than letting them talk. The person, however, who has chosen a life among young people, cannot help but enjoy and marvel at their productive, thoughtful discussions when the use of philosophy in the classroom has been mastered.

#### AFTERWORDS

1. The articles by Bobbi Fisher which appeared in *Teaching Pre K-8* were:

- a) "Starting the Year in a First Grade Classroom," Aug.-Sept. 1992.
- b) "Using Group Time," Oct. 1992.
- c) "Supporting Reading Development in a First Grade Classroom," Nov.-Dec. 1992.

This paper is a comment particularly on the second of those.

2. The group activity discussed here is not the *cooperative learning* which is given much attention these days. That is characterized as "carefully organized and structured" work in small groups "usually with four members apiece," by editors of a recent book, *Enhancing Thinking Through Cooperative Learning*. Editors: Neil Davidson and Toni Worsham, Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1992.

3. A philosophy program for children has been developed by Dr. Matthew Lipman of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair State College in New Jersey. Articles which give the rationale of the program and some explanation of it appear in the journal *Educational Leadership* for September 1984 and September 1988. Dr. Lipman's most recent book is *Thinking in Education*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1991.

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# On the Relationship Between "Philosophy for Children" and Educational Drama

Nigel Toye

This paper will explore the working relationship between two powerful pedagogical disciplines: Educational Drama and "Philosophy for Children."

Paulo Freire writes of the nature of learning:

To be an act of knowing, learning demands among teachers and students a relationship of authentic dialogue.

—Freire 1990

This "authentic dialogue" seems to be possible in both Philosophy for Children (P4C), as developed by Professors Lipman and Sharp, and Educational Drama. Both operate to change the usual teaching situation. Professor Lipman comments on the nature of this change:

To make higher-order thinking happen in the ordinary classroom, there needs to be reliance upon highly charged materials such as narrative provides and upon a highly charged pedagogy such as the community of inquiry represents. —Lipman, 1991

This could equally apply to Drama. After discovering P4C, I decided to explore whether the parallels were as striking as initial contact with the program suggested. So I started to train in the Lipman methodology including two weeks of work using the P4C program with the same children to develop my skills. During this time I began to see how Drama techniques could enhance the approach.

This work confirmed my belief that the P4C program is parallel in a number of ways to my own specialism, Educational Drama:

- Both create a community which is col-

laborative and requires an agreed contract.

- The ideas of the children are given status, they set the agenda.
- The teacher is not "all knowing." Both methods are non-didactic.
- The teacher's role is to work as a member of the group but to structure, question and challenge the thinking of the children in order to deepen their understanding. [This follows Vygotsky's ideas of the importance of the adult intervention in promoting development and learning. Matthew Lipman picks up on the Vygotskian perspective when he writes that schools should be *attempting to study such development by studying what children can do with intervention* (Lipman 1991) rather than concentrating only on testing what they can do unaided.]
- The affective and cognitive are both important.
- For learning to take place action must be slowed down and reflection take place.
- The medium of the community is fiction.
- It is through the distancing effect of focusing through fictional context that ideas can be liberated.
- The community constructs and reconstructs its knowledge and an individual's views should be modified by dialogue within the community.

I became aware that the two teaching methods are radical in the way they conceive of the relationship of the teacher and learner. They both fit the five criteria which Applebee uses to define learning:

*Ownership* resting with the learners, *appropriateness of activities, structure, collaboration* and *transfer of control* in the creation of meaning (Applebee 1990).

The two methodologies can learn a lot from each other.

Drama can help P4C improve its approach to involving the children at a feeling level and particularly children for whom reading, the basis of P4C, can be a stumbling block.

P4C can help Drama improve its awareness of its own philosophical base and ability to deepen children's thinking at the same time using material from the program as the content for Drama. P4C helps the participants train in conceptualizing, challenging and questioning their own and others' thinking. Drama teachers who are trained in using community of inquiry will make better listeners, conceptualizers, challengers and thinkers.

They share much but are also distinct. There are clearly differences between the two methods.

In Drama, the teacher and the children enter the fiction themselves which can prove both valuable and a problem when linking it to P4C.

The Drama situation has more obvious possibility for action, is more concrete and provides more exploration of the text/ideas before the reflection on those ideas takes place. Therefore, there can be more investment in the work by the children and more motivation to follow the ideas through. In order to consider the parallels and differences I will outline some examples taken from dif-

ferent contexts to show how I have used Drama techniques within Philosophy for Children.

One example of this is where children were put in role as friends of Tony in *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, who have to convince the Teacher, in role as Tony's father, that his argument that Tony is good at mathematics and therefore must become an engineer is fallacious. The scene was set up with the children in the normal P4C circle. The teacher went into role reading a newspaper, as when Tony approaches him in the book and the children seated round had to get his attention and then argue the case. I found the group of 18 children much more galvanized by having to counter Tony's father's prejudice directly rather than talking *about* it theoretically. In role, I could take an attitude, challenge the logic of their representation of the ideas and be provocative in responses. Afterwards out of role we could discuss the issues arising as a normal community and consider parallels with the original text.

The power of moving the children inside the fiction relies on what Augusto Boal calls *Metaxis*, acting in the fictional world and at the same time knowing that it is not real, thus being able to reflect on it, to think about it, to step out of the fiction and discuss the implications, consequences of actions and the concepts embodied in it. Gavin Bolton sums up the relationship:

Drama is a metaphor. Its meaning lies not in the actual context nor in the fictitious one, but in the dialectic set up between the two. —Bolton 1979

The philosophical dialogue can consider the meanings by examining what the *fictitious* context reveals about the real world. Indeed, which is more real?

If we are learning to understand viewpoints the potential for empathy is greater in Drama. If Philosophy for Children participants only read the text and do not *enter* it they cannot be as fully involved in it. As the participants help create the text of the Drama there is greater investment and the chance of greater response.

Paulo Freire indicates the particular impact that Drama can have because of its contribution of thought *and* external action:

The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon to a new action. —Freire 1990

This combination can involve the children more fully. There is dialogue both in and out of role that is capable of philosophical dimension.

To go further to examine the possible relationship between the two I need to indicate the methods of Drama and how they fit in with P4C.

In its simplest terms Drama is an active learning process where the participants agree on a fictional social situation and role playing the development of that situation. The elements of it are shown in fig. 1.

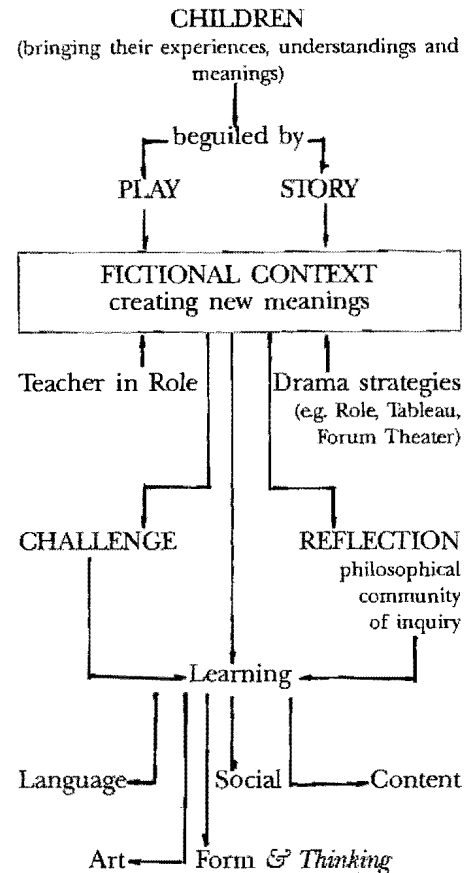
The children are faced with dilemmas, choices and the consequences of actions which, through reflection after the events, they can consider within a community of inquiry. Thus individual dramas can create the foci for philosophical dialogue. Gavin Bolton (1986) quotes Postman and Weingartner's (1971) list of concepts they consider could be most usefully learned in school as part of an alternative radical education:

- How do you want to be similar to or different from adults you know when you become an adult?
- How can you tell good guys from bad guys?
- How can good be distinguished from evil?
- Where do symbols come from?
- Where does knowledge come from?
- What do you think are some of man's most important ideas?
- How do you know when a good idea becomes a bad idea or a dead idea?
- What is progress?
- What is change?
- What's worth knowing and how do you decide?

He goes on to suggest:

In my view, it is these very 'philosophical questions' that children come face to face with in their drama. Part of the subject's status lies in its potential for putting children in touch with the very basic values of life

FIG. 1



An example of a Drama situation leading to a consideration of these values happened when one class had become a mountain community and taken in a fugitive girl with her baby (derived from Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*). Some villagers were suspicious of her and when she was asleep one suggested searching her bag. As he reached to do that, a girl said, "No, she is our guest. How can we take her in and then search her belongings? They are private to her?" This group of nine-year-olds then spent twenty minutes debating the issue of the morality of the act... and went on afterwards to look at the concepts of privacy, guest and host, etc., as a full Philosophy for Children community.

Drama can offer a number of specific techniques that will provide ways of working on the P4C materials.

Drama brings in the possibility of thinking *with the whole person*, communicating and creating with the body as well as the voice. Professor Lipman sees the importance of this but he seems to be suggesting that the Community of Inquiry cannot encompass the process:

Our bodies are not marionettes whose strings are pulled by the thoughts in our minds; making and saying and doing are all forms of conduct in which we think. Nevertheless, in the context of school, communication is largely linguistic communication.

The "doing" of drama can embrace the possibilities of a more holistic communication. In addition, the use of the non-verbal also trains the participants in the skills of translation. The following gives an example of work where Drama enables us to remove words altogether in setting the initial agenda for a community of inquiry, a creative and demanding constraint.

In one session with adults using the story, *Jesse's Question*, by Ann Margaret Sharp (Cam 1994), the technique of *tableau* was introduced. We began by learning how to use the technique, working in groups to make still images showing a family at the fair. We looked at these and considered the qualities of using *tableau*.

After reading the story I asked the groups to share their ideas of what interested them about the story, the most important ideas. Obviously this was carried out using normal discussion. As a group, they were then to embody their agreed ideas in a *tableau* as a non-verbal statement to share with the other groups. These *tableaux* were then our agenda. We looked briefly at each of the *tableaux* considering what they said about the story. Only the onlookers were allowed to interpret and speak. The originating groups were not allowed to interpret and speak. The originating groups were not allowed to explain their work orally at this stage because, whether interpretation was 'correct' or not in their terms, as long as reasons for the interpretations were given any idea was justified or could be challenged by the other onlookers.

I asked for reasons for choosing one for further discussion and investigation. Reasons were offered for three of them but there was more interest in one which became our subject.

The chosen *tableau* was interpreted further and the issues it embodied discussed, e.g., about *family* or *being on the streets*. As the talk developed the group who originated the *tableau* itself began to offer thoughts and ideas. The community was fully in operation.

There were noticeable advantages from using the *tableau* as the method of com-

municating the ideas:

1. The level of active engagement with the story in preparing the *tableau* was higher.
2. There was thus a high level of commitment to the ideas because the group had worked together to originate the *tableau*. It is certainly an advantage to spend more time engaging with the materials before choosing the agenda and starting the full community discussion.
3. The level of abstraction early on was high. In fact, the *tableaux* contained mixtures of the literal and the abstract in summarizing ideas about the story, on the one hand using characters in events from the story and on the other symbolizing attitudes or relationships in non-naturalistic ways. On other occasions that this community worked on Philosophy for Children, the members had often leaped too quickly to an abstract level of philosophical discussion, failing to anchor their discussion in the common experience of the text. So the discussion had been more about finding what the shared focus was rather than productive exploration of that focus or true inquiry into the question.
4. The skills of translation were very noticeable. In having to interpret what the image was saying the non-verbal had to be carefully attended to.
5. Very importantly, the *tableaux* constructed by the groups had embodied and symbolized key ideas from the story more effectively than a question limited by words often can—raising ambiguities and issues in a stimulating way.

Another of the key ways Drama can contribute to setting up P4C is in the leader taking on a *role*.

On an occasion when the group of children I was working with had chosen to discuss, "Why did Fran jump up on the tables?" from *Harry*, chapter 3.

After we had probed the issue and begun to focus on the behavior of the two 'bullies' who pick on Lisa and harass her, I decided to get them to look at the viewpoint of one of the two. The children, as class members who witnessed the event have the chance to *hot-seat* the bully and find out his attitude to Lisa's response. So they were very much themselves and not in a role that required special knowledge. I made the following note about the event:

The difference in attention was noticeable and they quickly made clear to the bully that he was responsible for upsetting her. I pushed them by saying I didn't see why she should dance on the desks and not get punished.

This moved us back into the more usual Community of Inquiry and we discussed what "being someone's fault" meant and the area of "being in the wrong," moving on to the unusual nature of Fran's way of dealing with the situation. The Drama helped focus this very clearly and the shift to the Community happened very naturally with me dropping out of role.

We need to look more fully at the possibilities Drama offers P4C, but my initial findings are very positive.

In conclusion, my association with P4C has made me look more at the philosophical content and quality of thinking in Drama work, for example:

- understanding that the philosophical basis of any educational program is essential and should be explicit.
- reinforcement of my ideas about the radical nature of the Drama; teachers have to accept the children's agenda and work with it, incorporating their agenda by the way they use the children's.
- I have looked more at the type of questioning both in and out of role and the possibility of using role to generate clarity of thinking, creative response and caring approaches.

The basis of the community of inquiry is fundamentally democratic and this must also underlie the Drama process. Underlying this democracy are key ideas like "self-correction," "good reasoning" and "good judgment." Drama can certainly benefit from greater awareness of these.

The community, whether in P4C mode or in Drama, creates, not homogeneity of viewpoint, but a shared multiview which creates greater understanding.

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# *Philosophy For Children: An Exploratory Study of 'Doing Philosophy' With A Grade 7 Class and First- and Third-Year Student Teachers in Zimbabwe.*

**Josephine K.P. Zesaguli**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This paper describes the exploratory study which was carried out in Zimbabwe with an elementary Grade 7 class and with the first- and third- year student teachers, at a Teacher Training College, "doing philosophy", using Lipman's PIXIE and HARRY novels, respectively, and the proposed critical inquiry methodology.*

*Secondly, the perceptions of the participants, about their experiences during these exploratory sessions, which were derived from the researcher's self-evaluation and the students' informal evaluations, are presented in the paper.*

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

*The Philosophy for Children Workshop was organized by Prof. Ann Sharp from The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (I.A.P.C.), Montclair State University, New Jersey, and Prof. Norman Atkinson, from the Department of Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe. This workshop was held at the University of Zimbabwe, in Harare, Zimbabwe, January 22-29, 1993. The participants were a representative sample of the teacher educators from all the Teacher Training Colleges in the country. I was very fortunate to have been invited to attend*

*by Prof. Atkinson, who is one of my dissertation supervisors. During this workshop 'doing philosophy with children' was explained and modelled for the participants, using the PIXIE, LISA and HARRY novels and their corresponding manuals.*

*After participating in this workshop, I decided to go and have an experience of it with real pupils. Mr. Ken Down, a lecturer in the Department of Educational Theory, at a local Teacher Training College, agreed to collaborate with me on this exercise.*

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## SESSIONS WITH THE STUDENT TEACHERS

Gaining access into the college was facilitated by Ken and we used his scheduled times with the first- and the third-year student teachers. Before each session, we would rearrange the furniture so that the students would sit in a semi-circle. However, the groups were large.

By sheer coincidence, the exercise was carried out at the point in time when their normal Theory of Education program was introducing the students to the topics on Philosophy of Education. Both Ken and I conducted two sessions with each group of the student teachers, using the HARRY novel.

Ken, being their usual lecturer, took each group first, after explaining to them what our objectives were. When one of us was leading the session, the other person would video-tape it. All the sessions were also audio-taped. But both the video and the audio recorders were switched off, in order to save the tape, while the novels were being read aloud, by the students, in turns.

## SESSION WITH THE GRADE 7 PUPILS

Access into the Elementary school was negotiated by Josie and only she conducted one session with a Grade 7 class, because of the tight timetable constraints at that school. It had a double shift, with one set of pupils having morning classes and another set having afternoon classes.

When we got to the school on the set day, we could not get the furniture in the room rearranged neither before the class, because it was being used by another class, nor after the students had assembled in the room, which was set aside for this session, because a lot of time had already been wasted in getting the class to this room. Hence, the kids sat in groups of 4 or 6 around the desks, which were arranged in their usual rows.

When the pupils had settled down, *PIXIE* novels were distributed for them to share in twos and threes. To break the ice, the purpose of the exercise was explained to the pupils. Then the pupils took their turns, around each desk and down the rows of desks, to read aloud a paragraph each of *PIXIE* Chapter 1. This was followed by a class discussion.

The discussion was brought to an end

by Josie explaining the purpose of this exercise to the class teacher, who had come in after we had started. She also praised the class for their keen participation during the discussion. At this point the class was dismissed for their lunch break.

Before leaving the school, Ken and I passed through the school office to thank the Headmaster for facilitating our exercise. We also reported to him verbally what we had felt about this initial experience of 'doing philosophy' with elementary school children of that age.

## ANALYSIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS

### 1. Quantity and Quality of Interactions:

What is strikingly obvious, glancing through the Grade 7 transcription, is the pattern of the dialogue. The interactions are heavily teacher-directed, with the teacher alternating with individual pupils, throughout the lesson. Hence, the teacher spoke 50 percent of the time. The other half of the time was shared among only 63 percent of the 40 pupils, since the remaining 37 percent of the class did not participate verbally at all, at any point during the lesson. Thus, this would not be characterized as a class discussion by Santi (1993), who concluded that

the relevance of the teacher's role is inversely proportionate to the quality of interventions he/she makes during discussion. . . to speak of class discussion it is necessary that the frequency of teacher's interventions are less than 30 percent of the total . . . With the progress of a change in the quality of the teacher's contributions, so that while the conversational disciplinary and informational intervention decrease, those of a cognitive nature increase. (p. 21)

Using her qualitative evaluation methods of analyzing philosophical discussions, it appears that philosophical content did not emerge spontaneously and the teacher's role of being a "facilitator, provoker, modulator, monitor and supporter" were not implemented effectively during the discussion with the Grade 7 pupils. The discussion failed on this score because the teacher took on a dominant role of directing the scope of the dialogues, which she had with in-

dividual pupils. The class did not resemble a community of inquiry, in which "we have circular communication between teachers and learners, against the frontal opposition." (p. 21) The latter is what prevailed.

The teacher's contribution was mostly at the level of "conversations disciplinary and informational intervention" (p. 21) and less of cognitive nature. The nature of the questions raised and the comments made by the Grade 7 pupils needed clarification of meanings of words and figurative expressions, from the text. Thus, the quality of the discussion was co-determined by the nature of questions raised by the pupils and the teacher's adopted role and teaching approach. Below are the comments and questions raised during the Grade 7 class, discussion of *PIXIE* Chapter 1.

1. "The story was exciting but there were some parts which I did not understand." (B1)
2. "How can my part belong to someone else?" (Robert)
3. "I was excited that other children of my age are clever." (G1)
4. "I was excited by the fact that the girl can describe her teacher." (B5)
5. "How can an arm fall asleep?" (Robert)
6. "I did not understand the word 'weird.'" (Robert)
7. "We all want to go to the zoo." (G5) (Esteri)
8. "What is a mystery creature? (Bill) (Martin)
9. "I was excited because some friends try to break other's secrets out . . ." (B8)
10. "If my body and I are the same then it can't belong to me . . . if different, then who am I?" (Ken)
11. "Is your mind and your body the same thing?" (Ken)
13. ". . . How do you know you have a mind when you can't see or touch it?" (Ken)

The roles played by students' questions were explained by Woolcock (1993) who wrote that:

The questions provide an opportunity to discuss matters of interest to children where the issues are open-ended and there is a genuine need to work together as a community of inquiry. Secondly, discus-

sing these questions enables the children to practice such general thinking skills as giving reasons, offering counter examples, etc. Thirdly, the questions provide the teacher with a diagnostic tool for identifying gaps in the children's thinking skills which he or she can remediate through the use of relevant exercises . . ." (p.23)

Considering the extent to which these questions and comments were discussed, they seem to have been "genuine puzzles" from the Grade 7 pupils' levels of understanding. Hence, the opportunity was potentially there for these pupils to be mentally engaged in exercising their thinking skills, had the teacher facilitated the discussion in a different manner. These thinking skills were grouped all involving "data comprehension; problem classification; ignorance recognition, and data location; inference-drawing and relevance recognition; meaning clarifications, generalizations and counter examples; and distinction-recognition." (Woolcock, 1993, pp. 23-28). In retrospect, some of the questions and comments, which pupils made, should have been probed deeper.

## 2. Logistics:

Altogether, the classes were large in all the sessions. Hence, despite the efforts which were made to try to involve everyone in the discussion, some of the people never got the chance to say something. The ratio of students to a novel was high and undesirable. Only 20 novels were available for 40+ people to share! This made it rather difficult for the students to look through the novel to identify what that which had struck them.

## 3. Time:

The reading speed was rather slow and thus a double period (one hour) was used for the Grade 7 lesson. At the pace the discussion went, one would not be able to accomplish as much in a normal 30-minute class period. Hence, the rest of the issues and manual exercises on a particular chapter would have to be spread over a number of lessons. The question is, how many, considering the already crowded school timetables?



#### 4. Language:

On the whole, the Grade 7's level of English usage was surprisingly good, since English is a second language for them. As far as language is concerned, I faced two dilemmas. In the first place, there were common grammatical errors of mixing pronouns (his/her, he/she), which were revealed as Pixie's gender was being discussed. Secondly, at two points during the discussion I felt that I was not explaining the meaning of two concepts satisfactorily enough for the Grade 7s. Hence, I resorted to the use of their mother tongue, Shona. This facilitated the Grade 7's clearer understanding of a concept like "weird"; and figurative expressions like "an arm falling asleep".

#### 5. The Students:

Most of the students in all the sessions were very attentive and interested, despite the novelty of a number of factors such as (a) using the novel story/text as the learning content; (b) the "new teacher" (Ken and I) using a different approach from what their class teacher normally uses with them (*i.e.*, applying dialogue as a method of teaching); (c) the use of strange technology (the camcorder and the cassette tape recorder); (d) the presence of a white visitor at an all black elementary school (Ken) and of Josie (at the Teacher Training College) video-taping; (e) and their class teacher sitting among them at the back of the class, "doing nothing", and occasionally contributing to the on-going discussion. In spite of these factors, the classes seemed highly motivated to learn. For an example, at the end of the discussion, the Grade 7s responded well when asked to identify what new understandings they had developed from the discussion.

#### 6. The Nature of Learning:

Palsson (1987) mentioned how students in class are learning both as a group and as individuals (p. 253). Likewise, sense-making was also being socially mediated among the class members and meanings were also being individually constructed, some strange and others accurate.

However, it could not be established where the Grade 7 pupils were in terms of their being "a community of inquiry" (Palsson, 1987, p. 288), because of my hav-

ing had only one session with them and because of my own limited facilitation of the dialogue among them. Rather than focusing on cooperative reasoning, I tended to jump in, after a student's response (comment or question), and focus on explanations, giving information, and definitions. On the other hand, the student teachers, being more mature and experienced, seemed to exhibit a higher level of "social togetherness" and "intellectual openness" (Palsson, 1987). But on this score, the third-year student teachers were better than the first-years. This may be due to the fact that the third-year student teachers have had more experiences of discussing among themselves during their previous Educational Theory courses.

#### 6. Personal Feelings About These Experiences:

I was definitely more anxious in leading the critical inquiry sessions with the Grade 7 pupils than with the student teachers. This may have been due to the fact that my teaching experiences are at secondary school and tertiary college levels and none at the primary (elementary) school level. My low expectations of the Grade 7's cognitive abilities and my lack of confidence of handling that age group did have a negative effect on how I led the Grade 7 session. Unfortunately, we did not have another opportunity of holding subsequent experiential sessions with this class. I jumped in to tease out the very first pupil's response, in order to get the discussion going, before the full agenda had been established and prioritized by the class. The agenda was later elicited further into the discussion. In contrast, with the student teachers, the agendas were drawn up-front and to a large extent determined the course of the philosophical critical inquiry. Interesting questions were raised in all these sessions.

Unfortunately, due to my research commitments, which I had put on hold for two weeks, and Ken's teaching commitments at the Teacher Training College, we failed to meet again before my return to Michigan State University. Hence, we missed the opportunity to reflect and brainstorm together over these initial and brief learning experiences which we had shared.

#### 7. Evaluations:

After their class discussions, the students were asked verbally what they felt about these sessions. Their responses were:

##### (a) First-Year Students' Evaluations After a Session Led By Josie:

When asked how they felt about these sessions the first-year student teachers responded,

1. "This sort of discussion is new to my way of thinking in the way we have been analyzing and criticizing these things/ideas." (Boy)

2. "It has improved my way of thinking and ways of trying to rectify the situations." (Boy)

3. "It has cleared my mind." (Girl)

4. "It caused me to look at things critically, trying to see the depth of that thing as applied today, in a normal classroom situation." (Girl)

5. "My vocabulary has increased. I've learnt some new words I didn't know before and their meanings have been simplified." (Boy)

6. "This discussion has helped me to realize that whenever I sit with other people sharing ideas, I should learn and try to cooperate and I should not always take my mind as if it is the end of everything, and as if I am the only one who knows, because there are others with better ideas and there's need to cooperate." (Boy)

7. "I will listen to other people's points of view . . ." (Girl)

8. "I'll take this discussion as a remedial action . . . in a class situation." (Girl)

9. "It is good because the teacher does not do all the talking. It gives everyone a chance to say what is in his/her mind." (Boy)

There was no time for eliciting some feedback from the first-years after their session with Ken.

##### (b) Third-Year Student Teachers Evaluation After a Session Led by Ken:

When the third-year students were asked what they felt about these sessions one student responded "I feel like I am mad in my head because of discussing a concept in different ways." A second said, "I feel like I've been thrown into the darkest recesses of my mind, thinking about thinking." To this Ken responded, emphasizing how this kind of dialogue "opens up your mind . . . , sharpens your

mind . . . , and it develops your thinking processes and make you critically aware of things and ideas, from having discussed them from so many angles." A third student complained about how "Some shy people sit and listen to what others are saying without themselves thinking." This triggered a heated debate as to "who benefits more, the "talkers" or the "listeners?" "Who's growing more intellectually?" "How do you ensure that everybody is contributing in a class discussion?"

The role of the teacher's questions was raised by one student who asked, "If I structure my own question and pose it to the children and when the children answer it, is that helping them think critically or have I only given them a thinking guideline . . . ?" The nature of the teacher's questions which stimulate children to think critically was then discussed.

A fifth student was anxious that "We had more questions than answers . . ." He went to explain how that is problematic with elementary children who might feel that their teacher doesn't know and become disillusioned about him as a teacher. For example, how does one give a satisfactory answer about the existence of God?

Ken then reassured the class that they should not despair and that it was necessary to engage the children in discussing issues for which there are no easy and satisfactory answers.

### (c) Third-Year Student Teachers Evaluation After a Session Led by Josie:

After a session with Josie, the third-year students were unanimous in feeling that the whole exercise had been interesting and that they would like to continue with such discussions, if time allowed. This discussion was cut short because of time. No further evaluations were done besides these brief oral feedback. On the whole the majority of the students seem to have appreciated the potential value of such philosophical discussions and that critical inquiry should be taught to all students at all levels of education.

### 8. Relevance For Science Teaching and Learning:

This dialogic and argumentative approach is applicable during science lessons, in which a constructivist

philosophy drives the practice and in which inquiry using the scientific approach is the norm. But what is prevalent in the schools is the dominance of the lecture and note-taking practices. Receptive passive learning about scientific knowledge as immutable facts is what students are experiencing during their science lessons. Few opportunities are being provided for them to "do science" like the scientific researcher does in the field. Teachers ought to provide their students with opportunities not only to acquire, integrate and apply scientific knowledge, but also to challenge their prior conceptions, which in most cases are not scientifically accurate (Driver, *et. al.*, 1985; Pines and West, 1986; & Posner, *et. al.*, 1982). The children's sense of curiosity and wonder seems to be gradually thwarted and lost as they progress in our school systems. This sense of wonder and discovery must be encouraged (Bruner, 1960).

Development of critical thinking skills needs to be emphasized and encouraged, if students are expected to question the status quo; reformulate problems; formulate hypotheses; design experiments; decide how to collect, analyze and synthesize the data; which will lead them to logical formulations of conclusions and recommendations. Hence, I agree with Atkinson (1993) when he urges for the development of critical thinking skills among the people in newly independent countries, like Zimbabwe, in which a number of developing projects are being implemented with varying levels of success.

The need to revamp science education is also being realized in developed countries such as the U.S., which is now urging for "Science for All Americans" (A.A.S., 1989). One of the best examples of the implementation of this change is the recently implemented Michigan State Board of Education's Michigan Essential Goals and Objectives for Science Education (1993). One of the goals is the development of "scientific literacy" in all its dimensions among *all* students. That is, *all* students should be able to "use scientific knowledge . . . to engage in activities . . . in real world contexts" (p. 9). During these activities, the students are also supposed to "construct scientific knowledge" . . . and "to reflect

on scientific knowledge" (p. 9). Obviously, to do these things well, the students need to have developed the inquiry and logical skills. The development of such habits of thinking and attitudes is what "Philosophy for Children" is all about.

### 9. Where To Next?

From the analysis of what happened during the three sessions which I led, I have come to the realization that I have the bad habits of repeating every student's response and of saying "Okay" a lot. What I need is guided practice to assist me, to become less directive, in my role of facilitating the students in managing and controlling their discussion.

As far as science teaching goes, I shall try to consciously encourage the students to pose questions which lead to inquiry and investigations *ie.*, the "How? Why? What will happen if . . ." type of conjectures, etc. Hopefully, this will make the students use their scientific knowledge construct new knowledge and reflect on scientific knowledge.

While considering the prospect of advancing the Philosophy for Children Program in Zimbabwe, I am still grappling with the critical issues of

- a) whether Philosophy for Children should be taught as a separate subject or be integrated into existing courses;
- b) whether a teacher specifically trained to teach Philosophy for Children should be deployed in each school, which is out of the question, as things are at the present moment. Or whether all teachers, regardless of their subject specializations, will be in-service trained for this task; and
- c) the relevance of previous teaching experiences at the different school levels.

Last but not least, as far as my personal interactions are concerned, it is not conversation as usual. I am more attentive to what my six- and seven-year-old grandchildren are saying when they talk to me or to each other. I now enjoy their incessant chatter. Very interesting ideas come out of them when I probe into their thinking. It is so refreshing. I enjoy being with them more now than before.

### CONCLUSION

On the whole, this initial, brief and exploratory experience of "doing philosophy with children" has been very

useful in making me appreciate that a lot of attention, sensitivity, skills, and enthusiasm is required, in facilitating critical thinking among students.

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# Interpretive Research and Philosophy for Children

Hreinn Pálsson

## ABSTRACT

In this paper it is argued that the stated aims of Philosophy for Children require an interpretive research<sup>1</sup> methodology. Quantitative and interpretive research is compared and contrasted but the main discussion in the paper is drawn from an interpretive study the author did in Reykjavík, Iceland (Pálsson, 1987). Most of the paper is worked from reflections and research questions that were stated in that study.

## Educational Research and Philosophy for Children

The more substantive studies on the Philosophy for Children program have been designed in such a way that working with *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (Lipman, 1974) has constituted an independent variable, while academic achievement, however measured, has been used as the dependent variable. This has led to interesting conclusions, but the investigators have not reported in detail what, except using *Harry* as a "treatment" happened in these classrooms. In other words, research has been focused on reasoning as measured by tests; such assessment rests ultimately on each individual's isolated performance, rather than on thinking and learning in a classroom community of inquiry. Researchers in other areas have been aware of this bias for many years; it has been claimed (Mehan, 1978) that the testing activities obscure the interpretive process of the test-taker; we just know that a kid comes to a wrong/right answer and we take the total score to

represent his "smartness." Mehan recommends:

that abilities [should] be seen as cohort productions, accomplished in interactions. This constitutive perspective shifts emphasis from having skills to using them. Since abilities appear as verbal and nonverbal displays, presented in a social context, it seems that interaction is the appropriate domain for their study (p. 56).

It is assumed in the Philosophy for Children program that interactions between people are later on internalized by the individual. The program is an attempt to reconstruct communal interactions to the benefit of the individual and the surrounding community. In *Philosophy in the Classroom*, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanya, state:

When children are encouraged to think philosophically, the classroom is converted into a community of inquiry. Such a community is committed to the procedures of inquiry, to responsible search techniques that presuppose an openness to evidence and to reason. It is assumed that these procedures of the community, when internalized, become the reflected habits of the individual (1980, p. 45).

Interestingly none of the major studies on Philosophy for Children have been designed to investigate the community of inquiry *per se*; detailed descriptive and scholarly studies of interactions in Philosophy for Children classrooms are lacking. The major studies have been quantitative and through them the general impact of the program and its

carry-over effects to other subjects has certainly been manifested. The problem is that quantitative research is seldom of much help to regular classroom teachers who search for particular ways to improve their practice in their particular settings.<sup>2</sup>

Erickson (1985, p. 30, ff.) makes a good point when he talks about the main difference between mainstream research and "interpretive" as "perhaps" being the different "assumptions about the nature of cause in human social relations" (p. 30). In the natural sciences cause is thought of in mechanical terms, where one thing pushes another, where the cause precedes the effect. This always happens in the same way most of the time, because physical nature is uniform enough. Mainstream quantitative educational research rests on a similar assumption about uniformity of human nature and human relations. For example, if a certain amount of "wait time" is found to be effective in 30 classrooms it is concluded that this is probably effective in all classrooms. Accordingly, all classrooms are seen to be similar in essence, there may be discrepant cases but if we study many enough we will discover the causal relations that drive classrooms; (teaching behavior is assumed to be on the causal side and student behavior or learning is assumed to be at the other end as effect.)

Whereas quantitative research in education is primarily aimed at discovering statistical relationships between causes and effects, interpretive research aims at mapping the interactive structure at the site being studied. In our everyday ac-



tivities we do not pay much attention to single interactions nor to the web of meaning that we jointly construct with other people. Interactive research is a method to make meaningful interactions explicit to people. Interpretive research can help teachers to come in touch with situational shifts and tactic rules in their classrooms. This could help them to make these more explicit and thus help students learn how things work interactionally at different times (*cf.* Bremme and Erickson, 1977). Interpretive research should appeal to teachers because it is concerned with their problems, in their language, from their perspectives but quantitative research tends to have a bias towards the researchers' problems. This last point is in line with Bolster's (1983) argument that if researchers want to affect classroom practice, their inquiries must be compatible with teachers' perspectives. Long ago we were reminded that the human world is not only one but many, sciences that want to effect change "must reach into these worlds, be mediated by them, if change is to be consonant with intention" (Hymes, 1977: 171).

Quantitative methods are traceable to positivism, in general, which has been described (Taylor, 1979) as an attempt to get beyond "our own interpretations, to get beyond subjectivity" (p.29). The goal is to reconstruct knowledge through verification such that there is no way to question it by appealing to further judgments or readings that can be checked. Taylor claims (p.31) that practitioners of "the sciences of man" have fallen into the temptation to imitate the structure or paradigm of natural sciences. The result is that we end up with sterile notions about human nature; "we cannot come to understand important dimensions of human life within the bounds set by this [positivistic] epistemological orientation" (p. 31). Taylor opts for interpretative or "hermeneutical" sciences of man which break with the traditional positivistic conception that we have of science and he states:

We have to think of man as a self-interpreting animal. He is necessarily so, for there is no such thing as the structure of meanings for him independently of his interpretation of them, for one is woven into the

other ... [the] self-interpretation ... is embedded in a stream of action (1979, pp. 37-38).

### **Educational Saga: An Interpretive Study**

Data for the study was gathered in the fall of 1986 in Reykjavik, Iceland (Pálsson, 1987). The purpose was to document the presence, absence or the genesis of communities of inquiry among twelve-year-old students in two classrooms taught by two teachers with ten years of experience in teaching. The teachers had taught the students for several consecutive years.

Students and the two teachers were observed at their regular work for the first three weeks of the school-year in early September 1986. Then each teacher was observed with her class over a period of twelve weeks in over 20 lessons on Lipman's *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*. After *Harry* had been in use for three weeks the researcher stepped in and gave a couple of model lessons with each group. In four lessons he served as a substitute teacher in philosophy, but altogether each group received 26 lessons on the subject.

In preparation for teaching and to discuss the evolution of the project the researcher had 26 forty-minute meetings with the teachers. Informal interviews were often a part of the meetings and four of them were one-on-one interviews. During observation handwritten field notes were taken and word-processed later the same day. Recordings of lessons and meetings were done in 31 ninety-minute cassettes (2x45). Recordings of the first ten lessons, with each group, were too hard to transcribe. Most other recordings were transcribed and together with field notes, the word-processed manuscript counted roughly 600 pages.

The research activities were of various nature; translation and publication of teaching materials being one area, transcribing recordings was another one, staff development was a third one which included being a teaching consultant, a coach, a model teacher and a substitute teacher. All these different roles related to my original research role as a participant observer and, as could be expected, some conflicts between the roles occurred. The basic conflict was between an advisor in teaching philosophy and a

researcher of what children and teachers do when working on philosophy.

Typically, interpretive studies are reports on particular settings, and various contexts for activities within them. For this purpose researchers join in with the daily activities of their subjects. In my case, I not only joined in, but I also brought different ideas about the context that should be in place in the classrooms. So, this was not only an observational study of a particular context for teaching philosophy to kids, but also a study of bringing such a context about. My actions, ideas and interpretations shaped the study; the objective was not just to select and express thoughts of which I am certain "but the very opposite: to fasten upon the difficulties and obscurities in which ... [I find myself] involved, and try, if not to solve or remove them, at least to understand them better" (Collingwood, 1933. Quoted from *Thinking*, 5 (4), 1985, p. 45).

The lessons were analyzed in terms of content, dialogue as a teaching method, and the teachers' perceptions. Specifically, each lesson was assessed for the level of success in the teaching of philosophy as a content (discipline), and as (dialogical) practice. Also, the teachers' expectations and perceptions about their own performance was used in the evaluation of each lesson.<sup>3</sup> These three criteria and the several questions guided the analysis of the data.

Writing up the study was a demanding task where I tried to substantiate my observations by citing typical patterns of interactions in the classrooms. Writing the study demanded reflections on my field notes and other experience from the site. I want to share some of my reflections with you and then I will move on to the answers to my research questions.

### **Week One: Mixed Reactions**

This was a week of mixed reactions. The students reacted differently to *Harry* in the very first lesson. The teachers were both disappointed and pleased. I was pretty optimistic myself. Probably I overestimated the teachers' abilities to conduct reflective inquiry, as well as the students' natural inclinations toward philosophy. However, what is needed for reflective inquiry is not really a question

ence as observers, but what was still lacking was the teachers' experience in conducting their lessons in such a way that they themselves and their students would *experience* inquiry in process.

#### **Week Five: Modeling and Experience**

Bringing philosophy to classrooms such as those studied requires negotiation to change the everyday context at the site. Negotiation which requires teachers to doubt their established habits of teaching and willingness to create new ones. Negotiation which requires students' cooperation and willingness to try new things.

Negotiation came, for example, to the front in the openings of the philosophy lessons: From the very beginning I had suggested that students should *take* turns in their reading, the teachers negotiated by *giving* shorter turns. Explanations on how a discussion agenda works, was given both in readings and verbally, but probably because of lack of modeling and philosophical sense, the teachers did not put the agenda they had on the board.

Up to the modeling period neither students nor teachers had opportunities to perceive what they could possibly benefit from doing philosophy. If the modeling had come earlier, I suspect that negotiations on procedural matters, such as creating the agenda and the reading turns, would have been easier.

#### **Week Seven: Helga's Class Takes Off**

There was forward movement in both classes in week six. In week seven the classes separated as Helga's classroom was in a rapid process of transformation into a community of inquiry. The point of departure came in the 17th lesson when Helga's class went right to work and created the agenda quite smoothly. The content of that lesson was a direct extension of the novel, but what was of most importance was how the class interacted. Helga needed for sure to stay on top of things, but the students were starting to show their acceptance of the social and intellectual responsibilities that a community of inquiry demands.

Linda's 17th lesson was mainly a whole group discussion but the topic and the attitude toward philosophy was negative. For example, the students' reluctance to create an agenda was quite explicit.



Despite my advice Linda still considered it to be a part of her job to assign reading turns and reading amounts to her students.

#### **Week Eight: Spontaneity vs. Convention**

The progress that Helga's class had made was evident in this week. More and more students were entering the discussion spontaneously and obviously enjoying it. Their comments were quite spontaneous and simultaneously the students were starting to take care of basic procedures, such as reprimanding for chat and keeping an informal but accurate record of who should speak next.

In the philosophy lessons this week, Linda had to be absent from her class-

room. I acted as a substitute teacher but with meager results; the more dominating students did not give their conventional ideas up: School is boring and philosophy is most boring.

#### **Week Nine: Community of Inquiry at Work**

Helga's 21st lesson suffered from too much outside interruptions to be a real lesson. Her 22nd lesson was delightful and showed a community of inquiry at work in her classroom.

Linda was absent from her classroom for the third philosophy lesson in a row and I substituted. I learned from another teacher that the negative behavior of Linda's kids was not isolated to the philoso-



Bernard Cornwell  
"The hope of St. Monica"

of estimation, but of experience. How can it be expected that both teachers and students change their conduct all of a sudden? How can it be expected that teachers will master dialogue as a method of instruction through mere verbal and written preparation? Are teachers different from other professionals in not needing training on the job? How can twelve-year-old students be expected to be inclined towards philosophy when social-

ized in an environment that is hostile towards philosophy as practice? (Cf. Lipma, 1985; Matthews, 1980.)

Doing philosophy with children needs preparation, but ultimately it is a question of extemporaneous *conduct* on the spot. A kind of conduct that is absent, I suspect, from most schools at all levels!

#### Week Two: Difficulties

In terms of applying dialogue as a method of instruction, this was a week

of difficulties. Neither students nor teachers showed significant improvements in practicing philosophical discussion. Linda's 6th lesson was somewhat an exception as the students' listening seemed to be improving and in general her class seemed more promising. Helga's class was more of a mess but although she was undecided in conducting her philosophy lessons she did not adjust them to her ordinary teaching style.

Linda tried to cope with the situation by adjusting the teaching of philosophy to her ordinary teaching style. She was successful in getting her students to work in groups as individuals on exercises. Thus, she was able to take advantage of the social togetherness that was present in her classroom, a togetherness that is best described as "togetherness-while-working-in-small-groups."

For myself, I was still waiting for the students to "take" to the program; I expected that they would any day discover how meaningful a philosophical discussion can be. But there were two factors, at least, against us: Neither the participating teachers nor students had experienced a philosophical discussion in a school setting, except perhaps by accident.

#### Week Three: Retreat

This was a week of retreat. I was ill and absent from the classroom this week but in good contact with the teachers who retreated into using exercises from the teaching manual as conducting philosophical discussions proved to be more difficult for them than the three of us had expected. They spent much of their energy to control the kids. They missed the peace, listening and respect, needed to conduct discussions.

A vicious circle was in effect: Before the kids would cooperate they needed to be led by the teachers and before the teachers could lead them they needed the kids' cooperation.

#### Week Four: A Turning Point

Week four proved to be a turning point as teachers (and students) were provided with the component of *modeling* which was most lacking from their preparation. *Explanations* were not lacking, at least not to the teachers. The modeling provided the teachers with experi-

phy lessons; this same group had been "unbelievably impudent" to him as a teacher.

### Week Ten: Commitment to the Procedures of Inquiry

Although moving slowly in the right direction the conditions for a community of inquiry to operate had not been established in Linda's class; the needed respect to persons and ideas were not shared as values by the group. By themselves, I think most of her students met the conditions, but as a group they did not as conflicts between two sub-groups within the class could still set the whole classroom easily off track.

Helga's class had not only improved greatly in terms of interactions but the new context had become valuable to them. They have become committed to the procedures of inquiry, to responsible manners of listening and talking, while inquiring at the same time.

In the early lessons it made sense to distinguish between content, method and the teacher's personal perception of their teaching. Now, when Helga's classroom has converted into a community of inquiry, this distinction breaks down. It becomes inapplicable to isolate the "content" of the lesson from the "method" of teaching, the content becomes one with the dialogue. The method becomes a way of life, so to speak, and perceptions of success move from having *control*, be it over the kids, over the dialogue, or over the content, to *respect* shown to individuals and their ideas. Success becomes a question of cooperation in coming to grips with the issues, the ideas, under investigation.

### Week Twelve: Postscript

There were no classes in the eleventh week, it was a week of an art festival within the school. Helga's class showed interest to philosophy in week twelve, but their success as a community of inquiry was meager. The break and ongoing examinations in other disciplines are likely to have affected their performance.

Linda's class showed great improvement during this week despite still having some way to go before forming a community of inquiry.

### Looking Back with the Teachers

Helga and Linda both agreed having needed more preparation for their teaching than they had imagined beforehand. Helga claimed having spent 8-9 hours at the beginning when she taught three lessons in a week. Linda estimated that sometimes it took her 2-3 hours to prepare for one lesson. In short they said they would recommend teachers to attend workshops in Philosophy for Children before starting to work in this domain.

They both mentioned their insecurity toward the subject as having injured their progress. Linda complained that sometimes the novel and the manual are too abstract and too complex with too much logic. Both of them talked about good and bad lessons coming in periods but overall the project was a positive experience to them:

- Me: This is my point—I was wondering whether you had learned something from this (the project)?
- Linda: Yes, a lot!
- Helga: Yes, quite a lot! It sharpens (our) thinking!
- Linda: Yes it does and the transcripts have been of immeasurable value to me. It really has been! One can see how awfully messed up one was at times! [Laughs.] I just think it's great to have myself all on a written record! [Laughs.] It is fun to reflect on it, that is to say: "I can do better in this and that respect. This is rather good, this is no good!" I think it is just great to (have the transcripts) do this!
- Helga: I think so too!...
- Me: Well, It's good to hear that you learned something!
- Helga: Yes, oh yes! I just think that I have grown in maturity!
- Linda: I think so, too!
- Helga: At home I'm getting right to the point, I'm beginning to see things from a completely different perspective than I used to [Linda and I giggle] and I just think it's for the better!
- Linda: Yes, I think it's good being through this.
- Helga: For myself, I think I have been going to school this semester for this project! (Fieldnotes, pp. 558-60.)

I must admit that this last conversation, especially Helga's comment on her growing maturity, lighted my day.

Although I was tenacious enough not to leave the site and just thank the participants for their time and effort, I was often nagged by the question: "Why are you trying to implement *Harry* the wrong way?" "Wrong" because of lack of workshop preparation.

### Review of Research Questions

In order to focus the research three sets of general questions were formulated. Two sets of less general questions were also formulated: middle level questions and then questions on particular aspects.

### The General Questions

My first set of general questions had to do with the formation of a community of inquiry in general.

1. *To what extent, if any, is such a community already in place in the ordinary classroom?*

Communities of inquiry were not present in either of the classrooms studied. The major explanation for this is that the students' regular schoolwork did not nurture the kind of respect that is required by a community of inquiry. A community of inquiry requires both listening and disciplined discussion; this includes drawing out implications by making inferences. The teaching activities I observed did not require listening and discussions in this sense; usually students had only to listen to short directions or explanations from teacher or they listened to students' reports or to one another in small groups. These activities did not focus on cooperative reasoning but on exchange of directions, explanations or information.

2. *How are rules and roles negotiated?*

It should be kept in mind that the teachers and their students had worked together for several years. Rules and roles were relatively settled when I entered, but the philosophy teaching demanded that teachers and students would take new rules and roles on.

Helga reprimanded her students for talking simultaneously, that they were chatting in every corner without listening or allowing interested parties in philosophy to talk together. But as Helga's classroom community of inquiry began

to establish itself, the students' behavior changed for the better. The students sensed the need for and they internalized and monitored a major rule for conducting their discussions: Turns at speaking should be taken in the order that the students had raised their hands to indicate that they wanted to speak. The students had evidently realized that this rule both gave fairness and discipline to the procedural side of their dialogue. The students enforced the rule themselves, even if it meant reminding the teacher who should really be speaking. So, by the end of the project one and only one student spoke at a time while the others listened and in this respect there is no doubt that a qualitative difference took place in the students' interactions.

Negotiation of roles came nowhere as clearly to the surface as in deciding reading turns and seating arrangement. To begin with, both teachers assumed it to be their role and responsibility to assign reading turns to their students. Helga was rather quick to give this unnecessary role up, but Linda<sup>4</sup> was extremely slow to give it up although being urged to. Linda's class also showed more reluctance to sit in a circle and thus change their everyday seating arrangement, which was in small groups. Linda favored working in small groups and talked about it as a means toward having the students sit in a circle.

Looking back at the research period, the most general summarizing of the results is to assert that the teachers did not succeed at their negotiations with the students as the teachers did not master philosophical discussion as a teaching method. The students could not grasp what they were being offered and therefore they were unwilling to change their ordinary schoolwork. But that would not be the whole story as Helga's students showed a cooperative spirit in the very first lesson, but Linda's students were hostile to any changes from the start. It seemed as if they wanted to hold on to what they already had.

### *3. How do the participants view themselves?*

Linda's students thought of themselves as being no "children." They were, for example, too old to be at a discotheque with 4th- and 5th-graders, but wanted to

be with 6th- and 7th-graders. In school they wanted to receive something that has or could be of utility, of practical value, to them. Reading *Harry* was all right, perhaps because it gave the feeling of having done or covered something, but philosophical discussions, as they conceived them, were of no utility as they just talked.

Helga's students overall did not think of themselves as being as grown up as Linda's students, which is no wonder as fewer students had matured into the puberty phase in Helga's group.<sup>5</sup> The conception of philosophy as having no practical value was also more evident in Linda's classroom although it was also aired in Helga's class.

### *4. How does the development of the community contribute to the development of good thinking?*

It should be emphasized that there is a moral code of basic procedures operating within a community of inquiry. The instructional method and the conceptual play employed must also be philosophical in nature as well as the issues that are raised. If teachers know the educational aim of a community of inquiry and if they have a basic mastery of philosophical discussion as a method of instruction, there is no reason but to believe that their orchestration of philosophical inquiry would trigger the formation of a community of inquiry. However, there is no reason to believe that either reading a philosophical novel or working on logical exercises would trigger a formation of a community of inquiry.

Although the teachers' competence is of central importance, it takes time for any skillful teacher to create a community of inquiry from scratch. That is a process that revolves around the students and it cannot be isolated from the social and intellectual context that they are embedded in. The students' circumstances are, I assume, so different from site to site that detailed generalizations on how to form communities of inquiry are inappropriate.

### *The next set of general questions circled around the teacher:*

#### *1. How do teachers create a community of inquiry?*

Three components are central to

teacher education in the Philosophy for Children program: Explanation, modeling and experiencing of what it means to work in a community of inquiry. The teacher educator can provide the first two components, but not the third one which teachers must themselves acquire as participants in philosophical inquiry. The modeling component serves as a bridge between (theoretical) explanations and (practical) experience. Through modeling teachers are provided with opportunities to participate in a philosophical inquiry, but the real challenge they face is in their classrooms where they have opportunities to gain personal experience in conducting such inquiries.

In this project the teachers were provided with plenty of written and verbal explanations, but modeling was provided only after they had attempted to conduct philosophical discussions on their own. In the teachers' own judgment the modeling period set them a clear example of how philosophical discussions could be used as a method of instruction; verbal and written explanation did not have as much practical value to them as did the modeling. This meant that after the modeling period the teachers' experience took on a new direction and a new meaning to them. Jumping over modeling and participation in a philosophical inquiry, directly into the phase of the teachers' experience of teaching new curriculum by a new method, proved not to work in this project.

#### *2. What pedagogical techniques are used?*

Philosophical discussions call for three basic pedagogical techniques: (a) A circle, or horseshoe or some other physical arrangement that allows everyone to see everyone else in the classroom; (b) Students' automatic turntaking in reading paragraphs. Other reading arrangements, such as reading by roles, can be appropriate but the automatic turntaking is democratic in nature and prevents teachers from giving their students unequal opportunities to read. In addition, this arrangement gives the teacher extra time to think and observe students; (c) An explicit agenda (on board or overhead) generated from the students' own ideas. Less vital but still important techniques include (d) using the blackboard as a pad to compare and con-

trast ideas; (e) Location of teacher and other arrangements in space and time.

Except for the first one, the teachers had difficulties in mastering the techniques above in a fruitful way. The major explanation being that they did not apply them regularly in their ordinary teaching and simply lacked experience in using them.

### 3. *Is it simply a matter of technique? What techniques? If no, what else is needed?*

Although important, doing philosophy is not only a question of mastering techniques. Philosophical intuition or sense for conceptual perplexities is needed. A philosophical sense is closely related to wonderment, an ability that is natural to young children but distinct in most adults. Awakening and nurturing philosophical sense in adults is the single most important challenge for philosophers as educators.

There is an element of art in practice, or spontaneity on the spot in doing philosophy, an element which transcends application of pure techniques. It is a product of imaginative combination of knowledge and techniques. This is an element of craft and it is the most evident of the elements involved in doing philosophy with children. The community of inquiry searches for usable material (substance) when constructing the agenda. It tries to come to grips with the material and checks its quality in the discussion. The outcomes (the form) of philosophical discussions are sometimes as breathtaking as objects of art are. But just like in arts and crafts, there is no way to guarantee that every discussion will lead to such a conclusion, although the probabilities for it can be increased.

### 4. *How are students viewed in such a community from the teacher's perspective?*

This question only applies to Helga. She experienced relatively few lessons where the community of inquiry was at work in her classroom, but her dominant reaction was that being with the students gave her pleasure and she liked watching them, listening to them, and in short she liked being with them. This does not mean that Helga did not like being with her students in other lessons, but only that the student-teacher relationship was different in philosophy. I saw it to be

more on a mutual ground, students started to take care of things that Helga ordinarily would have to do: assign reading turns, reprimand for chat. As a philosophy teacher Helga had to adjust to her students' ideas on the spot, she could not plan in advance what would be the exact content of each lesson as in other subjects. This does not mean that a philosophy teacher cannot prepare his or her lessons. On the contrary, philosophy requires much preparation as underlying themes of the novel and possible lines of thought must be clear to the teacher and fresh in his or her mind.

### *The last set of the general questions focused on the students:*

#### 1. *How do students react to doing philosophy?*

It seems obvious that the first question should be answered this way: Linda's students hated doing philosophy and Helga's students did so at times, too. However, that would be jumping to conclusions. Linda often talked about the boredom that her students complained about as a surface phenomenon; she even compared it to mob hysteria. So we have some reason to think that the philosophy lessons were not as bad and boring to the students as they claimed. Another thing to note is that a "philosophy lesson" and "doing philosophy" are not identical terms. We cannot really answer the question above because the students had too many philosophy lessons before they started doing philosophy. It really is no wonder that the students got confused on what was happening as it was not meaningful to them. When Helga's students started to discover meanings in their discussions we were in for better times.

#### 2. *Do they see their role as being different in philosophy from other classes?*

For sure, the students saw their role to be different in the philosophy classes. In ordinary classes they were supposed to work, in philosophy they were supposed to do nothing! Just talk! It was only gradually that they discovered that a difference existed between talking and discussing.

### **The Middle-Level Questions**

In the middle-level questions, the con-

cern was with the participants' talking in the classrooms:

#### 1. *Who does the talking?*

During regular teaching hours, *i.e.*, when dialogue was not employed as a teaching method, students sat for the most parts in their groups and worked while the teachers circled around the rooms. Under this arrangement the students did a lot of talking in their groups, both on and off their tasks. The teachers talked a lot too, especially to single students or to single groups, but not that much to the class as a whole. When dialogue was employed as a teaching method, the students usually sat in a big circle. At first, under this arrangement, there was a lot of talk, on and off task, among "chat-partners", just like when they worked in small groups. As the community of inquiry established itself in Helga's group the talk gradually became less private and more public as students started to share their comments and ideas with the whole group. The same process took place in Linda's group, but not to the same extent.

#### 2. *What kinds of questions are being asked?*

##### *Who is being asked?*

In regular teaching hours most official questions were from students to teacher: "How am I to do this?" "What do we do next?" Some questions were more of requests from students to teachers: "[Will you] come and help me!" When teachers asked students, their questions typically involved getting the students to report on their knowledge or on what they had learned. These questions were often directed to the small groups' reporters and then to the class in general: "How did you answer item X in the exercise?" The correct answers to these questions were known to the teachers beforehand. When dialogue was employed as a method of instruction, the teachers asked questions to which they did not always know correct answers. Until the community of inquiry established itself in Helga's classroom, it was a regular pattern for the teachers to do most of the questioning and for the students to respond. As time passed Helga's students had internalized a questioning attitude; they started to direct similar questions, as had been directed to them, to one an-



other. These were questions such as: "How do you know?" "What do you mean?" "Can you compare this to . . . ?" "Why do you think . . . ?" Questions that were typically asked in philosophy but not in other lessons.

### 3. Who responds to questions? How do they respond?

Various individuals responded to questions that were asked during discussions. Some tended to attack all questions; others were more quiet. This pattern was quite different when dialogue was not employed, as students worked in groups on defined tasks or on a set of questions. Such questions or tasks are quite different from the ones that spring out of the context of a philosophical discussion.

### 4. Are the discussions philosophical in nature, semi-philosophical or "mere talking"?

Some of the discussions, especially in the beginning, are best described as chaotic speech, at least the verbal interactions reminded me of a cloud of disturbed birds. Other discussions were semi-philosophical in the sense that the issues were really philosophical, but they were not worked on in a philosophical spirit. Closely related were discussions of mere talking where information and anecdotes of personal experience were exchanged without drawing philosophical implications out.

To find out the proportions between discussions that were "mere talking, semi-philosophy, or philosophy," the transcribed dialogues would need to be coded, by using corresponding categories. Such a coding would be interesting; however it was not needed to see that the discussions improved with them; there was a huge qualitative difference between the first discussions and the discussions that took place in the latter part of the research period.

### Questions to Begin with

Originally I had questions under the heading: "Questions on the particular", which were focused on habits and dispositions created in a community of inquiry. As a community of inquiry was only established in one of the classrooms, and for a relatively short observational time, my basis was too narrow for answering questions in that direction. The

research took me to a more basic question that was only stated when it came to writing the study:

### 1. What are the conditions under which a community of inquiry operates?

I came to the conclusion that the conditions had to do with social togetherness and intellectual openness. By "social togetherness" is meant a classroom situation where students listen to one another and monitor their own interactions. When social togetherness is not in place the students fight external authorities, be it other students, teachers, principals or other sources of power. When social togetherness is in place, students take external rules and demands onto themselves and thus they submit to internal authority. In short, this means showing respect to persons.

Intellectual openness is a question of respect for ideas, both of one's own ideas and other persons' ideas. Such a respect is expressed through willingness to discuss and investigate ideas as well as by settling disagreements with openness to evidence and reason.

### Summary

As a movement Philosophy for Children needs to be open for research methods which can ease for our self-correction and strengthen our moral judgment (but not only our statistical or theoretical judgment). Quantitative studies are primarily a technical process. Interpretive studies are also based on technique but they make much more demands to the researcher's moral judgment as he or she works closely with teachers and children while studying their interactions at the same time. The question is not whether to use one but not the other method; we need to employ both quantitative and interpretive studies in order to correct and transcend our current practice.

To me the study, *Educational Saga*, was not only about other people but also a study of my own actions. I learned a lot from the experience I have been sharing with you; it had lasting effects on my behavior and attitudes. My question is, can you also learn something of value from it?

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# Philosophy for Children in the Philippines Project

## FINAL REPORT ON PHASE III UNISTAR MISSION

John J. Holder, Jr.

This is the final report on the United Nations Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR) mission to initiate Phase III project activities of the Philosophy for Children thinking skills and science education project in the Philippines. (A brief description of the Philosophy for Children thinking skills curriculum can be found in Appendix I.) Phase III project activities have been made possible through funding from UNISTAR and UNESCO. Project activities of Phase III are intended to follow up on the recommendations of UNDP-STAS funded project studies (Phases I and II) developed at the Laboratory school of Philippine Normal College and Isabela State University in 1988 and 1989. The results of those studies indicated a high potential for successful implementation of the Philosophy for Children programs in Philippine classrooms. Phase III of the project is sponsored by the Office of International Cooperation on Science and Technology in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). The project is endorsed by and coordinated with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS).

Despite a two-week delay in project initiation, Phase III has proven *extremely successful*. Phase III activities have provided the project both a solid institutional foundation at many levels (among government departments, university faculty and administrators, and the core group of project managers from various regions) as well as important momentum that the project requires to expand the

existing pilot curriculum into a nationwide elementary school thinking skills curriculum. In short, Phase III has already achieved (and, in some cases, surpassed) many of its proposed aims. Such proposed aims can be enumerated as follows:

1. development of empirical research studying the effectiveness of the Philosophy for Children programs in *typical* Filipino schools in various regions of the country;
2. development of two new regional centers: UP-Diliman and Leyte State College;
3. further modification and translation of program materials (novels, manuals and testing instruments);
4. involvement of professional philosophers in the project management;
5. holding a conference for the project managers in Manila in order to plan future project development—one goal of this conference is to place the project more firmly in the hands of Filipino educators, and another is to coordinate project activities with initiatives in the DFA and the DECS;
6. revision of existing long-term project proposals for resubmission to funding agencies and the development of interim proposals to carry the project forward in the short term.

Project activities to date in each of these areas will be covered below. Of special importance, however, has been the strong institutional support afforded by the DFA and the DECS, through special directives and program management.

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Such support and coordination has made Phase III activities particularly effective and has provided a strongly supportive governmental basis for future project development. A copy of a directive from the DECS to its Regional Directors authorizing the development of experimental classes in four regions of the Philippines is appended to this report as an example of the institutional support afforded by the DECS (see Appendix A).

### Design and Implementation of Regional Experiments

The collection of empirical data to ascertain the effectiveness of the Philosophy for Children program in the Philippine elementary schools has been a main focus of Phase III activities to date. The experiments will be in typical 5th grades with modified English and Filipino versions of the *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* program. (The modified version has the new title *Hilario Romero's Discovery*).

On the advice of curriculum and experimental design experts both here in the Philippines and at St. Norbert College (USA), Phase III includes a large scale experiment having the following format for the 1991-92 school year:

#### A. VENUES: Area 1 (Manila)

3 urban 5th-grade *experimental* classes at Legarda elementary school, Sampaloc, Manila

3 urban 5th-grade *control* classes, Gomez elementary school, Quiapo, Manila

#### Area 2 (Isabela)

2 rural 5th-grade *experimental* classes, Cen-

- tral school, Echague, Isabela
- 2 rural 5th-grade *experimental* classes, Central school, Cabagan, Isabela
- 2 rural 5th-grade *control* classes, Barangay school, Echague, Isabela
- 2 rural 5th-grade *control* classes, Barangay school, Cabagan, Isabela

#### Area 3 (Quezon City)

- 2 suburban 5th grade *experimental* classes, University of the Philippines Integrated School, Diliman, Quezon City
- 2 suburban 5th-grade *control* classes, University of the Philippines Integrated School, Diliman, Quezon City

#### Area 4 (Leyte)

- 3 rural/Visayan 5th-grade *experimental* classes, San Jose Elementary School, Dulag, Leyte
- 3 rural/Visayan 5th-grade *experimental* classes, Southern Dagami elementary school, Dagami, Leyte
- 1 urban/Visayan 6th-grade *experimental* class, Laboratory School, Leyte State College, Tacloban, Leyte
- 3 rural/Visayan 5th-grade *control* classes, Central school, Dulag, Leyte
- 3 rural/Visayan 5th-grade *control* classes, Dagami North elementary school, Dagami, Leyte
- 1 urban/Visayan 6th-grade *control* class, Laboratory School, Leyte State College, Tacloban, Leyte

#### B. POPULATIONS:

- 16 Experimental Classes: 600 students (approx.)
- 16 Control Classes: 600 students (approx.)

#### C. IMPLEMENTATION:

1. *Control classes*: Pre-test and Post-test only (beginning and end of school year)
2. *Experimental classes*: Pre-test followed by one school year of program implementation (2-3 hours per week) and post-test.

Experimental and control classes have been demographically matched. A pre-test/post-test experimental design is being used. The testing instruments are English and Filipino versions of the Philippine Test of Reasoning Skills (adapted from the New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills). Commencement of the experiment was delayed slightly due to a delay in the release of UNESCO funds for reproducing the curriculum materials (see Appen-

dix B for details of UNESCO funding). The pre-tests have been given to both control and experimental groups in early August. Post-testing will follow towards the end of the school year (sometime in February). The experimental design includes frequent follow-up sessions held by regional project managers with the tryout teachers at the experimental schools. Philippine Normal College will manage Area 1; Isabela State University will manage Area 2, UP-Diliman will manage Area 3, and UP-Tacloban and Leyte State College will jointly manage area 4. This experiment will have a tremendous impact on future project development, as it will provide a significant amount of data for program assessment. Aside from the schools involved in the above experiment, several faculty at the Laboratory School of the Philippine Normal College will be implementing the programs in order to test the modified versions of the curriculum.

Training of the school teachers at each experimental site was accomplished in June and July. Training workshops covered the first eight chapters of the *Harry* program and emphasized the logical aspects of the curriculum. As much as possible, the project managers from each area were included in the workshops so as to give them some training as teacher-trainers themselves.

The following schedule of training workshops and public lectures was implemented (note: this schedule differs from the schedule of the project proposal due to the two-week delay in commencement of the project):

June 11-12 Training Workshop  
Echague Central School; also attended by Regional DECS officials

June 13-14 Training Workshop  
Cabagan Central School

June 18-25 Training Workshop  
Univ. of the Philippines Integrated School

June 19 Mini-Workshop  
with Dept. of Philosophy, UP-Diliman

June 27 Public Lecture  
to College of Education, Divine Word University (Tacloban, Leyte)

June 28 Public Lecture  
to College of Education, Leyte State College, (Tacloban, Leyte)

June 28 (p.m.) Mini-Workshop  
for school administrators from Dulag

and Dagami

July 1-3 (evenings) Training Workshop  
Leyte State College

July 2 Training Workshop  
Dagami South Elementary School

July 4 Training Workshop  
San Jose Elementary School, Dulag. Also attended by DECS Supervisor

July 11 Mini-Workshop  
with Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent of Manila City schools

July 18-22 Training Workshop  
Legarda and Gomez Elementary Schools, also attended by Asst. Superintendent and Division heads of English and Science.

#### Development of New Regional Centers

The University of the Philippines at Diliman, the University of the Philippines at Tacloban, and Leyte State College have joined Philippine Normal College and Isabella State University as regional centers for project management. The development of regional centers is part of the overall strategy for infusing the curriculum throughout the country. In the future, regional centers in other parts of the country will be developed—most notably in Cebu and Mindanao.

Of particular note is the plan of Dr. Celesta Botor of the College of Education at UP-Diliman. She is proposing an institute devoted to the development of thinking skills. After some preliminary discussions, it was agreed that a tie-up between her proposal and the Philosophy for Children project would be mutually beneficial.

#### Modification, Translation and Publication of Curriculum Materials

From July 5 to August 9, the director and several members of the core group devoted a large portion of time to the continuing cultural modification and translation of the curriculum materials. The work was supervised by experts in Filipino education and culture as well as professional philosophers. The *Harry* novel and the testing instrument (Philippine Test of Reasoning Skills) have been modified in English and translated into Filipino. Publication of the modified and translated materials with a desktop publishing program has been completed for the testing instruments and the first chapter of the English and Filipino ver-

sions of the novel (see Appendices C, D, E and F). The modification and translation of the other chapters of the novel have already been completed and are now being published and distributed. These materials will be more than sufficient for one year's experimental implementation. The teacher's manual has been partially translated and culturally modified, but a more careful and thorough revision is being accomplished by several faculty members at Philippine Normal College at this time.

The current modification of the curriculum materials represents no more

than a first attempt at such a cultural revision. A subcommittee of the core group, composed of experts in philosophy, curriculum development and educational psychology, has been developed to work on more detailed modification. In particular, this subcommittee will attempt to modify the materials both by enriching them with topics taken from the minimum learning competencies stressed in the elementary science education program as well as by adding philosophical and cultural themes consistent with Filipino culture and the values education program.

### **Inclusion of Professional Philosophers**

Since the Philosophy for Children curriculum has a strong "philosophical" core, it is essential that trained philosophers become involved in the project—such is the contribution of the Philosophy Department at UP-Diliman. Such philosophers can provide a component of teacher-training that allows teachers to understand and effectively engage their students in philosophical inquiry. An introductory lecture held in the Philosophy Department at UP-Diliman June 19 has garnered the support and interest of that department in servicing the project. In particular, Dr. Zosimo Lee, Ms. Darlene Berberabe, Mr. Martin Mapohen, Mr. Enrique Vera and Mr. Napoleon Mabaquiao (all from the Philosophy Department, UP-Diliman) have joined the core group and will assist project development. Dr. Lee is also the Dean of UP-Tacloban, and thus is particularly helpful in project management in Leyte. He has agreed to provide follow-up sessions with the schools in Dulag and Dagami. Several of these philosophers are undertaking graduate-level research on topics related to the project.



### **The Philosophy for Children Conference**

The conference for the project managers from the various schools and regions was held in Manila on July 28-29 (a list of the core group members in attendance is appended as Appendix G). The sessions of July 28 were held in conference facilities at the Kowloon House in Makati and the sessions of July 29 were held at PNC. The conference was very effective in accomplishing its goals (see Appendix H for the Conference Agenda).

First, the conference accomplished the transfer of control of the project management from the current director to this core group of managers. Until that point, the coordination of the project was heavily dependent on the activities of the project director. In light of the fact that the director is a *foreign* consultant, such a transfer at this time was most appropriate. A coordinating committee was formed to take over management of the project. The committee has the following

personnel and structure:

Head Coordinator: Dr. Zosimo Lee, Dean UP-Tacloban, Faculty member, UP-Diliman;  
 Coordinator for Manila: Mrs. Norma Jaramillo, Faculty member, PNC;  
 Coordinator for Quezon City: Ms. Darlene Berberabe, Faculty member, UP-Diliman;  
 Coordinator for Isabela Province: Ms. Nena Babaran, Principal, Laboratory and Science High Schools, ISU-Cabagan;  
 Coordinator for Leyte: Mr. Quirino Ragub, Faculty member, Leyte State College.

Second, the conference provided a forum for introducing the project managers from various regions to one another. This is an important factor in coordinating regional activities and dividing up the work required for project development. For example, data collection methods were coordinated and issues such as the language issue were discussed and clarified.

Third, the conference was attended by representatives from the DFA and the DECS and thus provided a forum for coordinating project planning with governmental initiatives. Mr. Thaddeus Hamoy, representing the DFA, outlined the strong support of his Department for the project and described the available opportunities for tapping funding sources, particularly in science-related areas. Dr. Marcelina Miguel, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Elementary Education for the DECS, expressed the DECS's strong support for such a project. She suggested the drawing up of a terms of reference and a memorandum of agreement that would provide the means for infusing the Philosophy for Children program in the nation's schools. Dr. Miguel also said that the project fits the "Education for All" initiative developed by the DECS in coordination with UNESCO, and that a proposal should be developed to tap that source of funding.

Fourth, strong institutional support for the project was expressed by the new President of Philippine Normal College, Dr. Gloria Salandanán, and the Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Fara Santos.

Fifth, the core group determined that an interim proposal should be developed. The proposed interim activities focus on making the core group itself the first generation of teacher-trainers. This would be accomplished through a two-week intensive training

seminar in late-May 1992. The seminar will be run by specialists from the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (Upper Montclair, NJ, USA). This first generation of teacher-trainers will begin the process of infusing the curriculum on a regional basis through in-service workshops in the local school districts.

Sixth, the development of other regional centers in areas not already covered was discussed. In particular, universities in Mindanao, Cebu, and Panay are being contacted to determine their interest in the project. A brochure that is being developed by the core group to disseminate project information will be sent to interested schools.

### Long-Term Project Proposals

The revision of the long-term proposals was discussed by the core group at the conference and by the project director with officials at the DFA (notably, Assistant Secretary Federico Macaranas) and at the DECS (with Dr. Miguel). Revisions of an earlier draft for long-term project development are currently under way to suit the proposal to the "Education for All" initiative of the DECS and UNESCO. The project addresses eight of the thirteen main areas discussed in the plan of action developed by the National Committee on Education for All. This makes it highly likely that the project will be successful in garnering support from this quarter. Nongovernmental organizations and several lobbying groups in the areas of science and education are being contacted for their support of the project as we attempt to garner support for the nationwide infusion of the program. It is particularly crucial to get support from members of the Philippine Congress so that a long-term funding commitment by the government can be achieved.

### Conclusion and Prospectus

As noted above, Phase III of the Philosophy for Children in the Philippines project has made great strides towards realizing its goal of a nationwide elementary school thinking skills curriculum. The institutional support provided by DECS, DFA, and the administrators at PNC, ISU, UP-Diliman, and UP-Tacloban has been the real catalyst for the rapid project

development.

Many difficult challenges still lie ahead, however. The analysis of data from the year-long experiment should provide important feedback about the success of the program in the Philippines. As project director, I see the following major areas as crucial to future project development:

1. interim activities must be initiated that include the training of a first generation of teacher-trainers/project managers: this is necessary to maintain and expand upon the momentum of the project;
2. the development of infusion strategies, both through in-service workshops and courses for student teachers must be explored, one idea is to create "itinerant" specialists in Philosophy for Children;
3. long-term funding recruitment is an area that will need continuing attention—it is suggested that the project seek support both from the Philippine Congress and from nongovernmental organizations;
4. issues concerning language (whether to implement, in English, Filipino or the local dialect) must be resolved.

Each of these areas poses a significant, but not unsolvable challenge for Filipino educators. It will take a great deal of creativity and commitment from a wide variety of people, both in government and academia, to handle this project effectively.

After the conference in Manila with the core group and government officials, I have a greater confidence that the project will have a significant role to play in the education of Filipino children, particularly as they develop thinking skills in science and language arts. The successful implementation of the Philosophy for Children program in Philippine elementary schools has tremendously significant social and technological implications. Besides aiding the technological development of the country, a thoughtful citizenry provides one of the necessary conditions for free and democratic political institutions. Hence, the expected outcome of the project is the development of thoughtful, scientifically literate, and creative children who are thus empowered to intelligently shape their lives and their culture.

# Computers and Education for Thinking

James Heinegg

Over the past fifteen years, computers have begun to play more and more of a role in schools. Some have claimed that computers will "save" education. There are those, however, who have reservations about the technological revolution in education, particularly about its effect upon children's thinking. The questions that are involved in this conflict are numerous and complex, and I do not pretend to have any comprehensive resolution to the problem. I will confine myself to the consideration of two of the most common objections to letting computers play a major role in the classroom:

1. *Programming a computer teaches a child only a very mechanistic type of thinking.*
2. *Engaging children with computers will only foster the sort of computer mania that is already too prevalent in society.*

After considering these arguments in more detail and discussing their merits, I will suggest what seems to me to be a reasonable response to these concerns about the "revolution" of using technology in the classroom. My argument is that the concerns do not really represent a demand for the banishment of technology from schools, but rather a demand for something more. This "something more" could be philosophy.

The first concern described above seems to arise from a comparison between the way a computer program processes information, and the way a person's mind works through a problem. Certainly there are times when we think like information processors, but the essence of higher-order thinking is not the sort of thing one could program a computer to do. This view is summed up by Roger Penrose when he says, "It is in-

deed 'obvious' that the *conscious* mind cannot work like a computer, though much of what is actually involved in mental activity might do so." (Penrose, p. 488) What we wish to develop in children is good judgment, and it is judgment that is exactly the sort of non-deductive thinking which computers cannot do. Why should we present our children with a model of thinking which is admittedly powerful, but terribly deficient in dealing with what we consider to be the most important problems?

Obviously, one answer to this (which Penrose considers as a possibility) is that eventually computers will be able to perform so many intricate sorts of computations that they will approach what we would call judgment. Seymour Papert's answer to this concern, however, seems to be that regardless of the simplicity or mechanistic nature of a computer program, the creation of it is still a vital experience of thinking about thinking. He writes:

By deliberately learning to imitate mechanical thinking, the learner becomes able to articulate what mechanical thinking is and what it is not. The exercise can lead to greater confidence about the ability to choose a cognitive style that suits the problem. Analysis of "mechanical thinking" and how it is different from other kinds and practice with problem analysis can result in a new degree of intellectual sophistication. (Papert, 1980, p. 27).

Papert also argues (Papert, 1993) that programming may not be so important for the sort of thinking which it represents, but rather for the sort of activity which creating the program is—fun, involving discovery and invention, etc. Both *Mindstorms* and *The Children's Machine* are filled with examples of "ap-

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prenticeship in epistemology" in action.

It is just these arguments and examples which the skeptic seems to find most difficult to swallow. Such kinds of learning and thinking do not appear *necessarily* to have anything to do with programming a computer. A child could just as easily have such experiences of "thinking about thinking" and yet complete her computer project without ever going beyond these experiences. This is, it seems to me, the skeptic's strongest point, though it is misdirected if it is an attack on the use of computers in school. For what the skeptic is in fact arguing about, and what the computer revolutionaries seem to gloss over somewhat, is the importance of philosophical discussion. The implication of the argument should not be that computers won't do the job of teaching kids to think, but that kids need, in addition to computers, philosophical discussion as a central part of their education.

For the initial experiences of thinking about thinking, which are involved in the programming of computers, are actually the *starting points* of philosophical reflection. The remarkably successful episodes of individual learning which Papert recounts seem to involve some sort of philosophical dialogue intertwined throughout the programming experience. Children are engaging in reflective dialogue about their practice, and it is this dialogue which seems to lead to an improvement in thinking. Skeptics who question the importance of the programming in teaching thinking are ignoring its essential complement—philosophical dialogue. The programming alone may not lead to improved judgment, but with dialogue it can.

This does not mean, however, that situ-

ation is one of computers needing philosophy to save the day. Rather, it is more a matter of work with computer programming and philosophy enhancing each other. Consider what Matthew Lipman says in *Philosophy in the Classroom*:

When people engage in dialogue with one another, they are compelled to reflect, to concentrate, to consider alternatives, to listen closely, to give careful attention to definitions and meanings, to recognize previously unthought of options, and in general to perform a vast number of mental activities that they might not have engaged in had the conversation never occurred.

Computer programming has considerable attraction as another vital experience of thinking only if, through dialogue, they will not only have the experience of thinking about thinking, but also have the occasion to engage in dialogue about the experience.

Embracing philosophical dialogue is also an answer to the somewhat vaguer second objection mentioned at the beginning of the paper. When "technological pessimists" (Postman, p. 122) suggest that the "computer . . . has usurped powers and enforced mind-sets that a fully attentive culture might have wished to deny it," they are not simply complaining about the machines. Joseph Weizenbaum writes:

. . . the computer is a powerful new metaphor for helping us to understand many aspects of the world, but . . . it enslaves the mind that has no other metaphors and few other resources to

call on. The world is many things, and no single framework is large enough to contain them all . . .

. . . programming . . . appeals most to precisely those who do not yet have sufficient maturity to tolerate long delays between an effort to achieve something and the appearance of concrete evidence of success . . . (Weizenbaum, p. 277)

I do not imagine, of course, that such fears would be allayed by saying, "Yes, but we're going to supplement the use of computers with philosophy!" Nevertheless, both Postman and Weizenbaum seem to be arguing just as vehemently about the lack of judgment of people as they are about the inherent qualities of the machine. I sometimes share their concerns about the computer—I'm not always comfortable with the notion that children need powerful mathematical ideas, for example. It seems, though, that we may have a better chance of improving judgment through epistemological, logical, and ethical inquiry than we have of keeping the computers out of the children's hands.

What are this argument's implications for teachers? It seems that we do need to consider the following points:

1. Education for thinking will not just happen simply because a child happens to be using the computer.
2. The kinds of dialogue (between the student and teacher, among the students, etc.) which emerge from the practice of computer programming may have as much of an impact on the

student's thinking as the programming itself.

3. Philosophy, as the discipline in which we think about thinking, may provide some of the answers to the troubling questions of critics of computers in the schools.

Those who advocate philosophy in the schools, like those who advocate computers playing a larger role, are in a sense educational revolutionaries.

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# The Mill on the Floss: an Argument for Philosophy for Children

Megan Laverty

*The Mill on the Floss* is more of an argument than a narrative: the development of the story is governed by the novel's thesis and the characters are exemplifications of ideas rather than expressions of dynamic and complex individuality. *The Mill on the Floss* defends a particular view of subjectivity: it argues that human subjectivity has a greater depth and complexity than what is more commonly assumed by philosophers.<sup>1</sup> It does this by comparing Tom and Maggie, the two central characters. Tom embodies the view of subjectivity more commonly assumed by philosophers of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century and Maggie embodies an alternative view of subjectivity which is favored by the novel.<sup>2</sup> In this article, I identify these contrasting paradigms of subjectivity and show that although in the novel, Tom judges Maggie, the novel itself endorses Maggie, enlisting her character to critique Tom. Maggie, throughout the novel, displays many of the attributes which Philosophy for Children aims to foster in its students: she reflects, she asks questions, she uses her imagination to understand the perspective of others, she revises her opinion in the light of what she learns from her own experiences and what others say, she returns to old arguments and redefines them. If *The Mill on the Floss* is an argument for Maggie against Tom—an argument for a particular conception of subjectivity—then it is synonymously an argument for Philosophy for Children, as Philosophy for Children is premised on a view of subjectivity not dissimilar from the one realized in the character of Maggie.

*The Mill on the Floss* begins with Tom and Maggie in their early childhood and

ends abruptly with their death in the flood of the Floss River. It narrates what happens to Tom and Maggie from their childhood up until their death: their interrupted education, their relationship with their aunts and uncles, their parent's decline into poverty, their parents' loss of dignity, their father's death, and their own subsequent endeavors. It tells of their hardship so that the reader "can understand how it acted on the lives of Tom and Maggie" (363) and reflect on how it was that Maggie and Tom came to live their lives so differently.<sup>3</sup> Given the comparison between Tom and Maggie, it is significant that she becomes the heroine of the novel—her character becomes increasingly important to the narrative. It is Maggie who rescues Tom from the overflowing banks of the Floss River. She not only rescues Tom, but rescues him from the Mill; as though he had never left it and she could only return to it by her supreme efforts. In rowing away from the Mill, "face to face with Maggie" (654), Tom comes to see what he hadn't seen before: "the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force—such an entirely new revelation to his spirit, of the depths of life, that had lain beyond his vision which he had fancied so keen and clear, that he was unable to ask a question" (654). Tom comes to see or understand, a little too late, something which Maggie had always shown him—'the depths of life.'

The novel establishes that neither Maggie's nor Tom's formal education adequately prepared them for their struggles—the difference between Maggie and Tom is not constituted by their education.<sup>4</sup> Although Maggie is academically

brighter than Tom, it is not cleverness which facilitates her rescue of him. Mr. Stelling, Tom's teacher, was convinced that Tom was "stupid at everything" (223), but Maggie knew that Tom manifested his intelligence in areas more practical than his school studies: "he makes beautiful whip cord and rabbit pens" (82) and "he knew about worms and fish and those things; and what birds were mischievous and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of gates were to be lifted. Maggie thought this sort of knowledge was very wonderful!" (92) Tom also reveals himself as a reliable and loyal person in the midst of the Tulliver's family crisis: he acts with decorum, obtains a position in his Uncle Deane's warehouse while studying at night, he saves his money and makes profitable investments, he pays all his father's debts and returns the Mill to the family. So in what way did Tom not see 'the depths of life'?

Tom was limited in and by his vision of what it meant to be a human subject. Let's look at some of his characteristics. Tom is already himself; his experiences do not create his self, they only serve to test his will. Tom identifies himself with his will; he determines to act in a certain way or does not determine to act in a certain way. A prescription for how he should act in any given case is given by objective—and therefore immutable—moral ideals or principles which are applicable to all individuals in all circumstances. For example, "he (Tom) would have struck her, only he knew it was cowardly to strike a girl, and Tom Tulliver was quite determined he would never do anything cowardly" (147). Tom regulates his empirical self (his feelings, desires, etc.) in order to realize his true or moral



self in action. As a consequence, Tom does not attempt to analyze or understand his empirical self, he “was not given to inquire subtly into his own motives, any more than into other matters of an intangible kind” (446). He is not given to understanding the motives of others either: when he learns that Maggie is seeing Philip he says to her, “I don’t wish to hear anything of your feelings” (445).

Tom’s imagination is impaired by his refusal—which he thinks is justified—to explore the feelings and desires of himself or others, making him austere and unsympathetic (even Aunt Glegg wouldn’t turn Maggie away from her home). Tom is moralistic; he has a propensity to judge himself and others: “O, you greedy thing” (92) and also Maggie, “You’re always in extremes—you have no judgment and self command; and yet you think you know best, and will not submit to be guided” (504). Early on in the novel, Tom judges Bob Jaken somewhat severely as “a sneak and thief” (107). Later in the novel, when the Tullivers have lost all their savings, belongings and home, Bob Jaken proves himself to be a devoted and loyal friend: visiting the family, offering Tom money, giving Maggie some books, advising Tom of a good investment, and allowing both Tom and Maggie to board in his home. Bob Jaken continues to cheat when he is sure that it won’t hurt anyone but his cheating does not prevent him from being a constant support to Tom and Maggie. Tom changes his mind about Bob Jaken’s character, but does not *learn* from this experience: he does not infer from his initial erroneous judgment of Bob Jaken, that maybe it is wrong to judge a person’s character on the basis of just one incident, or just one feature of their behavior. Similarly in his relations with Philip: Philip is kind to Tom when he is laid up in bed, and is generous to Maggie. Tom, however, chooses to ignore this in favor of his father’s prejudice, even though this involves him in some untenable reasoning: Philip is the “son of a bad man. And Tom did not see how a bad man’s son could be very good. His own father was a good man, and he would readily have fought any one who said the contrary” (232).

Neither could Tom appreciate the complexity of Maggie’s character for “her

life was a planless riddle to him” (505). She says to him at one point, “You don’t know how differently things affect me from what they do you” (504). Tom’s vision of what was involved in being a human subject meant that he could only find one explanation for Maggie’s behavior: she lacked the will power and self command to do what she knew was right: “no motives are strong enough to restrain you” (712), he says to Maggie. Maggie, according to Tom, has failed in her struggle with her feelings (unlike him) and therefore failed to realize her true or moral self. According to Tom she has indulged her empirical self (her feelings and desires, etc), making her irrational, inconsistent and unreliable. “I loathe your character and conduct” (613), and “the sight of you is hateful to me” (614). Tom believes that if Maggie cannot exert control over herself then he must exert control over her; he must teach her not to indulge her impulses. “But I will sanction no such character as yours” (614).

Maggie appreciates Tom although she recognizes that his is very different from herself, and it is in this appreciation of Tom, that Maggie realizes her difference from him. The character of Maggie calls Tom’s vision of human subjectivity and what it means to be a good human being into questions; she shows Tom’s vision to be limited and limiting. Maggie is not fixed or static but perpetually weaving the threads of her experiences into a “self”; she is always bringing her past into some coherent relation with her present. She is simultaneously enacting and creating her true or moral self, by telling a story that makes sense of the many aspects of her empirical self; she is “finding truth by making it.”<sup>5</sup> Maggie takes responsibility for her past by understanding it and learning from it—she is repeatedly coming to see it in a new light. She is always finding “some key that would enable her to understand” (379). There are two things to notice about this.

Firstly, Maggie judges the world as she experiences it; she allows her experiences to condition her judgments. She exercises a large degree of independence in her judgment making. For example, despite the intense prejudice had by her father and brother about the Wakem family, Maggie is able to make a judgment about

Philip based on his kindness to herself and Tom: “I think Philip Wakem seems a nice boy, Tom,” she said . . . “He couldn’t choose his father, you know; and I’ve read of very bad men who had good sons, as well as good parents who had bad children. And if Philip is good, I think we ought to be more sorry for him because his father is not a good man.” (311). Maggie is continually reappraising her judgments. She alters her understandings or changes her mind in the light of new discoveries facilitated by what others say or new experiences: “Philip had been right when he told her that she knew nothing of renunciation.” (597).

Secondly, Maggie is thinking about broadly significant questions through the particular details of her own life. Maggie was principally preoccupied with the question of, “When should an individual act according to her feelings and when should she act for reasons of duty or obligation?” (Which is itself part of the more general question about grounds justifying any action). Maggie says, “It seems right to me sometimes that we should follow our strongest feeling; but then, such feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us—the ties that have made others dependent on us—and would cut them in two” (571). In her early relations with Philip, Maggie decides to follow her strongest feeling: she secretly sees him against the wishes of her father and brother. In the case of Stephen, Maggie decides (with the utmost difficulty) not to “throw everything else to the winds for the sake of belonging to” him (369) but to be motivated by her feelings of pity for, and faithfulness to, Lucy and Philip. Maggie’s surrender to Stephen and consequent departure from him is fascinating and requires far greater elaboration and analysis than I am capable of presenting here. However, I will say that no matter what one thinks of this scene, it is important to note that Maggie herself feels that she has made the right decision; it is a decision most coherent with her past self (648).<sup>6</sup>

Stephen is unable to persuade Maggie to be with him as his wife, either in person or by letter. This is because Maggie is confident she has made the right decision by refusing him. Maggie’s confidence originates in her greater self-know-

ledge: "Many things are dark to me—but I see one thing quite clearly—that I must not, cannot seek my own happiness by sacrificing others . . . I should be haunted by the suffering I should cause" (571)<sup>7</sup> Her self-knowledge is brought about by her ability to analyze her experiences in greater depth. Maggie's analytic powers have become more sophisticated because she has increasingly engaged in good reflective practices. Maggie engages in hypothetical thinking: "O how brave you are, Tom. I think you're like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you'd fight him—wouldn't you, Tom?"<sup>8</sup> She emphathizes with fictional characters and with other human beings by imagining what life must be like for them: "O, what is Lucy feeling, now?" (603).

She learns to ask questions and goes on to refine her questions so they become more insightful. Initially, Maggie's communication with others was motivated by a desire to impress and dazzle them with her cleverness: she converses with Luke "wishing him to think well of her understanding, as her father did" (80). However, in time, Maggie starts to acknowledge the other person with whom, as opposed to whom, she is talking, as a perspective. She says to Philip at one point, "And your mind is a sort of world to me. You can tell me all I want to know." (There is some flattery in this line of Maggie's but this is because Maggie is not only responding to Philip's question but the insecurity which motivates his questioning of her). Also in her discussions with Philip, Maggie acknowledges, "I understand what you mean" (426) and "she felt there was some truth in what Philip said" (427). In seeing another person as a perspective, Maggie is acknowledging that they and their inner psychology largely elude her. She is reluctant to judge others therefore, being more inclined to ask them questions and allow them the other—to circumscribe the meaning of their actions and words. Although Maggie cannot know the 'facts' about another, she is nonetheless sensitive to their individuality in her responses to them, often using her own experiences and feelings as a guide: "Hitherto she had instinctively behaved as if she were quite unconscious of Philip's deformity: her own keen sensitiveness and experience under family criticism

sufficed to teach her this, as well as if she had been directed by the most finished breeding" (261)

Anyone familiar with Philosophy for Children will recognize these attributes of Maggie which I have briefly described, as some of the attributes which Philosophy for Children aims to foster in its students. *The Mill on the Floss* as much an argument for Philosophy for Children as it is for Maggie; Philosophy for Children assumes and educates for the understanding of subjectivity embodied in the character of Maggie and it educates the conception of subjectivity. What is curious therefore, from the perspective of someone who is a proponent of Philosophy for Children is the question of why Maggie is presented, if albeit unsuccessfully, as such a tragic heroine<sup>9</sup> Although *The Mill on the Floss* traces Maggie's development from an impetuous and impudent girl to a reflective adult, at the end of the novel she is not fulfilled or particularly happy. At the time the Floss begins to flood, she is on her knees, desperately trying to stem her longing for Stephen, and yearning for an early demise of her suffering. There may be a number of explanations for this, I shall look at one of them. She may not have been as knowing about herself as she first assumed. She was not beyond self-deception: she had never been completely honest to herself or Philip about the platonic nature of her feelings for him, nor had she been entirely honest with herself or Stephen as to the sexual nature of her passion for him. She was still, despite her independence, dominated by Tom's judgment of her, and the value which that judgment was grounded in. But if Maggie did know herself as well as she could have, the tragedy lies not so much in herself but in the absence of a community of like-minded individuals, the absence of a community of inquiry.

#### NOTES

1. I shall leave it to others to determine whether or not this contributes to the deficiencies of *The Mill on the Floss*. I will merely note that when George Eliot wrote *The Mill on the Floss*, she was still very much a new-comer to the task of writing fiction—*The Mill on the Floss* was one of her early novels—having had her training in philosophy.
2. There have been some critiques of this im-

age of human subjectivity within philosophy itself in recent years. Iris Murdoch in *The Sovereignty of Good*, identifies this image of the human subject as behaviorist, existentialist and utilitarian. Sam Goldberg in *Agents and Lives: Moral Thinking in Literature*, connects this image of the human subject with an emphasis on conduct morality. I draw on both their works for my portrayal of the image of subjectivity which Tom embodies.

3. All page references to *The Mill on the Floss* are to the Penguin Modern Classics edition (London, 1979).
4. See page 381. Also, "Tom, like every one of us, was imprisoned within the limits of his own nature, and his education had simply gilded over him, and left a slight deposit of polish" (630).
5. Lloyd, G., *Being in Time: Selves and Narrator in Philosophy and Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) page 163. Genevieve's book is an interesting exploration of the way in which philosophy has been aware of subjectivity as creativity.
6. I have in mind Sam Goldberg's discussion of this scene in Chapter Five of *Agents and Lives: Moral Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
7. She says the same thing to Lucy on page 481. There is a suggestion in the novel that Maggie's self-knowledge is accompanied by a feeling of empowerment. As a female and as a child, Maggie was powerless and often felt frustrated by this lack of power. Her responses would often reflect her frustration: she would often respond to objectionable situations with an outburst of tears or with such rash actions as cutting off all her hair, pushing Lucy into the mud and running away to join the Gypsies. However, in her confrontation she remains remarkably calm and unthreatened so much so that he says to her, "I could commit crimes for you—and you can balance and choose in that way" (603).
8. It is not surprising that Tom replies that there are no lions. Maggie suggests a lion country but Tom retorts, "But the lion isn't coming. What's the use of talking?" (89)
9. See Chapter Five of Sam Goldberg's *Agents and Lives: Moral Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).





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