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Thinking

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Thinking in Stories

by Peter Shea



Brian Selznick, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret: A Novel in Words and Pictures* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2007)

The orphan boy Hugo endures a lonely and secret life, sleeping in a hidden room in the Paris train station, continuing his departed uncle's work of tending the station's 27 clocks from small dark tunnels in the walls. At the start of the book, he sneaks out to steal a mechanical mouse from a toy store. He is himself a mouse, a secret creature in inhabited spaces, and also mechanical - part of the mechanism of the station - a boy with a function but no life.

The young thief is caught and forced to show an old toymaker his precious notebook, drawings for repairing his mechanical man. This automaton, the only inheritance from Hugo's watchmaker father, is Hugo's great secret: a writing robot. He is working to repair it using the parts from the toyshop animals, hoping that it will write a note to "save his life."

The toymaker also has a secret, a terrible memory he wants to leave behind. He recognizes with some strange alarm the drawings in Hugo's notebook, and refuses to return it. Hugo is desperate to get it back, and the two artisans become locked together in a strange destiny: Hugo's secret and the old toymaker's secret are part of a large, wonderful, sad story that promises a brighter future for both of them, if they can just work out the mystery together.

This is how *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* begins. It is a demanding book, initiating the reader into a specific time and place, Paris in 1931, and into a set of unfamiliar ideas and metaphors. The young reader must learn his way around this world, and believe in it. The success of the Harry Potter books shows that quite young children relish the challenge of working within unfamiliar assumptions and languages, of following a long and intricate story. This novel builds on that insight.

There is an important difference between the dark Paris of Hugo Cabret and Harry Potter's school of sorcery. As the novel progresses, we learn that Hugo lives in a strange corner of the real world, not in some totally fantastic place. Hugo has stumbled into a fantastic story from real history; the old man from the toy store is one of the early geniuses of French silent film, from the days when filmmakers and toymakers were classed with magicians, because they made impossible things happen. The story begins with the texture of fantasy, but it moves ever closer to real history, ending with bibliography and web references. At the very end, we learn that the writing robot, which seems initially to be the most fantastic feature of the story, is one of many such automata built in the Nineteenth Century; several are on display in the Franklin Museum in Philadelphia. Thus, Selznick challenges the readers' certainty about where the line runs between fantasy and history, forcing

them to ask, "What is possible?" - one of the oldest and best of the philosophic questions.

The form of the novel provokes another kind of question. On the opening page, the narrator tells the reader to think of the book as a movie. This is strange advice; we usually consider books and movies as very different media, for different audiences, at different levels of importance. But this is a movie/book, a sustained meditation on the power of movies and on the early experience of movies as magic, as doors into the world of dreams and unrealized possibility. The conversations between Hugo and the toymaker develop this idea in many dimensions.

However, Selznick's most striking reflection on the power of movies is built right into the structure of the book. The first few pages are like scenes from a silent movie: a trip through a train station, from the perspective of a boy hiding in the wall, peering out through the faces of clocks. Each moment in this journey is portrayed with great accuracy. Suddenly, the drawings stop, and we are confronted with pages of dense text, picking up the story just where the last drawing left it, carrying it on in lucid prose. This seamless alternation continues throughout the novel, leading us to insights and questions about how differently prose and pictures work. The pictures draw us in, convey immediate felt experience, but they are very slow. The prose provides a faster ride through the story, conveying interpretation and background impossible with pictures alone. And then, just when we are feeling starved for the feel of Hugo's life, another haunting sequence of pictures brings us back behind Hugo's eyes, in the dark passages of the station. We are made vividly aware that experience has both these dimensions, and that it needs both these media to come to full expression.

I imagine a young child encountering this book, following the trail of pictures, making up a story, and then running up against a page of beautifully printed prose. The child will naturally ask, "What do these strange marks mean? How are they going to help me understand this story?" That question is an entry point into the world of reading. Readers will keep asking it, all the rest of their lives. For asking that question well, and for many other gifts, lovers of literature have reason to thank Brian Selznick.

Engaging the Interview Process: *An Introduction to the Third Feminist Issue of* *THINKING*

Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd



The interview is a common part of modern life. At first glance, its ordinariness hides its complexity. For though it is a seemingly simple space of meeting between two, within this space there is a wide array of interaction points. It is within this space that I begin this short commentary; for it is here where Dr. Ann Margaret Sharp began a course at Montclair State University, Montclair NJ on Feminism and Philosophy for Children, spring 2006.

What is an interview? If we refer first to the definitions found in ordinary language we find two main themes: 1) the interview as a gathering of information between two persons (e.g: Barbara Walters interviewing Tom Cruise) and 2) the interview a formal interaction where one person seeks to evaluate a person's qualifications or behavior (e.g.: the judiciary committee interviewing John Roberts as to whether or not he was fit to be a U.S. Supreme Court Judge). These commonly held definitions of the interview regard the subjects involved in the interview experience as unequal participants: The interviewer seeks to either elicit information from or evaluate the interviewee. Does this inequality actually exist? While we tend to speak of interviews as objective experiences of information gathering, is this the case? Furthermore if this is the case, should it be the case? Thus, do we think of the interview wrongly? Do we miss something in this ordinary conception of the interview? Perhaps there is more the interview may offer us?

At first glance an interview *is* only a gathering of information by a powerful subject through the objectification of a subject. The interviewer wants to know something and poses a question to the interviewee. The interviewee, more often than not, complies and answers the question. Rarely, do we see Oprah allowing one of her 'guests' to ask her a question. Oprah is immune to the scrutiny she subjects her guests to. If we were to take a Sartrean view of this interview experience we would recognize only the freedom of the interviewer, who holds the interviewee under a hard gaze. Sarte argues that in order to be authentic we must take from the subjects around us. It is our 'stare' which turns those subjects into objects and ourselves into authentic and free subjects.

However, taking this view simplifies the interview experience. It may be true that interviewers rarely allow the tables to be turned. The BBC News Hour would be quite a different piece of media if so. Yet if it were the case that interviewing was merely a gathering of material I do not believe the interview would hold a revered place in our modern culture. As a populace we would be satisfied with a re-telling of facts by news anchors. Instead, the interview is an intricate piece of our modern life. Having an exclusive interview is the golden ticket for media outlets. The interview captivates us.

Why does the interview captivate us? Perhaps it is merely an evolutionary tool. An interview allows us to see the face of the person. We are, by nature, most often visual creatures. We judge truth of experience by our ability to tell whether or not another human subject is sincere and can be trusted. However, the ability to see an interview does not always apply. Printed interviews are celebrated aspects of our culture and radio DJ's have successfully captured audiences with audio interviews.

There must be something more than the evolutionary need to sense the person, their humanness, their friendliness, their capability of joining in on the hunt. Rather there is something else about an interview that we must desire.

What we desire is the relationship which grows between the interviewee and the interviewer. It is not merely that Oprah interviews interesting people that continues to make her show one of the highest viewed network daytime talk shows but it is Oprah herself and the way that she elicits comments and insights throughout the interview. It is what we know of Oprah through her interview that makes us watch. Jerry Springer's guests, do not the Jerry Springer show make. Terri Gross and Ira Glass from National Public Radio have in common, not (as some would argue) a specific type of United States listener but engaging ways of creating an experience together with the person they interview. We listen and watch Barbara Walters and Tavis Smiley as they interview because we are interested in the information that we gather between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is this relationship which fascinates and it is this relationship

that allows the interview something which no memoir or encyclopedia will offer to us.

If this is true, that it is the relationship which captivates us, not merely the information gathered, as audience then it is no wonder that the interview rarely satisfies. Although there are memorable interviews (where as an audience we have gathered much information) rarely are we truly satisfied. We always want to ask one more question.

It is not only our own questions that we desire to ask Tom Cruise or Dick Cheney. Oftentimes it is the interviewer her(his) self whom becomes the more strange, we desire more of the interview because within the interview experience we learn of two persons, two subjects. It is this desire to watch an interaction unfold across all parts of its experience that is the captivating aspect of the interview. It is a desire to watch a building of selves. It is a desire that the media market has so skillfully capitalized on but it is this same desire that allows the interview to be an educational tool.

If we regard the interview as something more than a Sartrean example of the gaze of the other then we may turn towards the work of Simone De Beauvoir for a different and more feminist picture of the interview experience. In her work, *Simone De Beauvoir, Philosophy and Feminism*, (2001) New York; Columbia University Press, Nancy Bauer attributes to De Beauvoir's a re-viewing of the Sartrean situation where the Other's has freedom as well. Bauer states,

This situation does not strike the Other as something that just incidentally results from my actions; its something that the Other, the Other as subject, automatically, phenomenologically, regards as *mine*. The situations I create by my actions automatically become, in other words, phenomena open to and even inviting her judgment" (p.150)

De Beauvoir's reading of the gaze of the Other becomes a situation not only in which I am called to judge and view the Other but she is also called to judge and view me, both in our subjectivity. Furthermore Bauer credits De Beauvoir with the judgment that we forge ourselves through our actions with our neighbors, not merely in discovering them. Thus, we when we observe an interview we are observing persons forming, *two selves* under construction. If we merely say that an interview is to gather information instead of giving recognition in its formative power then we have denied ourselves access to the authentic interview experience. If instead, we regard the interview as subject development,

subjects transformative, then we have three points of learning. First, the person being interviewed is engaged as an active subject, she herself will learn. Second, the interviewer is engaged as a growing, active, learning subject. And third, the audience is privy to an experience of growth (though once removed).

Ann Margaret Sharp began the class on Feminism and Philosophy for Children by asking two questions; 1) What does philosophy for children have to do with feminism and 2) Why has feminist philosophy so ignored the unequal standing of children in the world?

In order to answer these questions we, as a class, turned towards the act of interviewing women philosophers and educators greatly involved and invested in Philosophy for Children. It may seem that we were simply gathering information to answer these two questions. But, Ann Margaret Sharp challenged us to consider the women's answers through our own lenses of research interests and life experiences. Thus, what could have been an empty exercise, an example of Sartre's gaze became a rich focal point from which to answer those first two questions, for the own transformation of ourselves. In conducting these interviews, by telephone, through email, and in person we entered into an interview experience that allowed all of us subjects to grow and discover. The papers following the interviews are papers that stem from the questions raised and the answers given from the interviews. The connection is not always an explicit one; however, the papers show a deep level of grappling with the issues raised in the interviews. Oftentimes the connection was one of personal recognition. As Mor Yorshansky notes in her article, "While I was reading and learning about the history of Philosophy for Children, and women leaders in it all over the world, I was amazed by the repetition of narrative in so many personal biographies".

Each woman interviewed was asked a few of the following basic questions (created by the class as a whole) and some interviews grew from these questions.

- What brought you to Philosophy for Children?
- Did your knowledge and understanding of feminist theory play a role in your decision to become involved with Philosophy for Children?
- What feminist authors most influenced you and why?
- What connections do you see between feminist theory and Philosophy for Children?
- Do you believe that there is a connection

between women's liberation and children's liberation?

- To what extent do you think the practice of philosophy/philosophy for children/community of inquiry plays a role in this libratory practice?
- Do you see a connection between class struggle and women's liberation?

Ching-Ching Lin interviewed Kun Peng, a leading educator in a Chinese preschool. In the interview Ching-Ching asks, "Do you consider yourself a feminist? If yes, did your knowledge of feminism play a role?" The reply from Kun Peng is that "feminism is this self-determination". Kun Peng brings up the role of self within the feminist philosophy and feminist education. How can Philosophy for Children nurture the self of the child in its practice? What dimensions of the self can be nurtured through philosophy? This same issue is brought forth in the interview with Marie-France Daniel conducted by myself. Marie-France asks us to consider "human virtues" such as strength and courage as necessary characteristics to fighting inequality in the workplace. Her belief in the power of philosophy to allow children to find the "beauty of being human" is made explicit in this interview. Both Marie-France and Kun Peng placed great importance on the self in the liberation process for the women. And this question of self reverberates throughout the theoretical papers following.

In a Community of Inquiry facilitated with Marie-France which took place mid-semester, after her interview was completed, this position was found to be in tension when looked at in regards to communal life. Richard Odiwa takes this tension and explores the nature of feminism in an African context. He notes that the question of gender in Africa must be explored not only through the individual self but through the cultural norms of the body, experience, identity, and communal interest. Instead of focusing on the self and its self-liberation Richard notes that, "African women derive the basic tenets of African feminization theory from the notion of justice". How does Philosophy for Children grapple with this tension? How do educators both explore notions of community and justice and provide self liberating experiences? What is justice within the P4C context?

Stella Accorinti while writing to Julia Jackson takes issue with making a strong connection between class and race struggles and feminism noting that "I cannot see any connection between the two paradigms in order to resolve them into only one, I mean a third one". Julia Jackson explores these different views of feminism in her paper

on race and feminism arguing that until these differences are resolved, until feminism is defined then feminism as a whole will continue to be a splintered affair.

Richard Odiwa interviewed Daniela Camhy who replied to his questions that philosophy and the pedagogical method of P4C serves to empower young girls enabling them to speak and reason more clearly. "By looking at dialogues in the classroom I suddenly noticed that girls got more self confidence and that doing philosophy provided them with tools they did not have before". Mor Yorshansky asks us to look at the assumptions that may exist in this common picture of Philosophy for Children. She questions along with Jen Glaser, whom she interviewed, whether or not social inequality can be guaranteed through Philosophy for Children pedagogy and second, what if cannot? She asks us to question our search for ideal practice.

John Cleary interviewed Megan Laverty and the question of new and better practice for Philosophy of Children was raised. Megan notes, "I think that the theory of COI would benefit from appropriating some of the modern feminist discourse on desire, so as to understand and better facilitate the complexity of the interactions of the COI". I grappled with the challenge that Megan put forth, how to put desire within the Philosophy for Children teaching context.

In keeping with the move to look at better practice, the interview with Wendy Turgeon conducted by Julia Jackson brought up a similar point to Megan's noting that there are many connections between feminist theory and P4C. Patricia Lowry, and Dina Medonça similarly discuss in their papers the connections between Philosophy for Children and terms and ideas considered outside of the teaching realm and within the realm of Feminism and Philosophy. Dina insightfully looks at emotions within Philosophy for Children practice. Patricia notes the similar definitions of caring found in nursing philosopher Jean Watson and the definitions of caring put forth by Mathew Lipman.

Thus, by conducting and reading these interviews the Spring 2006 course on Feminism and Philosophy for Children engaged with Ann Sharp's questions: *What does philosophy for children have to do with feminism; Why has feminist philosophy so ignored the unequal standing of children in the world?* in a transformative manner. It is this experience which is recorded in the following pages. I hope that it captivates the audience of *Thinking*, as much as it captivated our selves.

An interview with *Stella M. Accorinti*

Interview conducted by Jaye Julia Jackson



Introduction

The following interview was conducted through an email questionnaire by Jaye Julia Jackson, a doctoral student at Montclair State University. Stella Accorinti is a leader in Philosophy for Children in Argentina.

JJ: Julia Jackson

SA: Stella Accorinti

Interview

JJ: What brought you to P4C?

SA: That is a long story. During the '90s I finished my studies as a Licentiate in Philosophy. For many years I had been asking what I wanted to do with my life after I finished my degree. The answers always circled around the idea that philosophy is not a cemetery for conceptual mummies; that philosophy involves not only the history of philosophy but also the doing of philosophy in all ways and in all places, and that, in any case, all people are philosophers. A coworker in the University of Buenos Aires had bought a book during his travel across Europe, and he lent it to me for a week. This book was *Filosofía en el aula* (a translation into Spanish of some chapters of *Philosophy Goes to School and Philosophy in the Classroom*). I began to find people who were involved with P4C in Argentina, and I found that Gloria Arbones had discovered P4C at the same time. In my case, in Argentina, it was through a book, and in her case through Irene de Puig in Barcelona. Then I was surprised to find notices announcing that Ann Margaret Sharp herself was flying to Buenos Aires that week to teach a workshop. In those times I was heavily involved in work—as a Philosophy teacher and also as a Literature teacher—and I had four daughters. My salary was not sufficient to enroll in that workshop, and the workshop was so near. Anyhow, only two years later I was with Ann Sharp and Mathew Lipman in the first workshop in Buenos Aires, developed as a Mendham-style workshop. In addition, I was one of the first ten people to be working with P4C before

that workshop, and one of the people who organized it (including renting a first floor apartment for Mat, buying some little female things for Ann, and so on.) The rest of the story is known from the book *Introducción a Filosofía para Niños* (Introduction to Philosophy for Children in Argentina), published in Buenos Aires in 1998 (the same day that my mother died, on February 18). I would like to add, at this point, that the first nine students who had sessions in P4C with me were only girls (Camila Arroyo, Malena Arroyo, and others)

JJ: What feminist authors most influenced you? Why?

SA: Several women have influenced me. Some of them cannot be called 'feminist', because they lived before the feminist movement was born. There is another group that influenced me, not necessarily by their writing, but by their attitudes. They cannot be called "authors", because we know them more by their lives than their writings. Finally, another group can be called "feminist authors".

I will name not only some of the third group, but also some of the first and second group:

First group

Diotima of Mantinea: In the Symposium, Plato named Diotima of Mantinea as Socrates's mentor. It has been the assumption of contemporary historians that Diotima was a fictional character. However, there is credible evidence that she in fact existed. The origin of the suggestion that she was fictional has been traced to a 15th century Humanist, and until that time it had been accepted by historians that Diotima had undeniably existed. Diotima, her voice and her gestures, influenced me in various ways. In my novel, *Socrates*, Diotima speaks through Socrates. I finished my *Socrates* two years ago. In the text, Socrates is always represented by women: Xantipa, Mirto and others. Socrates is the opposite of Plato in my writings, using as a basis Socrates' saying that we can read in Diogenes Laërtius: "This young man

[Plato] has been telling too many lies about me!”

Aspasia of Miletus: Aspasia was an influential intellectual, active in the inner circles of ancient political and intellectual life at the time of Plato. She was a leading member of the Periclean circle, and thus, with others, a co-architect of the Sophistic movement. She was considered very knowledgeable about matters of state and she taught rhetoric to Pericles. Philosophers of her time called her brilliant and renowned, the “mistress of eloquence.” Socrates and his friends visited her often while she taught him rhetoric and philosophy.

The two Theanos: The first is Theano of Crotona, the wife of Pythagoras, who was a member (along with her three daughters) of the original Pythagorean cult. There is a manuscript attributed to Theano in which she discusses metaphysics, and there are records of her many written works in which she expresses her views on marriage, sex, women, and ethics. Upon the death of Pythagoras, Theano, alongside her two sons, became the director of the Pythagorean School. The other Theano was another late Pythagorean philosopher, but I don’t know where she was born. She raised the question of whether it is an individual’s responsibility to live life according to whichever moral theory best takes into account their special circumstances. She showed that harmony is the principle underlying human moral psychology and education.

Hypatia of Alexandria: If I must choose only one or two of the ancient women thinkers, I would choose Hypatia without any doubt. She lived in Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, in the 4th century AD. At that time, Alexandria was the literary and scientific center of the world, containing numerous palaces, the Alexandrian Library and Museum, influential schools of philosophy, rhetoric, and other branches of learning. Hypatia was Alexandria’s most eminent neo-platonic philosopher and mathematician. She was renowned before the age of 30, in intellectual communities from as far away as Libya and Turkey. This was a time of great social and religious turmoil as the Christians gained strength in the region. The emperor forbade pagan cult practices in Egypt and rioting broke out between the Christians and the pagans.

While the Roman Christian government persecuted Jews and pagans, the government honored Hypatia with an unprecedented, paid public position as the head of the neo-platonic school of Plotinus. This was all the more significant because the government of Alexandria

was Christian and Hypatia was a pagan. She headed the prestigious institution for 15 years and students, both male and female, traveled from afar to study under her. She taught geometry, mathematics, the works of Plato and Aristotle, neo-Platonism, astronomy, and mechanics.

Hypatia met an early and gruesome death at the hands of a mob of monks who pulled her from her chariot, dragged her into a church, stripped her of her clothing, hacked her body to pieces with sharp shells, and then took her dismembered body to another location and burned it. Unfortunately, although Hypatia was known as the greatest philosopher of her day, her teachings and writings were virtually ignored by historians of philosophy for almost 1500 years.

Hipparchia of Maroneia: Hipparchia was so inspired by the speeches, life and conversation of Crates, the famous cynic philosopher, that no advantage conferred by wealth or nobility could separate her from him. She was so in love with Crates that she told her parents that she would kill herself if they refused to allow her to marry him. Finally, the parents begged Crates to dissuade Hipparchia, and he did what he could, but nothing prevailed. Finally, he removed all his clothes and said to her: “This is the bridegroom and these are his goods; if you accept then you could not be my companion without embracing my institute.” She chose him, and taking only her dress, she walked away with Crates. One day in a symposium that Lisimaco gave, where Theodorus was also present, she proposed the following argument: “That which would not be said to be wrong if Theodorus did it, should not be said to be wrong if Hipparchia does it. In hitting himself Theodorus does no wrong, so nor does Hipparchia do wrong in hitting Theodorus.” Theodorus made no reply apart from pulling up her clothes and showing her legs. She was not offended or distressed by this, but Theodorus said to her: “Who is this woman who has abandoned the shuttle of the loom? Hipparchia replied: “I am, Theodorus, that person, but do you think that I have erred if I have given to philosophy the time that I would otherwise have spent at the loom?”

Hipparchia and Crates had sex in public and lived in the streets, like dogs (the word ‘cynic’ has its roots in ‘kyn’ (dog)). When it was cold, they slept together with poor people. It was said that they gave warmth to them. They ate from the trash, together with dogs. At this point I must say ‘stop’ because, like Nietzsche, I think that the Cynics were the “most beautiful people in the ancient world”, and also “Before we go seeking man we will have to have found the lantern.—Will it have to

be the Cynic's lantern?" Ancient Cynics were the only philosophers who lived according to what they wrote and said. That says a great deal. Remember Diogenes, the most renowned of the Cynics. During his time in Corinth, an interview is said to have taken place between him and Alexander. Plutarch relates that Alexander, when at Corinth, receiving the congratulations of all ranks on being appointed to command the army of the Greeks against the Persians, noted that Diogenes was not among their number. Curious to see the one who exhibited such haughty independence of spirit, Alexander went in search of him and found him sitting in the sun. "I am Alexander the Great," said the monarch. "And I am Diogenes the Cynic," replied the philosopher. Alexander then asked what service he could render Diogenes. "Stop standing between me and the sun," said the Cynic.

Second group

I would like to represent all of them with only one woman, **Rosa Lee Parks**, who refused to give up her bus seat to a white man in 1955. I suppose I don't need to say anything more about her, one of the real pioneers in the modern civil rights movement.

Addendum: Here I would like (or better, I need) to add the name of **Wynona Moore**. She was Martin Luther King's tutor, and therefore, in my view, is intimately linked with Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement. Wynona Moore, more recognized in the state of New Jersey as Wynona Lipman, was the first Afro-American woman who become a senator in the United States. I would like to propose a hypothesis: Wynona Lipman had an important influence on the birth of this creature called Philosophy for Children. She was, almost without doubt, the inspiration behind the creation of Fran, a friend of Lisa, in the P4C curriculum. The character also appears in Suki. It is almost obvious that the name 'Fran' is a pun on 'France'. Wynona Lipman Moore was a French translator and Professor and spoke French perfectly. Wynona Moore and Matthew Lipman met in travelling from the United States to France, where both had a fellowship to study in Paris. There they were in a little intellectual circle with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Guggenheim's daughter, among others. Wynona married Matthew Lipman in Paris, in the 50's. (The Wynona M. Lipman Education and Training Center, known as Lipman Hall, is a state-of-the-art children's residential treatment facility and on-site school located on an urban campus in Newark, New Jersey. The staff-secure facility, which opened its doors in November 2001, serves up to 212

adolescent males between 12 and 21 years of age with serious behavioral problems and special needs, including sexually aggressive youth and arsonists.)

Third group

With your permission, in this section I will only name the authors, because they are well known: the **Bronte sisters, Emily Dickinson, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Terry McMillan, Amy Tan, Anais Nin, Lou Andreas von Salome, Ursula K. Le Guin, Audre Lorde, Marianne Moore, Sylvia Plath, Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, Marguerite Duras, Flora Tristán** (Paul Gauguin's grandmother), **María Zambrano, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Cecilia Bohl de Faber** (a.k.a. Fernán Caballero), **Lucía Etxebarria, Gabriela Mistral, Alfonsina Storni, Lucia Irigaray, Francoise Sagan, Madame de Stael, George Sand, Marguerite Yourcenar, Mary Wollstonecraft** (Frankenstein's author), **Patricia Highsmith, Espido Freire, Susan Sontag, Hilda Doolittle and Jeanette Winterson**. I must not forget to make a final point here. I am at a loss with several names, because in this section I have been remembering them without any order and also thinking almost always of writers but only a few feminist theorists. In this reply, Julia, I am much indebted to you. Any debt to the authors not mentioned is my own failing.

JJ: What connections do you see between feminist theory and P4C?

SA: I think P4C is a feminist theory. Part of the richness of P4C is its point of view that all of us are philosophers (women, children, men). This is a classical matriarchal paradigm: to include all people as human beings who have the same rights.

JJ: Do you think there's a connection between women's liberation and children's liberation?

SA: Yes, I do.

JJ: To what extent, if at all, do you think the doing of philosophy plays a role in this liberation?

SA: I am a philosopher. I don't know if I can choose to say 'no'. I guess that all of us believe that our way in the life is something important. This is the meaning of our lives. We believe that doing philosophy plays an

important role at several points of the life. Is it true or it is not? That's the question. Many people have been playing at philosophy in their lives, in their countries. Are they on the path to liberation? Which is the way of liberation? Liberation of what and /or who? I think that liberation and freedom are sisters. I will endorse the following answer about what freedom is: On 16 Apr 2001, Matthew Lipman wrote:

Dear Stella, I think we are free only if (1) we can get the help we need to explore the options that are open to us; (2) we can select among and experiment with those options; (3) we can carry out our choices, in ways that are compatible with justice for everyone; (4) there is equitable access to the world's resources and productivity; (5) our legitimate rights and needs are respected and satisfied; (6) we can express ourselves and enjoy ourselves as we please, so long as we do not interfere with others doing likewise; (7) there is general recognition that freedom is not an independent value, but is contingent upon justice and equality. Mat

To take only one point, we know for example that the 20% of the global population enjoy 80% of the resources. Then, what is the role that doing philosophy plays in this? I know that the answer most probably is: if we can help citizens become active, then, they (we) will do the best for all of us. I think it is really more complex. I believe that the marriage between democracy and capitalism is not a possible means of liberation. We can do a little to enforce the way of liberation, we can walk the way of liberation, but this is only a grain of sand for liberation itself. It is not so little, because the beaches begun with grains of sand, but human beings are not beaches, and human lives are very short, and all the time millions of people die of hunger, etc. Philosophy alone is impotent to offer a real solution in face of the deepest human difficulties. However, this is our role. Playing this role well is important, but it is not an Aladdin's key to open the doors of liberation.

JJ: Do you see a connection between class struggle and feminism?

SA: I think there is a connection between feminism and class struggle, but this connection is a negative one. Feminism and class struggle are different paradigms. The two paradigms assume different conceptions of injustice. In the words of Nancy Fraser, we can call feminism

'the recognition paradigm' and class struggle the 'redistribution paradigm'. The redistribution paradigm focuses on injustices it defines as socio-economic and presumes to be rooted in the economic structure of society. The recognition paradigm, in contrast, targets injustices it understands as cultural, which it presumes to be rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. These two folk paradigms assume different understandings of group differences. The redistribution paradigm treats such differences as unjust differentials. Far from being the intrinsic properties of groups, they are the socially constructed results of an unjust political economy. From this perspective, accordingly, we should strive to abolish, not recognize, group differences. The recognition paradigm, in contrast, treats differences in either of two ways. In one version, they are pre-existing cultural variations, which an unjust interpretative schema has maliciously transformed into a value hierarchy. In another version, group differences do not pre-exist their hierarchical trans-valuation, but are constructed contemporaneously with it.

Sincerely, dear Julia, I cannot see any connection between the two paradigms in order to resolve them into only one, I mean, a third one. If women recognize themselves as women defending women's rights, we cannot defend class struggle, because in class struggle women and men are together, and patriarchal power is not underlined as responsible for the injustice in the world. If we recognize ourselves as workers, we are in class struggle against capitalism, and against certain social classes, however here we are not recognizing ourselves as feminists, I mean, as women defending women's rights... Is it possible that an Aristotelian middle point exists? I don't believe in the Aristotelian middle point on this issue. I don't believe that anything is totally black or white, however, there is an intrinsic vital contradiction if I say: 'I am feminist AND Marxist'

This last point is connected with my criticism of the 'marriage' between capitalism and democracy. If democracy could be a maternal one, my point of view would be different. However, our democracy is a patriarchal one. This includes the Marxist paradigm, because Marx never made any kind of feminist assumption, and he never recognized that work is the basis of the entire problem. Marx, on the contrary, always defended work, almost in the same way that capitalism assumes the point. (I am not saying 'to do' when I say 'to work': to work includes doing—to do—but to do does not necessarily include working.)

*An interview with**Daniela Camhy*

Interview conducted by Richard Odiwa

**Introduction**

The following interview was conducted via email by Richard Odiwa; doctoral student at Montclair State University, February 2006. Dr. Daniela Camhy is a leader in Philosophy for Children at the Austrian Center for Philosophy with Children.

RO: Richard Odiwa

DC: Daniela Camhy

Interview

RO: What brought you to Philosophy for Children?

DC: After I had finished my PhD at the Karl-Franzens University in Graz, Austria I became research associate at the Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies at Indiana State University, in Bloomington Indiana. I worked on the language theory of Karl Buehler and I also worked in a Speech and Hearing Clinic with language impaired and autistic children

When I came back to Austria I participated in the Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg am Wechsel/ Austria. Professor Fowler from Norway told me that he had heard about something that is called "Philosophy for Children". When I asked him, to tell me more, he said he does not know anything about it, but he would send me an address when he is back in Norway. He really sent me the address. It was the address of the IAPC the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children in Montclair. I wrote to Professor Matthew Lipman and got a very kind letter and some materials. He also offered me to come to a workshop. I was so fascinated when I read some chapters of Harry that I decided to participate in the workshop. So I came to Paterson, New Jersey in January 1981. This changed all my live.

RO: Did your knowledge and understanding of feminist theory play a role in your decision?

DC: The 1960's did make many significant changes for women in regards to basic rights. Feminist movements had become more prominent in society, it was a decade of political activism and women wanted real changes in the way that they were treated by society. They demanded greater support for equality and access to good education.

Of course I was influenced by this movement and in a way engaged. I wanted to speak up, but really did not have the tools to get more involved. When I got to know about Philosophy for Children I noticed that doing philosophy with children did not only improve children's thinking skills, but also gave them the motivation and strength to stand up and speak. By looking at dialogues in the classroom I suddenly noticed that girls got more self-confidence and that doing philosophy provided them with tools they did not have before. They became equipped with useful tools of inquiry and logic and were encouraged to talk, to listen to each other and got involved in a dialogue in the community of inquiry.

RO: What feminist authors have most influenced you and why?

DC: The feminist movement is concerned with individual autonomy, rights, freedom, independence, tolerance, co-operation, non violence and diversity.

I was inspired by several feminist authors:

By Hannah Arendt (although some people saw her as a non feminist and rejected her as a male theorist), who was dealing with many important questions, for example with the questions: How do we counter totalitarianism and anti-democratic movements? What can the activity of thinking do? "Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happen to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific contents, could this activity be among the conditions that make us abstain from evil-doing or even condition us against it?" (Hannah Arendt: The life of the mind)

How do we become an active citizen? There are many elements in her work, that are important to be explored specially also for a feminist analyses of conditions for active citizenship and gender equality. For example: her “notion of plurality”, her concepts of communicative action, natality, power.....

Hannah Arendt’s suggestion as possible protection and response against social pressures and discriminations was not to deny one’s own identity and assimilate but to fight back with stressing upon one’s own discriminated identity. Recalling her own experience as a child to anti-Semitic remarks of other children, she still remembered her mother’s reaction “you mustn’t let it get to you. You must defend yourself!”

Elisabeth Young Bruehl, the author of the biography of Hannah Arendt, concluded with the thought that most of the feminist analyses of Hannah Arendt tell us more about feminism itself than about Arendt and this in itself is the most valuable result of the encounter of Arendt and feminism.

I was also influenced by the writings of Simon de Beauvoir. She was very much concerned with the ethical responsibility that the individual has to him or herself, other individuals and to oppressed groups. I think it is important to say that her analyses of a free subject always implied the ethical considerations of other free subjects in the world. It also implied an active orientation to the world through projects that express not only our own “freedom” but also encourage the freedom of the others.

Martha Nussbaum’s works influenced my thinking as well. On the one hand her political thoughts that relates to law, but also her work on moral philosophy and her writings on literature. In discussions about multicultural reforms in education, she points out that recognizing cultural differences is not enough. The goal is to become a “cosmopolitan” – a citizen of the world, “someone whose loyalty is not to a particular locality or cultural order but to humanity.” She also asks: what is a good society? Are there criteria for determining the most just way human beings might live? What is it for a human being to live well? These are all questions I got involved in.

I was also influenced by the linguist Ruth Wodak, her research focus on the development of theoretical approaches in discourse studies, gender studies, language in politics, prejudice and discrimination. In 1998 we started with our research project “Development of Strategies against Xenophobia and Racism - an Example of Philosophy for Children” including discourse analyses.

Of course I was influenced by Ann M. Sharp, by all her writings and by her activities. It is not only the theory but also the practice that is involved in Philosophy for Children. Like one of the justifications Ann Sharp and Matthew Lipman offer for introducing children to philosophy in schools is that, unlike other school subjects, philosophical ideas will help them to find meaning in their lives. So this is a benefit for the children and it was a benefit for me to get involved in Philosophy for Children and be part of the community of inquiry.

RO: What connections do you see between feminist theory and P4C?

DC: There are many connections:

- a. the parallel movement in the 1960’s
- b. the political dimension in these movements
- c. both fight for the importance of the awareness that each person has to be respected- women and children have been oppressed and still in many countries do not have access to education - so they need a strong voice in the dominant society regardless of one’s own sex and age
- d. women and of course also children were told that they do not have the ability to reflect and to think on a rational level, so they have to fight against these prejudices and to stand up for equal rights
- e. paying attention not only to the content of discussion but also to the way of how to do philosophy

I think there are many other parallels, but I really wonder why feminist philosophers are not getting more involved in Philosophy for Children, because the doing of philosophy and to engage in philosophical inquiry helps to develop new ways of education. This is essential for the active participation in a democratic society and it might be a good way for peace education

When I asked my colleague, who is a feminist philosopher she said that she is not interested because if she, as a feminist philosopher, would get involved in Philosophy for Children our men colleagues would not take her serious anymore and then she would be driven in a special corner like then she would have to do philosophy of education and that is not what she wants to do.

RO: Do you think there is a connection between women's liberation and children's liberation?

DC: Of course there is. For example, although most of the people know about human rights, unfortunately the message still hasn't been heard or understood in many parts of the world. So women's liberation as well as children's liberation have to fight for their rights. Both, children and women, are groups that have been suffering from repression ever since. Only with the development of human rights in the last fifty years their situation is getting better step by step. But still today and still in Europe, women have not got equal rights, and still children are not taken as full human beings. They are the rights of every man, woman and child anywhere in the world. But unfortunately, this message still hasn't been heard or understood in many parts of the globe. So it is our duty to repeat it time and time again, until the day when women's rights and children's rights are respected and protected throughout the world. Violating the rights of women or girls can never be justified on grounds of cultural relativism or in the name of tradition. Such arguments that sustain and excuse human rights abuses against women and children are mere excuses for their true meaning: that women's and children's lives matter less than men's.

RO: To what extent, if at all, do you think the doing of philosophy plays a role in this liberation?

DC: Philosophy is education for critical thinking and provides skills that enable the individual to question the self and others. Someone who is able to think for her- or himself can not only doubt his or her own values, but is also able to examine the values the thinking of others. The conscious treating with language, the capacity to think and observe attentively leads to an open, critical attitude, so the children do not overtake opinions and arguments without a previous, critical examination of the important factors.

RO: In your opinion, what practices of P4C contribute to both women's liberation and children's liberation?

DC: Philosophizing for all members of the community of inquiry, no matter if they are children, women or men can improve certain skills that help them to express themselves clearly, get better self confidence and not let themselves dictate opinions or thoughts. These skills

which are listed in the following help them to liberate themselves and to stand up for their rights.

These skills are, among others:

- Giving and asking for reasons
- Making distinctions and connections
- Giving counter-examples
- Discovering assumptions
- Using and recognizing criteria
- Asking questions
- Referring consequences
- Recognizes logical fallacies
- Calling for relevance
- Defining concepts
- Seeking clarification
- Voicing implications
- Perceiving relationships
- Judging well
- Using good analogies
- Voicing fine discriminations
- Sensitivity to context
- Offering alternative points of view
- Building logically on contributions of others

RO: Do you see a necessary connection between class struggle and women's liberation?

DC: Same work, same salary is a well known claim of feminism as well as of concerning class struggle. In this sense there is a connection between class struggle and women's liberation. Women are also a disadvantaged group that struggles for its rights. Also the fight of workers for better conditions has improved the situation of women, who since the industrial revolution have been working in great number in the factories. The great feminist Simone de Beauvoir noticed a parallelism between class struggle and feminism but concluded that the objectives of feminism go farer: "Feminism for me is that parallel to the struggle of classes there is a fight for the claims of women. The social revolution alone will not be able to solve our problems." That means that there is a connection between class struggle and feminism, but that feminism with its special claims also exists apart from class struggle.

An interview with

Marie-France Daniel

Interview conducted by Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd



Introduction

The following interview takes place during the week of March 3, 2006, through email correspondence between Marie-France Daniel, a prominent researcher at CRIRES (a center of research in Montreal) and Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd, then a Masters student at Montclair State University in the Philosophy for Children program. The interview occurs 12 years following an article Marie-France published in a special issue of *Thinking* dedicated to Feminism and Philosophy for Children.

Daniel's primary interests are the intersection of critical thinking as practiced with Philosophy for Children and its affects on children's cognitive, emotive, and libratory well being. Daniel is the author of *La Philosophie et les Enfants* and is currently conducting research for SSHRC on violence prevention.

SBS: Stephanie Burdick

MFD: Marie-France Daniel

Interview

SBS: What are you currently working on?

MFD: I am working on a research project on violence prevention which started this year and will end in 2008. It is conducted in Montreal (Canada), Toronto (Canada), Clermont-Ferrand (France), Narbonne (France) and Brussels (Belgium). In total, 16 kindergarten classrooms are engaged in this project. Diverse experts will participate in the analyses of the data: a specialist in psycho-linguistic (France); an expert in violence prevention (University of Geneva); a specialist in comprehension of emotions (Harvard and Aalborg University). The objectives of the research project are: a) to study whether the children who practice P4C during one school year can succeed in understanding the causes and consequences of their emotions and their peers' emotions; b) to study the children's discussions in order to analyze their communication competencies; c) to study the cognitive and moral development of children when

practicing P4C (developmental process of thinking and moral judgment); d) to study the relationship between the children's cognitive development and their social behavior when facing a problem with peers.

SBS: What are your plans for the future?

MFD: For the future, my plans are to continue to study the relationship between P4C and violence prevention. Indeed, it is only when this relationship is scientifically proven that psychologists and philosophers will believe in the positive effects of philosophical dialogue among children to prevent violence. Also, I want to continue to study more deeply the competencies of kindergarten children to dialogue and to think critically. Since Piaget, everyone considers children of this age as essentially egocentric, that is, incapable of engaging in dialogue with peers and unable to think in a complex manner. Finally, I want to demonstrate that P4C has a real cognitive impact on children. To do so, I am now planning with some experts in the field of "brain development" (neuroscience) a research project that will study the development of brain mechanisms (neural systems) in 8-9 and 11-12 years old children when they practice P4C for one school year.

SBS: You relate in a published article in *Thinking*¹, 12 years ago, that it was while walking "in the European cities and museums...that I first came into contact with what I consider a more authentic and egalitarian education" (p.64). Are there any specific feminist theorists or thinkers which played a role in bringing you to Philosophy for Children?

MFD: Among the feminist thinkers the one I appreciated most, at that time (and still, today) was Simone de Beauvoir. I loved her points of view, oriented in a humanistic perspective and her reflecting on women and men fighting for freedom and equality. What led me to philosophy is the wisdom of Ancient Greeks which I wanted to understand and to integrate in my personal experience. Then I worked with the thesis of the 20th century philosophers of education (J. Passmore and J.

Dewey). It was Passmore who led me to Dewey and then was Dewey who led me to Lipman and Sharp. What I appreciated most was that these authors considered it fundamental to develop reflective and critical thinking in pupils.

SBS: What is it specifically about learning which becomes “a liberation” for the women?

MFD: I think that the best way to liberate women is to consider them as human beings, period. And to tell them that the beauty of being human is found in thinking and in fighting for one’s freedom. Learning creates liberation for women but also for any individual. As in Québec, society has been for a long time (until 1968) under the domination of the Catholic religion; the society was quite patriarchal. The models of women that were present around me, while young, were mainly women working at home (cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children). In this context, few women were highly educated. Education was a men’s privilege. So I believe that to learn, mainly to learn to think in a critical manner, is a tool to empower women (and children, and all minorities).

SBS: You note that, “For a woman to take her place within her environment it requires strength and courage!” (p. 65) There are some who would question these words, strength and courage, as patriarchal and that women in academics have simply taken on the male patriarchal role? What is your response to this critique?

MFD: I consider that strength and courage are not male virtues but human virtues. And (even) in 2006, these virtues are necessary to women in order to do what they want. For instance, at UDEM, only 20% of the professors are females. And if we look at the salary of the professors, the men have a higher salary. Indeed some of them have a “bonus” when they are engaged and from the statistics, this has never happened in the case of women. Moreover, when women are in minority in a science department (as the one I work at), they need to publish more scientific papers than men, and to get more grants than their male peers if they want to be acknowledged as a full professor. To me, this means, women need courage and strength at least in the professional sphere of their life.

SBS: Do you believe that there is a necessary connection between the liberation of women and the liberation of children?

MFD: There is not a “necessary” connection between the liberation of the women and liberation of children, but there might be a connection in the sense that, in some contexts of culture, both women and children are marginalized. Both might be considered as objects that men and society use to their benefit. Both might be less educated than adult men and, as a consequence, both might be less reflexive or less critical. This is to say that women and children, in these cultures, might not be able to develop their potential as men could.

SBS: Finally, would you please comment on any aspect of feminism, philosophy, or philosophy for children that you feel I may not have addressed?

MFD: It is difficult, even impossible, to be perfectly stereotype free (male or female; North American or African, etc.) because our culture is unconsciously integrated with these stereotypes. Moreover, if we write philosophical novels for pupils in which the characters are too far from reality, the young readers will not like them because they will not recognize themselves in the characters. And as a consequence, they will not have the intrinsic motivation to work with the novels. So we need to respect a small part of the existing stereotypes (the less harmful I believe) in order to be coherent in the readers’ eyes. The equilibrium between the two positions is always hard to get. But one thing is sure: we have to do something against the hyper-sexuality of the young girls, nowadays. It is like if the feminists’ efforts during 30 years have been reduced to nothing.

SBS: Thank you.

Footnotes

¹ Daniel, Marie-France. (1994). Women, Philosophical Community of Inquiry and the Liberation of the Child. *Thinking*, 11(3,4) p.63-71.

An interview with

Jen Glaser

Interview conducted by Mor Yorshansky



Introduction

The following interview was conducted by Mor Yorshansky; doctoral student at Montclair State University. The interview was with Dr. Jen Glaser, Senior faculty, Mandel School of Educational Leadership, Israel. Jen is President of the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children and Co-Director of The Israeli Center for Philosophy in Education – ‘Philosophy for Life’. It was conducted through a taped telephone conversation and was transcribed and edited by Mor Yorshansky.

MY: Mor Yorshansky

JG: Jen Glaser

Interview

MY: What brought you to P4C?

JG: This is my 21st year with Philosophy for children. My initial contact with P4C was in 1984/ 85 in Australia. Laurence Splitter told me about P4C and I thought it was a fabulous idea. I had just moved to Sydney to help develop a new Jewish Day School. I thought introducing the students to philosophical inquiry could be incredibly important for Reform Jewish education because the principle behind Reform Judaism is informed choice. This means educating the students to grapple productively with the question “how ought I live?” in light of their understanding of Jewish tradition, their conception of the world and their understanding of what is worthy. I taught P4C across the school. During this time Laurance (who had a position in Philosophy at Wollongong University) and I launched P4C in Australia. We brought Ann Sharp and Matt Lipman to Australia for the first National conference.

Later I got an appointment teaching in the school of education at Melbourne University, and began my PhD in philosophy. Laurance and I were then involved in establishing the Victorian Centre for P4C and later, the Federation of Associations for Philosophy for Children

in Australasia (FAPCA). I was also involved in the production of a TV series called Lift Off with Peter Clarke. Eleven years ago I came to live in Israel, where Talya Birkhahn and I established the Israel Center for Philosophy for Children.

MY: What feminist authors most influenced you and why?

JG: This is very difficult question because I find it very hard to pigeon-hole people as feminist or not feminist. Is this a question of what female authors or female philosophers have influenced me whom I regard as being committed to things that feminism is committed to? Because this doesn’t necessarily make them feminist authors. Similarly, you can have men who speak to commitments that feminists speak to, without this making them feminist authors either. So, I think I am just going to talk a little bit about some of the people I was thinking about and reading at this time, people who influenced me in relation to both feminism and P4C.

Am I a feminist in terms of my own commitments and what I think is good and what I promote? A version of feminism, yes. Do I consider myself a feminist author? I don’t think so. It is not that I read feminism in order to develop a ‘feminist approach’ to other things I am interested in - like conceptions of self and community and other things, rather, I think I am a theorist for whom certain feminist commitments resonate and which I take as my own. So I think there is a tension about what makes you a feminist or not. I think the same thing can be said of some of the people I am going to comment on. One influence on me, Martha Nussbaum, is definitely a female author who reflects feminist concerns, but I don’t know if she would describe herself as a feminist author. One of the ways feminist commitments find expression in her work is in the way she goes about moral theory. She often begins with a close examination of particular lives and through this examination of particulars she draws out generalizable truths, or things that are universal about the human condition. Starting with situated complex lives and real human engagements in order to do moral theory

is another way of doing moral theory than starting with abstract principles and deriving implications for life from that. It is an approach I associate with feminism. In her early book “Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature” (as well as in her most recent books) she pays close attention to cognitive emotions – dealing with emotions as a serious form of judgment – and this I also associate with a feminist interest in dissolving the separation of reason and emotions and legitimizing the emotions as a form of knowledge. But Nussbaum is not speaking about the connection between emotions and judgment in order to make arguments about feminist theory. It is more a use of feminist orientation than it is arguing the feminist cause. And in that sense, it’s kind of close to what I think I do.

I think one of the early books that made an impact on me in terms of feminist theory was a book called “Feminism and Critical Pedagogy” edited by Jennifer Gore and Carmen Luke. It is a collection of classic essays in feminist theory. Another book was “The Education Feminist Reader” edited by Lynda Stone. These books influenced me in terms of the connections between feminism and education. Both books just came at the right time in terms of my own engagements of what I knew and what I didn’t yet know.

The second person that I relate to strongly does in fact identify herself as a feminist theorist – this is Seyla Benhabib, even though I think of her more as a social and political philosopher. She takes situated embodied experience as a central part of our experience and identity as persons. When she speaks about situated lives, and the complexity of persons as culturally embedded human subjects (rather than of persons as idealized agents), this reflects a feminist orientation. Feminism argues with Rawls, that is, it argues with the idea of ‘hiding behind the veil of ignorance’ as a way of doing social philosophy. She is another one that influenced me.

In terms of early influences on me, John Macmurray is where I came across a certain kind of feminist argument for the first time. He is a Christian theologian whose starting point for moral theory is the care required of a mother toward a child. This exposes human experience as quintessentially relational. Annette Baier (another influence on me) also takes this approach in her book “Postures of the Mind: Essays on Mind and Morals”, where she explores Hume as a moral theorist. Macmurray was making these claims back in the early 1950’s. What fascinated me when I first read him was that someone in his time could speak a language that was developed by feminism later. Now I could go on to other people,

but I picked these people because they capture something important about what I take to be the feminist position on certain things that also inform my work.

MY: What connections do you see between feminist theory and P4C?

JG: Firstly, the obvious one is the concern with relationality, the social construction of persons in relation to other persons. Relationality also in terms of constructivism and theories of knowledge. What I see in common between P4C and feminist theory is the dissolution of the fact / value distinction, and of the subject – object divide.

I think P4C, like feminism, doesn’t accept that facts are objective and neutral, or that what we know about the world, in terms of claims about truth, are essentially different kinds of claims than value claims. Feminist epistemologists have argued that claims about facts already have within them, embedded, a whole range of evaluative judgments. I think P4C tries to explore knowledge as informed by, and expressive of, both evaluative and rational judgments – elements that come into play within a single inquiry about the subject that we are on about. And value too, is not devoid of what we know about the world, what we consider to be facts about the world. The object-subject divide is very tied to that. In a way I should have put it the other way around, that the dissolution of this distinction comes first. This is to do with the role of language. For me P4C is a natural language philosophy that takes a hermeneutical approach to claims about truth and meaning. Our concepts are not neutral because they exist inside a language tradition; inside a way of seeing things as *this* rather than *that*.

I think a high percentage of P4C and feminist theory accept a certain contemporary stance on the primacy of language. We simply cannot make claims that lie outside who we are as humans trying to understand the world. I think that the people that influenced me most here are Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty. All knowledge is *human* knowledge, all value *human* value. Truth has to be with a little t and Realism with a little r. It’s interesting, because I’m listening to myself here making claims about P4C -- but I actually don’t think, P4C in its early years would agree with this. It wouldn’t say that this represents where P4C is coming from. Because I think that within P4C there is an early strand that is actually very realist and idealist – a view that basically sees talking with one another as utility towards making fewer mistakes. Early articles on P4C often assume the position that if we talk

together in a CI we will eventually arrive at broader consensus – get closer to the Truth. This is much more platonic than where I am coming from.

I think that the second and third generation of P4C theorists are more concerned with difference – concerns with pluralism and multiculturalism mean we have moved away from a view of inquiry as reducing difference, to a view of inquiry as one that acknowledges– owns – difference, or that is the way I would like to think about it anyway. I think that part of what the CI is about is principled discourse across irreducible differences. It allows reflection on the linguistic and cultural traditions from within we speak and the recognition of these traditions as different traditions. There are probably still people who would say: “no, no– the point is to get to the truth, and there is a single (albeit complex) truth to get to” and they represent one tradition within P4C, but it is not my tradition.

So the next thing I think P4C and feminist theory have in common is placing the social at the heart of what it is to be human. Both feminist theory and P4C see relationality not just in terms of *structure*, but as a *practice* of being in the world that is ultimately social. In a sense the idea of P4C is that we begin figuring things out in the public sphere, and only later internalize this as a practice we call “thinking for ourselves”. Developing a practice of rigorous inquiry in the public sphere is a way for developing rigorous individuals, rather than we develop as individuals and then we come to learn how to reason in public. This is a tradition that we also find within certain traditions of feminism.

The last point to make -- and this again might be a bit contentious – is about justice. I think that in both P4C and feminist theory, the people who are concerned with questions of justice and the good life are concerned with forms of attentiveness rather than merely with principles. It is interesting because P4C also puts an emphasis on logic and on a movement between the particular and the general. In many of the manual exercises and discussion plans, we do actually look to principles to guide our practice as well. But the principles that we apply to our practice often come through in words and examples that are attentive to nuances of detail. For example, when Lisa jumps on the table and says “I am a dog too” – being attentive to what is going on here may take us to principles. But these principles are not ‘the final word’ - they are further resources to bring to bear in being attentive to the situation. The very choice to use narratives as a starting point for generating questions invites us to be attentive to particularity. And so issues of justice are approached

with particularity in mind. We raise questions and then put them on the table in terms of inquiry which can bring principles as well as our experience to bear.

Certainly hermeneutics, natural language and certainly philosophies that start with situated cases – with complex cases – are valued here as an approach to inquiry. The examination of particulars, in order to seek out the general is very much what happens when reading a story and then coming to a question.

MY: Is there a necessary connection between women’s liberation and children’s liberation?

JG: It all depends on what you mean by “necessary”. I don’t see a causal link, but it is no surprise to me that the three great liberation movements – the liberation of women, children and the oppressed – all arose pretty much in the same historic period. As movements they were all born out in the 60’s (though that wasn’t their beginning). Each of them addressed the need, or the right, for recognition. The oppressed and powerless in South America, women in terms of the recognition of voice in the Public Sphere – the political sphere and in the work force and in all the rest of it. And then it happened with children which I think is Matthew Lipman’s great contribution in the 70’s. I think in each case it is the recognition of full personhood. What it is to recognize these groups as equally human, equally persons.

What was at stake here in these liberation movements is the right of participation; Participation in society; participation in the vote; participation in having something to say. I think Hannah Arendt actually gets it right. I want to give you a short quote from her. She talks about it as the right to have rights, which is a chapter of “The Origins of Totalitarianism”. Before we can speak about rights *as* participants in society she claims that we need to speak about the right *of* participation. The right of participation for her rests on three forms of recognition – and here is the quote: When we think about rights we need to think “not of a right to freedom but of the right to *action*, not of the right to ‘think what they [we] please’, but the right to *opinion* and [of the right] to belong to some kind of organized community”. What I want to talk about are these three forms of recognition as conditions for participation in the public sphere. When Arendt says ‘not the right to think what they please but the right to Opinion’, certainly with children, if you think about it, treating someone as having an opinion is actually to treat them as having something to say. And this means that we have to recognize their *capacity* to respond to what is

going on and their *entitlement* to respond.

I think we can all think of cases where we consider people have a right to think as they please, but we do not treat what they say as actually having an opinion. In a way what P4C represents is taking what children say as a true opinion, that is a form of participation in the public sphere. But what Arendt is addressing is actually prior to this – it is about whether one is even considered to be relevant. That is certainly one thing that women's liberation and children's liberation have in common. Because it is also a question of women's voice. Everyone thought that women said lots of things, but their right to have opinion – political opinion expressed in their vote, expressed in their engagement in public life, expressed in the recognition of their rationality – that is what was at stake.

The second one: 'not the right of freedom but the right of *action*' is similar. For Arendt action is about the human capacity to initiate something new, it is about our agency. In this case we insert ourselves into the world as we come together in the public sphere to initiate something new. It is participatory and generative and not just social reproduction.

So I think that when we talk about children in schools and we talk about the importance of student *activities* and their freedom to *do* things, that doesn't necessarily mean we respect their capacity and entitlement to action – to *initiate something new*. Very few places in education see children as participants in the generation of new beginnings. Rather what they are doing is reproduction. And I think the CI is one place where we really respect children's capacity to generate something new, to initiate newness. One of my criticisms is that I don't think we take this on fully enough within P4C. I think we do it well in terms of the deliberation in a public sphere, but I don't know that we give children the capacity to translate that into social action. Which is why, in my current thinking about P4C, I am asking how we might need to expand our thinking about CI if we want people publicly engaged in the problems and construction of society in the way of initiating new things out there. Giving children the skills and experience of deliberative discourse may not be all that is required in order to recognize them as having the capacity for action in the world (not just opinion). Again, I think this is what P4C shares with feminism. Women too were not seen as having the capacity to act as participants in initiating new things in the public sphere in terms of politics and business, and all the things they fought for. To see their activity not as a 'doing' but as forms of action. So, too with the private sphere – women

were seen as 'doing' housework, but not homemaking as a form of action. So that is something that the two movements absolutely share.

The third one – belonging to an organized community – is I think very important here. It is not just belonging to community it is belonging to *organized* community, in other words a structured polis of some kind. Belonging to a polis involves the recognition of being inside a framework of joint action. Organized community is also about a space for collaboration, about the group making arrangements to do something shared, not just individual actions around others who are also acting. It is intra-social rather than inter-social. I think that this right to belong to organized community is a form of recognition present in P4C – a CI is not a matter of random speech, but a matter of organized speech – organized according to the 'rules' of deliberation, and organized around the collaborative search for understanding / truth / meaning. It is not the case that we simply happen to be there when a comment flies past us. The alternative to recognition of our presence in organized community is a kind of institutionalized blindness – not 'part of the system' we are not even seen. For instance: Women might exist within the community, we might even say they are members of the community in the sense that they live in this community, but we don't have them in mind when we talk about what it is to engage in joint action in the community, issues of representation and those sorts of things.

If I am talking about the practices of P4C that contribute to children's liberation then there are some other practices within P4C beyond those internal to a CI that also contribute toward this. These are the practices of people committed to P4C doing things like the children's parliament in Europe, and things like the *Questions* journal that is produced under the auspices of the APA in America. P4C contributes to children's liberation by giving them voice and the possibility of participation in the larger social sphere that is usually closed to children (at least to organized contributions from children). It gives recognition to them in the face of society and the polis in general. This, I think, is really important.

Another way that P4C contributes to children's liberation is in some of the theory that has been put out by people committed to P4C. There are a number of scholars that identify with, and have often worked within, the movement that have done a lot to put children forward. Examples include Gareth Matthews, "Philosophy in the Young Child" and "The Philosopher's Child", and Michael Pritchard with "Reasonable Children" and

“Philosophical Adventures with Children”, Walter Kohan’s publications in Brazil, and David Kennedy’s work on the philosophy of childhood, which is, I guess, the most recent. There are obviously many contributions I have left out here as well.

MY: To what extent, if at all, do you think doing philosophy plays a role in this liberation?

JG: I would say that doing philosophy plays a role in giving us voice – as treating people as having opinions. But it contributes more – philosophy also recognizes thinking and speaking as forms of *action*. The life of the mind, like doing physical action, is an expression of agency and of the capacity to generate something new.

Here I would say that deliberation as recognition of one’s membership in organized community is not just taking a stance regarding ‘thinking’ and ‘speech’ within the philosophical tradition (where dialogue is a matter of ‘speech acts’) but emerges from our particular way of embodying that tradition – the CI.

MY: Do you find any difficulties or contradictions in terms of the way P4C allows the liberation of women, both practitioners and students?

JG: I think that it depends. I wouldn’t say that there is one tradition within P4C – I’d prefer say that there are different traditions within P4C, and these different traditions raise different difficulties and contradictions. It is not a monolithic movement and people have developed in different directions. Today we can also speak of different generations of P4C – each moving on from the starting point of the other.

Within that, I think, If you look back historically to the birth of P4C, then in some ways, I guess, it would be interesting to explore whether the three waves of feminism are paralleled in different waves of P4C. In the first case it was about voice – the suffragette movement

– gaining the vote. This was the struggle for the right to have rights. In P4C this was about the right of children to be taken seriously as capable of reason, opinion and action. First wave feminism grappled with what it meant to be treated as equals. Women were as good at doing what men do as men themselves, the rational bit, the logical bit. Structural inequalities needed to be addressed, as did women’s self-conception. This has its parallel in P4C.

Within the CI there are girls, and they were treated the same as boys. There was no gender distinction regarding what you looked for and expected from individuals in the CI. But one might argue (as did third wave feminists) that this approach was a kind of negation of gender. Saying there is no difference in differences of gender stops us addressing what might be different *because* of differences of gender. But that is an issue to be taken up under 3rd wave feminism. Let’s go back to the second wave.

Second wave was about equality – glass ceilings, working mothers, minority

status... does P4C ensure equality to female students in its own practices? This is a complicated question. In as much as there *are* difficulties and contradictions in the way that P4C allows for the liberation of women (in this second-wave sense), we need to be careful what we ascribe to difficulties inherent to P4C, and difficulties that might be experienced within the context of P4C, but that are difficulties attributable to larger practices within education overall (where P4C is just one more site where they become visible). I don’t see any particular difficulties or contradictions in terms of the role we give the facilitators for instance, or the participation of children. I think the difficulties and contradictions are much more about: (a) how philosophy is done, and (b) the way in which ‘community’ is understood within the individual contexts in which P4C is done. These raise different difficulties and contradictions in terms of how women are coping and are benefiting from the CI. Are women yet taken seriously as philosophers? Do communities make equal space for women to participate



and grow? We are not there yet, but we are a lot closer than we were in the 60's.

Third wave feminism (really since the late 80's, early 90's) has been all about reclaiming difference. The nature / nurture argument was no longer about genetic capacity of women to be like men, but about 'feminine' and 'masculine' labels that were used to identify traits that men as well as women might have. It is about the right of women to choose to stay at home and have kids. The celebration of different ways of knowing. Diversity of cultures within women's cultures.

What about P4C? I don't know if I would say that this attention to difference within a community of inquiry is a 'later' development – maybe it has been there from the start. But certainly greater attention in recent years has gone to acknowledging different styles of thinking, different 'intelligences' in P4C in a more focused way. This is also one of the criticisms teachers used to voice – it is all so verbal/logical/rational – what about the arts? Drama? Feelings? Over time, greater attention was given to other dimensions of what is going on in the CI and other dimensions of the exercise of good judgment. More attention has also gone toward styles of thinking and integrating activities. Care and creativity and multiplicity of ways of thinking, and being sensitive to the emotional side of the inquiry and all of those things. Actually, I think this has gone a long way to dissolve the early criticism. I think that Lipman himself has addressed what might be regarded as emerging feminist concerns over time in the way he has thought about philosophical dialogue in a CI. Adding caring and creative thinking to the repertoire, as well as critical thinking. That is a part of trying, in a way, to address an imbalance in the place given to rationality in defining what it is to be human. In effect it is taking aboard feminist critique.

Are women's voices different to men's? Their way of doing philosophy? It would be interesting to know - and I am only thinking about this right now – if differences are discernable. For instance, it would be fascinating to look at all-girls' school and all-boys' schools that have taken up P4C and ask whether what is being done in the CI is different. Does a CI operate differently? Maybe someone has done this research but I am not aware of it.

MY: Do you find empowering education, CI, caring education, etc' to be equally available for both male and female students?

JG: I think I want to ask what we mean by available? We might treat available as three different things. You

could talk about do we make it available in a sense that we *value it and endorse it* and say "you can do this here". There is second way which means do we *let it happen* when it occurs, and the third way would be to say we make it available by actually *creating provision* for it – creating opportunities and structures that make it more likely.

So in terms of, for instance, caring, or empowerment through a CI, we might speak of how children are empowered through their participation in a CI in a sense that we endorse it and we let it happen. The question is do we actually *provide* for it to happen, in a sense of actually setting a structural framework in which it could be encouraged or promoted?

I am not sure we do. In terms of discussion within the CI, I think male and female students are empowered equally unless the teacher, or the person who is leading the discussion, themselves are not sensitive to gender issues – if the teacher always goes to boys when they have their hands up (rather than to girls), or implicitly gives boys' views more authority, then empowering and caring education won't be available to the girls.

Where it might be criticism of the CI is in the third structural sense – is there a way in which we could make provisions in a CI so that the sort of teacher who always gives preference to boys in the discussion cannot get away with it? Answering this means that we have to put issues of power and politics inside the things that the CI is attentive to, and I don't think we have done that. I don't think that we are educating the kids in the CI to take on a political awareness of who is participating, and who is not, and who is actually valued in what they are saying and how to give equal weight to voice with in it. And this is something we might need to ask – do we need to go there?

MY: Do we need to go there?

JG: The assumption I think has been that general education should provide those things; that it is the school's responsibility to make sure that all the kids have equal voice. But we all know from evidence and research that that's not the case. And if it is not the case then how much do we actually put that into our own agenda. If the liberation itself doesn't deliver justice for the participating members we might need to do more – this view I share in common with the second-wave feminist agenda. I have been in many CI's where women's voice has not been given the same weight not because it is not allowed or the CI doesn't let it happen, but because there

is no provision for correcting it when bias occurs.

Let me give one idea of how such bias might be attended to (and I will have to ask Tom Jackson whether he does this or not). Tom Jackson uses cards and symbols in the CI. He has a repertoire of “short hands messages” which give students procedural and cognitive ownership over the discussion. There is a card for “its time to move on” and “counter-example!”, etc’. So if we are talking about the awareness of the politics of a CI around gender, could we have a card that is a short-hand way of saying ““women haven’t spoken for a long time”, or “the rational voice is being privileged over the emotional voice”. It could just be “FPV” – ‘female points of view’. When they are not expressed hold the card up and recognize it, something that actually gives the students (and teacher!) a sense that something is missing and that they are called upon to be attentive to those differences.

The other thing I am thinking is that I am not sure we are attentive enough to the way feminist engagement in the public sphere reflects an industrial model of society – and this is a problem for P4C. Feminist critique often has its metaphoric picket lines, lines of resistance and issues a call for solidarity in a union sense – solidarity of women with each other. Alongside that, promoting women’s voice, and women’s place, is often done reactively – *against* something else. I don’t think P4C sits comfortably with this – there is a clash because P4C is based on dialogue and values dialogue; it pushes dialogue over dialectic engagement. P4C is not about arguing your point against an oppositionary other, but rather asks “how can we think about this together?”. So how we think together about something, already, in a way, addresses some of the gender problems, or the feminist issues. In some ways, the lack of attention to gender in a CI, is because it’s actually about *dialogical* thinking – and this can probably achieve more regarding feminist goals, than the forms of feminism that in fact want us to always have gender and power together in the face of anything that goes on.

MY: Is there a particular connection in your practice of P4C between Progressive Judaism and a feminist approach?

JG: I think I want to break the question down: Is there a particular connection in the way you see the practice of P4C and the practice of Reform or Reconstructionist Judaism? Is there a connection to feminism?

I definitely see connections here. Judaism, like P4C, is about informed choice. Reform Judaism also embraced

the rationalist, individualist, Western, enlightenment tradition. This is often how CI in early P4C was presented – In a CI we all think for our selves. CI helps us get more things right by putting our ideas out there in the public sphere for comment and testing – this is the way ‘self-correction’ seems often to be understood. I don’t believe Matthew Lipman ever had such a view of it – but I do believe that is how many people understand what the CI and self correction is about.

What do I think? I think Lipman was thinking of self-correction much more in line with what now goes by the title of ‘plural subject theory’. That the whole, that is the community as a whole, constituted *one* act of thinking. It is one activity of thinking that had the participation of a number of people in it. With the thinking happening ‘in the center’, self-correction is the correction of a plural subjects towards itself. This is a different conception of community. It is much more de-centered and interdependent, and this ties it much more in a way to feminism.

Over the last 20 years Progressive Judaism, or Reform Judaism has certainly tried to work out what community means in a Jewish context. And what connectedness and living with a community as a vibrant organic interconnected whole is about. Trying to grapple with community beyond just association and formal membership. So in Progressive Judaism we find concerns that are similar to Lipman – thinking about caring, and creative thinking, and about the social context of community, and necessity of community. Certainly the grappling with the meaning of community, and what it means to think for yourself *as a member* of community, is basically the same grappling to me in P4C and in Jewish life. They are played out in different arenas but they both actually address one another.

How I understand myself as a member of the community emerges out of the way the CI operates – and to me this has a lot to do with how we want citizens in the public sphere to relate to one another and to the CI as a whole. This, in turn, has a lot to do with what feminism was fighting for. I don’t think it has much to do with feminism. I think feminism is just another example alongside other such cases.

I think that that is really important in P4C, it is really important in feminism, and the place where we give kids that right is the CI. That is the form of organized community in which they are actually participants, meaning can act within being one of that group. And the alternative to that is a kind of blindness.

An interview with

Kun Peng

Interview conducted by Ching-Ching Lin

Introduction

Prior to becoming the head of a large preschool, Mrs. Kun Peng was the principal of South Station Elementary School in Kunming, where the first P4C workshop in China took place. She was at the position for seven years or so. According to Deng Peng who brought P4C to China in 1996 and who has served as a liaison between IAPC and China since, Kun Peng was the driving force behind the phenomenon of P4C in China, who initially knew little about philosophy and yet with a leap of faith embraced P4C as a means of school reform in China. Under her leadership, P4C flourished first in Kunming and later was adopted by many other schools (mostly elementary level) across China. As professor Peng said, “Without Kun Peng’s single-mindedness and diplomatic savvy, the success of P4C is unthinkable.”

Ching-Ching Lin, doctoral student at Montclair State University was curious about Kun Peng’s stance on feminism and how it has influenced her take on the education of philosophy in China. The following is a transcript of her telephone interview with Kun Peng conducted in February 2006.

CL: Ching-Ching Lin

KP: Kun Peng

Interview

CL: What motivates you becoming who you are?

KP: I have always wanted to be a teacher since I was little. I simply like the image of teacher. Chinese have the highest regard for teachers. After all,

Confucius, who we consider as a saint was a teacher. There is a saying that summarizes the importance of the teacher for me: teachers are the engineers of human mind.

I have continued to work in educational field since I graduated from Teacher’s College in China. I love children, for me children are the purest and most innocent of human species, unadulterated by adult sophistication and hypocrisy. But then what you teach them is important. This is where I believe philosophy can play an important role and why I continue to work with P4C.

CL: What brought you to P4C?

KP: It should be credited to Professor Deng Peng who introduced P4C to China in 1996 and who occasioned the long term collaboration between SSES and IAPC. I was then the principal of SSES, an elementary school in Kunming. I saw the educational potential of P4C and adopted the program. P4C in China has evolved a lot since. As an effort to indigenize, we trained our own teachers, wrote our own teaching material – coming out of that, a series of philosophical stories were published and adopted by many elementary schools nation wide. The P4C program at SSES was a great success I can say. The program was acknowledged by the government for its innovativeness and became a model for school reform.

After my retirement from SSES, I decided to experiment P4C at even younger children. I see no reason why philosophical reasoning can’t start at younger age. In fact, I believe the earlier the better. I think I have been right.

CL: Do you consider yourself a feminist? If yes, did your knowledge in feminism play a role?

KP: Yes, feminism to me is this self-determination, this developing a confident self, this belief in a woman's ability in 'walking out her own path,' her ability in control her own fate. I have been trying to be faithful to this idea of feminism in my practice. But I am not exceptional, I am nothing but part of this new Chinese women phenomenon that have been transforming China since China was liberated. Coming out of the shadow of a feudal past, today's Chinese women are sure of themselves. They know what they want, and how to get there. The iconoclasm of Cultural Revolution has made this possible. You see women in every profession. There is no limit in women's sky except self limitation. There are some women still confining themselves to the traditional roles, but this is no fault of government. It is their own fault.

CL: What authors have had the most influence on you? Why?



KP: Feminism in China is made possible by all those particular women ahead of me who are courageous enough to take the first step, who dared to challenge the tradition and defied the social roles imposed upon them. They are the one who made history and served as role models for women in future generations.

CL: Do you think there is a connection between women's liberation and children's liberation?

KP: Yes, there is a connection between women's liberation and children's education. The more liberated a woman is, the better generation she will produce or help bring up better children. Strong, confident women will set a positive example to our children, especially to girls.

CL: To what extent, if at all, do you think doing philosophy play a role in this liberation?

KP: Philosophy is thinking of thinking. It is a great tool that can be used to question values and let children think for themselves, for shaping children's character development, to become independently minded. One problem with our educational system is its being too rigid, its use of standardized material that disregards and effaces individual difference. Children coming out of this system don't have their own personality. Philosophy education encourages students to cultivate their individuality. If we can make children to think as a habit at early ages, our society will be better.

Also, philosophy can play an important role in character education which has been gradually neglected by our educational system that places no value and emphasis in character education. With its emphasis in community building, it (P4C) will serve to correct the 'little emperors' or 'little empress' phenomenon that is plaguing China as the result of one child policy. Children nowadays become very egocentric and should be reminded that we are essentially a social being.

An interview with

Megan Laverty

Interview conducted by John Patrick Cleary



Introduction

The following interview was conducted via email on February 1, 2006. John Patrick Cleary, a doctoral student at Montclair State University interviewed Dr. Megan Laverty; an associate professor at Teachers College, Columbia University.

JPC: John Patrick Cleary

ML: Megan Laverty

Interview

JPC: How did you first learn about P4C and what attracted you to it?

ML: I first learned about P4C as a Master's student of Philosophy in 1992. After my Honors year in 1991, the Philosophy Department at Melbourne University in Australia invited me to undertake a Master's of Arts in Philosophy with a full scholarship. I agreed. In Australia, at that time, we do a Masters degree by thesis only or by a combination of minor thesis and course work. I chose the thesis-only option and wrote mine on Iris Murdoch's philosophy and it was supervised by Christopher Cordner. It took me three years to complete. I sent it to Iris Murdoch and she reacted to it very favorably. It was at that time that I also began tutoring for the Department. I taught courses on introductory philosophy and the history of philosophy (Plato and Descartes particularly). It was as a teacher of philosophy that I began to become enthused about the discipline. Although I had been a Philosophy honors student from my second year and had often come top my class, I very rarely spoke in my philosophy classes, if ever.

Walking along the corridor one day I saw a notice for a Philosophy for Children workshop. The chair of my Department at the time, agreed to pay all of my expenses for the Workshop, if I was accepted. I

applied and was invited to an interview with Laurance Splitter. At that time Laurance Splitter was the Director of the Center for Philosophy for Children and it was housed at ACER. For the duration of the short interview Laurance managed not to turn around from his computer screen - I don't believe he ever laid eyes on me (I knew then I that I was going to like this very quirky individual).

I attended the workshop and found it a revelation. It was a two week residential workshop, held in Geelong and facilitated by Ann Sharp, Ron Reed, Laurance Splitter and Phil Cam. I couldn't get over the fact that I was encouraged to speak *for myself* - Ann kept insisting that she wanted to know what I thought (Did I own my books or didn't I? - at first I thought that they had to be trick questions!) - and that I was being encouraged to speak about things for which there was *no* preordained expertise. The question of the P4C discussion were neither technical nor textual philosophical ones. They were, rather, philosophical questions about the ordinary, mundane and everyday; they were the questions that I had been asking all my life and here I was pondering them with strangers. I knew then that I would never practice philosophy in the same way again. I felt that the curtain had been lifted. There were about twenty participants (teachers and philosophers). The people who attended that workshop included: Gil Berg (editor of *Critical and Creative Thinking*); Sarah Redshaw; Ross Phillips (Long time president of VAPS) (and I others who I can't remember).

After this inspiring workshop, I followed up my interest in P4C by teaching it in schools at every level. As I became more experienced, I began to charge for my services and became a consultant to a number of schools in the region. I also became a member of the VAPS committee (Secretary for one year). I was on the organizing committee for the ICPIC Conference held in Melbourne (September, 2007), and accepted the school's liaison position for the philosophy department. I also taught graduate level P4C courses

with Laurance.

On the basis of the workshop in Geelong, Ann invited Sarah and myself to attend an August Mendham workshop in 1992, all expenses paid. We were both very excited and traveled together. We stayed at Ann's for a week before Mendham so that we would have an opportunity to meet Matthew Lipman. That Mendham workshop was facilitated by Ann Sharp, Michel Sasseville and Eugenio Echeverria. This workshop was also a revelation for me, but largely because it was international. I met people from Canada and Mexico with whom I still keep in touch with. I remember insisting that a stone could be a teacher whilst at the same time convinced that no one would really be persuaded. A logician, who was there, went away and developed an argument for why a stone could be teacher. I couldn't quite believe it. It allowed me to consider that maybe I was right.

It was on the basis of my participation at Mendham in 1992 that Ann invited me back as a Fellow in 1994. I was scheduled to stay six months. After a couple of months I learned that my Philosophy Department in Melbourne University was offering me a three year Assistant Professor contract. I accepted the position and flew home. For the two or three months that I was a Fellow at the IAPC, I helped Ann with her Master's courses, learned more about P4C and spoke to Montclair State faculty. When the position at MSU came up in 2000, I was encouraged to apply, and was accepted.

JPC: Did your knowledge of feminist theory influence your understanding of P4C?

ML: Dramatically! My knowledge of feminism directly influenced my understanding of P4C and continues to do so. It influences my understanding of P4C in two significant senses.

First, I have always believed and wanted to be persuaded, accordingly, by a large part of feminist ethics. For example, moral particularism, dialogical ethics, and ethics of care. All of these schools emphasize that autonomy is not a matter of being able to stand back, dispassionately, from our lives and apply the principles of Reason; rather, moral judgment is thinking and behaving reasonably in the many situations and relationships in which we find ourselves. To do this effectively we have to be able to determine

what is morally salient about a situation, the extent to which others agree or disagree with us, and be able to imagine what the best response to the situation might be and have the integrity to act accordingly.

I see P4C as giving children and adults practice in all of these elements. For in P4C, students do not begin with moral dilemmas but instead read narratives. They share their responses to these narratives in the form of questions. These questions are often normative: "Should the other kids have laughed at Harry?" "Should Harry have resented Lisa?" "Is it right to eat meat if you love animals?" "What should you do if you think a teacher is wrong?" and so on. P4C takes seriously the idea that these questions are suggestions for inquiry and so they are to be dealt with openly, sensitively and critically. P4C students have permission to express doubts about the possibility of coming to an adequate solution; they have permission to share the arguments or experiences from their lives that they have found persuasive and have an opportunity to evaluate these experiences and arguments. Moreover P4C gives students permission to acknowledge their affective responses to the world at the same time as wondering about how valid they are in reality.

I see P4C putting into operation many of the commitments for which feminism argues. Feminism is committed to relations, emotions, particular cases, the ways in which we describe the world etc. P4C makes all of these commitments possible.

The second thing that I found very attractive about P4C in relation to my understanding of feminism concerns feminist critiques of philosophy. Many feminists had criticized the manner in which professional philosophy was practiced and taught. It was adversarial, technical and largely conducted from the third person perspective. The aim, in philosophy, was to mount a successful argument and to relentlessly criticize the arguments of others. The philosophical project was not seen as collaborative, inquiry based or tentative. This always seemed to me to go against what I saw as the real spirit of philosophy.

I saw P4C as an opportunity for me to legitimately practice philosophy within a framework that was collaborative, inquiry-based, tentative, and accepting of first person reflections.

JPC: What feminist authors have influenced you and why?

ML: Many feminists have influenced me. I list a few here of greater relevance to your project.

Professor Ann Sharp has been instrumental in my professional career and an enormous influence on my thinking. What is most important to me about Ann Sharp is that as such an influential figure in the Philosophy for Children community, she has not abandoned a personal, relational, ironical approach for that of the 'expert' (impersonal, authoritative figure). She has given me reason to believe that it is possible to be a serious, influential philosopher and educator whilst retaining commitments to a relational ontology, with all that this involves (humility, humor, self-correction etc).

Iris Murdoch did not identify herself as a feminist as such but she too has been enormously influential on my philosophy. I studied her for my Master's degree and continue to find ways to articulate her insights and their relevance today.

Professor Genevieve Lloyd has been very influential on my development as a philosopher. She examined my Master's thesis and was my doctoral supervisor. I have read all of her books numerous times and I have taught, *The Man of Reason* and *Being in Time*. What I most admire about Lloyd, is her commitment to both philosophical rigor and political integrity. She thinks that it is important to be philosophically rigorous but doesn't confuse philosophical rigor with "neutrality". Similarly, she thinks that politics is important, but that it doesn't give us an excuse to abandon philosophical rigor. Few philosophers in the history of philosophy have successfully combined both, and Genevieve Lloyd is one of them. She refuses to caricature a philosophical position, but always engages with it in the spirit of seriousness and play.

Professor Lorraine Code has been influential

because she developed an epistemology out of her commitment that we are all second persons. That knowledge is developed, acquired and learnt in the context of human relationships and not the other way around. Although I do not write on her directly, that commitment informs much of what I am trying to achieve in my philosophical and pedagogical practice.

I have studied and been influenced by *Luce Irigaray* and *Michelle Le Deouff*. I admire Irigaray's experimentation with alternative paradigms of reason. Even though she may never ultimately succeed, in my mind at least, her feminism is connected with alternative ways of conceiving and doing philosophy. *Michelle Le Deuff* resists cheap victories.

Teresa Brennan and *Marcia Baron* have both been important figures for me, not so much because of their philosophical output but because they behaved towards me as collegial friends. They treated me like a future peer, which made me believe that it one day it might become possible. So I am indebted

to them for taking themselves seriously as female philosophers and extending the opportunity, at least in principle, to other young women.

JPC: Is there a connection between women's liberation and children's liberation?

ML: Yes and No. Yes, because children are oppressed in a manner not dissimilar from the oppression of women. Children are defined against adults, as the normative standard, and fare badly as a result. Children are defined as impulsive, egotistical, lacking in reason etc. So much of children's liberation involves finding a voice and speaking for themselves.

On the other hand, children are developmentally



immature (whatever this means) and for this reason will always remain dependent on adults for care and instruction. Women have been able to liberate themselves, to a certain extent, from man as the normative standard, by achieving their economic and psychological independence and contributing to the defining of the norm. Children will never be in this position of independence. Although having said this, I still think that it is vitally important to engage them in dialogue and to listen for their reflections on what it is they are experiencing.

I also think that, as with women, it is perhaps better to stop speaking of “the child” and begin to speak of individual children, in an effort to prevent the generalizing and stereotyping that goes on in the case of children. I also think that it is vitally important to give children, opportunities to reverse roles with adults in situations that are safe (my keynote address to ICPIC one year was about this).

I have been talking about the ways in which women’s liberation and children’s liberation are similar and different. This is one type of logical connection. But there are also other connections to consider, namely causal ones. It has been argued that children are the victims of women’s liberation. Now that women are liberated to pursue independent and self-fulfilling lives, children have become neglected, abandoned to childcare centers for long days, and are without the loving interactions of a primary caregiver (I am sure that you are familiar with the argument). Men are not filling the vacuum created by women, in part because it is early days yet and in part because a two-income family is becoming the norm.

I don’t know that I have worked out fully what I think about this and my response is complicated. I do not think that it is ideal to have individuals (whether they be male or female) isolated in the home looking after a few children (the average today in the West at least is one or two). But I do not think that childcare centers are entirely healthy for children either: their day is highly routinized; children are confined to one room for very long periods, there is often very little child-adult interaction, and they are supervised at all times (there are no private spaces in childcare centers). I do not think that the current arrangements are satisfactory and I am not convinced that past arrangements were satisfactory, but I am worried that children are the most vulnerable members of our society that we will

fail to meet their needs adequately. As I said I think that this is a complex issue.

Ironically, I am convinced that the liberation of children will contribute to the liberation of men and women, from many of their false ideas. I am convinced that if we can take children seriously then we will be able to take alternative paradigms for living more seriously. Children are representative of these alternative paradigms because they are less socialized than adults (I am not a Romantic about this). This is important because if one thing is apparent in today’s society, it is that there are very few life alternatives: everyone works for a living, most people live in single family homes in nuclear family arrangements; very few people live self-sufficiently and so on. It is my hypothesis that to liberate children and to take them seriously, will necessarily entail a certain lack of confidence with respect to how we socialize them; a certain fallibilism and preparedness, perhaps, to experiment with alternatives.

I should point out that I have addressed this question largely as a conceptual issue. I have not addressed other issues of children’s liberation, such as the terrible and tragic issue of child abuse: the dramatic increase in reports and the intensifying of their brutalization and sexual molestation. This is a significant issue and one that Ann addresses in her curriculum against violence.

JPC: To what extent, if at all, does philosophy play in this liberation?

ML: The role for philosophy has been to allow women and, ideally, children, to engage in criticism of the normative standard. It is empowering in a very effective way. Rather than simply reacting to the experience of being marginalized or disenfranchised - by acting out, by being sullen, by withdrawing, by engaging in violence - it allows women and children to ask critical and intelligent questions of the normative standard that they encounter in their everyday lives. For example, what does it really mean to be egoistic or altruistic? Are these rules serving the interests of one particular group more than another?

Ironically, Philosophy done dialogically provides people with solidarity. It normalizes people’s reactions to the world. Students will say “I never knew that anyone else felt like that” or “you were so brave to say that you feel X because I have felt X too but never

had the courage to say so.” Isolated individuals get to hear that other individuals experience and reflect on the world in ways that they do. Others share their unease or discomfort, their existential angst, their joy, and their hope.

Philosophy makes individual and social transformation more possible by encouraging and enabling individuals to practice imagining alternatives. Hypothetical reasoning is of such vital importance, particularly to children. It is important for children to explore what the world would be like if children held positions of power, or did not have to go to school, or did not know their parents. These questions provide vital preparation for envisaging alternative futures and engaging in social criticism and activism.

Philosophy builds community because it is, uniquely I think, a language that facilitates dialogue across different cultures, genders, races, classes, sexual orientations and age groups. I think that this is because of the kinds of questions with which it is concerned with. Philosophy focuses on questions to do with concepts that are common, contested and central. Everyone, irrespective of cultural or age differences, wonders about friendship, loyalty, love, justice etc. It is the concern to have a deeper understanding of these concepts that unites us. Secondly, the methodology of philosophical inquiry does not rely on experience or technical knowledge: children and adults alike can look for exemplars of friendship, love and justice in their lives and then explore together what these different exemplars have in common (generalize from the particular to the universal).

I am inclined to think that philosophy is an activity that can bring people of difference (adult/child male/female etc) together. I don't think its purpose is to eradicate our differences but to help us understand the reasoning that informs our differences, allowing us to find more subtle points of connection.

Philosophy is not a reductionist discipline so it enables us to examine those factors and conditions that contribute to our identity and our thinking, whilst always working towards changing our thinking and actions in accordance with our ideals. Few, if any, of the other disciplines, enable us to sustain this apparent paradox. That we are both conditioned and free to transcend our conditioning in virtue of what we think is right and idealize as a better future or world. Given that this is the case, it is important that philosophy

continues to be practiced as a discipline and that more individuals become involved in the practice of philosophy.

JPC: What can philosophy of feminism do for COI (Community of Inquiry) and vice versa?

ML: I think that there two things that feminism does for COI. The first thing that it does is keep the issue of gender and sexuality at the forefront of the conversation. In evaluating COI, feminism makes it imperative for us to ask: are the girls talking as much or more than the boys and vice-versa? Was my response dismissed on the basis of my sex or gender?

Another thing that feminism does is to legitimate a plurality of thinking and speaking positions. It is so conscious of how masculinity defined the norm for so many hundreds of years, that it is vigilant in preventing any one facet of human experience from defining the norm for all human experience. So it allows for anecdote; it allows for self-doubt, and tentative, stuttering speech.

Second, it is always compelling us to ask ourselves why we find a particular individual, or what a particular individual says, compelling. Feminism has done much to prioritize and theorize desire in thinking about epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and politics. I think that the theory of COI would benefit from appropriating some of the modern feminist discourse on desire, so as to understand and better facilitate the complexity of the interactions in a COI. It would allow us to consider and examine how and what individuals say and the ways in which they say it, and how they affect us as much as they do what we think. In my opinion this lead to a more nuanced practice and understanding of the COI.

JPC: Thank you for your time Megan

ML: You're welcome John

An interview with

Jana Mohr Lone

Interview conducted by John Patrick Cleary



Introduction

Dr. Jana Mohr Lone is the director of the Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children. John Patrick Cleary is a doctoral student at Montclair State University. He facilitates a philosophy class at a secondary school in New Jersey.

JPC: John Patrick Cleary

JML: Jana Mohr Lone

Interview

JPC: How did you first learn of P4C and what attracted you to it?

JML: I first learned about P4C when I was a philosophy graduate student at the University of Washington. For several years I was a part-time student and a full-time lawyer, and as a lawyer I did a lot of work on children's issues and became interested in education as a means to empowering young people. I happened to come across Gary Matthews' book, *The Philosophy of Childhood*, and was inspired by it. Gary is a former undergraduate professor of mine, and so I contacted him to talk about doing philosophy with young people. He suggested that I attend one of the IAPC summer workshops about philosophy for children. I did that in 1995 and was so thrilled to find a community of people engaged in doing philosophy with children. I had worked with non-profits for many years and understood how they functioned, and my course with the IAPC inspired me to start a non-profit organization, the Northwest Center for Philosophy for Children, while finishing my Ph.D. the following year. I was really attracted to P4C because it drew together for me my passion for philosophy and my interest in working to prevent child abuse and neglect and the syndrome of "giving up on life" at age 12 that I was seeing in much of my work. I thought that

if children could understand the power of their own voices, ideas and thoughts, and learn to think critically and independently, they could take control of their own lives and move out of some of the destructive dynamics in which many children are growing up. I saw (and continue to see) philosophy as a powerful means of inspiring this transformation.

JPC: Did your knowledge of feminist theory influence your understanding of P4C?

JML: Yes, both in the practical and the theoretical senses. I had been involved in the women's movement for over a decade when I began to be involved in P4C. I worked with battered women and their children and understood the multiple barriers to empowerment that women and children face. My work with diverse groups of people served me well when I began working with students in classrooms. My academic grounding in feminist theory had given me a strong awareness of the external and internal barriers to change and self-actualization. The understanding I had developed through my work in the women's movement and in feminist theory about the connections between one's emotional/intellectual life and one's economic and social standing helped me to construct the view I have about the relationship between young people being introduced to philosophy and the potential they have to take control over their lives.

JPC: What feminist authors have influenced you and why?

JML: I think I have been most influenced by Simone de Beauvoir, Catharine MacKinnon and Adrienne Rich. I first read all three authors as a women's studies minor in college. I was profoundly affected by de Beauvoir's analysis of the female situation and her view of transcendence as central to autonomy. MacKinnon's theories about power as the



central force in gender inequality and the ways in which gender inequality pervade our thinking were extremely influential for me in my legal work on family violence and sexual abuse. Adrienne Rich's analysis of the power relations between mothers and children was especially provocative for me in thinking about the power dynamics of the classroom. All three authors eloquently express how the way we understand femaleness is essentially socially constructed, and this understanding has helped me to think more critically about the assumptions we make about children.

JPC: Is there a connection between women's liberation and children's liberation?

JML: Of course. In the simplest terms, it is difficult to imagine children's liberation taking place without women's liberation, both because the women's movement set the groundwork for a movement for children's liberation, and because women continue to be primarily responsible for the care and raising of children. On a deeper level, to acknowledge the injustice of treating women in a discriminatory way because of our biological status leads to the conclusion that we must think carefully about whether we can justify the

way children are treated merely by reference to their status as children. There may, of course, be grounds for treating children differently than adults, but what we have learned from the women's movement requires us to think in as unbiased a way as we can about what is a reasonable way for children to be treated in society.

JPC: To what extent, if at all, does philosophy play in this liberation?

JML: I think philosophy has a significant role to play. At its core, philosophy pushes the individual to ask questions and to be uncomfortable with final definitive answers. The most effective method of any liberation movement, it seems to me, rests in the possibility it holds out of society awakening to all of the assumptions its members make without awareness. Philosophy, in my judgment, is the most powerful intellectual tool we have for enabling people to unmask the socially constructed belief systems we have internalized, and to (as the saying goes) learn truly to think for ourselves.

JPC: What can philosophy of feminism do for Community of Inquiry and vice versa?

JML: I think that the use of COI can benefit philosophy of feminism in that COI provides a clear structure that emphasizes open, contestable questions that are essential to true dialogue and understands dialogue as a self-critical practice. Philosophy of feminism can provide for the COI a history of theoretical and practical grappling with the difficulties of creating meaning and uncovering assumptions in classroom settings.

JPC: Thank you Dr. Lone

JML: You're welcome

An interview with

Wendy Turgeon

Interview conducted by Julia Jackson



Introduction

The following interview was conducted with Julia Jackson; doctoral student at Montclair State University via email questionnaire. Dr. Wendy Turgeon is a professor of philosophy at St. Joseph's College, New York.

JJ: Julia Jackson

WT: Wendy Turgeon

Interview

JJ: What brought you to P4C?

WT: I cannot even recall but I know that I had been out of graduate school and was working in Admissions for a college. I had been offered a teaching job but turned it down. I really didn't think I was good at teaching. (By the way, none of my male colleagues ever have a doubt about being good teachers...) One of the things that really impressed me was that in P4C philosophy did not seem to be an adversarial sport. I am a slow thinker and not very good at graduate student banter. I liked the cooperative nature of the inquiry. I wrote a short account of my own experiences called "Pedagogy for the Unimpressed" and Thinking published it. That was back in, 1980?

JJ: What feminist authors most influenced you? Why?

WT: Now this is interesting. Although I went to grad school in the 1970s (yes, that long ago!) I was untouched by feminism. I went to a program that stressed an historical understanding. Frankly, I avoided feminism as a type of "ghetto" in which

women were plugged. At that time, I was one of only a couple of female grad students in my department. I didn't see sexism but in deep retrospect, I realize how powerful it was. So I came to P4C from a different direction. Curiously I just created a course in Philosophy and Women for my college and I am discovering for the first time the rich field of feminist thought.

JJ: What connections do you see between feminist theory and P4C?

WT: I see many connections. Just to begin, I like the model of knowledge as cooperative and caring, not disputation. Sharp has written some really powerful commentaries on the connection between feminist theory and P4C in terms of assumed hegemonies. Women are still not listened to or taken as seriously. I see this in my own college with the differences between the men and women faculty. Who is respected more? Men. I think to the extent that P4C takes children seriously and does not dismiss or trivialize their concerns and ideas; we see a direct parallel with the feminist platform. It is about giving a voice and listening to what is said. We can also look globally at how women and children are powerless still in so many situations and then blamed for it.

JJ: To what extent, if at all, do you think the doing of philosophy plays a role in this liberation?

WT: I think it is key. By allowing a person to think for him or her self within a community that cares enough to listen but also to demand and nurture good thinking that form of liberation is essential for anyone to realize personhood.

JJ: Do you see a connection between class struggle and feminism?

WT: Absolutely. And as reminded by the Third Wave feminists, we must be careful about generalizing about all women. However, the danger is that we will see everything as an individual situation. That is what my students do. For every general comment I offer about women's situation in the world today, their response tends to be "well, for some that is true but not for others." I think the real challenge is to chart a path between gross generalizations that are dismissed as simply false or slanted towards one group and the reduction of all analysis to individual experience. I think many do not realize the extent to which their own experiences are shaped by their gender, race and class; they somehow think they did it on their own, for good or ill. P4C can help here in that it encourages a dialogue with multiple viewpoints.

As I write this I am thinking that I wouldn't want to align P4C too closely with feminism because its

open-endedness and willing to suspend judgment until the information is on the table is to be preferred over many forms of formulaic feminism. Perhaps P4C can offer an alternative to feminism which embraces its call for equality and the right for women to speak and be attended to but it also offers that same opportunity for men. Its inclusiveness might actually be a strength that feminism itself too often lacks.

I don't know if this is too much or too superficial an answer so I will stop here! I enjoyed your questions. Let me know if I can be of further help.



Exploring Caring

Patricia Lowry



Abstract: In this paper, I will explore the role of care in nursing and nursing education. I will examine ethics of care as proposed by theorists Jean Watson, Nell Noddings, and Mathew Lipman. Although engaging, Watson's theory of care is underappreciated and lacks practical pedagogical application. Noddings and Lipman supply the missing pedagogical practice in their strategies to implement caring thinking in the classroom. Lipman stresses interactive strategies as effective techniques for teaching caring and caring thinking. Philosophical inquiry provides an ideal way for nursing students in seminars and clinical post-conference, to examine the role of caring in contemporary nursing. The community of inquiry holds promise as a practical strategy to infuse more caring into nursing education

Introduction

Although the American Nurses Association continues to identify caring as one of the essential features of nursing practice, evidence of caring in contemporary practice is difficult to find. Scarcer still is any evidence of caring in nursing education. The current climate in health care leaves little time for the demonstration of caring; nurses today are kept busy completing the mountains of documentation which managed care demands. In nursing education, the teaching of caring has been pushed aside by the rigors of an additive curriculum. Didactical time is spent frantically teaching an ever expanding body of scientific nursing knowledge in an effort to prepare nursing students to pass licensure exams.

In this paper, I will explore care and the lack thereof in nursing and nursing education. I will examine ethics of care as proposed by nursing theorist Jean Watson; feminist philosopher Nell Noddings; and philosopher - educator Mathew Lipman. Although engaging, Watson's theory of care lacks practical pedagogical practice. Noddings and

Lipman supply the missing pedagogical practice in their strategies to implement caring thinking in the classroom.

Caring as moral motivation

A central theme in contemporary nursing theories, nursing theorists describe caring as the moral ideal of nursing. Caring involves "the will to care, the intent to care, and caring actions. Caring actions include communication, positive regard, support, or physical interventions by the nurse...Caring promotes individual growth, preserves human dignity and worth, augments self-healing, and relieves distress" (Kozier, et al., 2004, p. 419).

In the United States, the American Nurses Association (ANA) is the national professional organization for nursing. In 1995, the ANA defined nursing, naming four essential features of contemporary nursing practice:

- Attention to the full range of human experiences and responses to health and illness without restriction to a problem-focused orientation
- Integration of objective data with knowledge gained from an understanding of the client or group's subjective experience
- Application of scientific knowledge to the processes of diagnosis and treatment
- Provision of a caring relationship that facilitates health and healing (ANA, 1995)

By specifying the provision of a caring relationship as one of the foundational features of contemporary practice, the ANA recognizes the central role that caring plays in nursing, as well as the influence and contribution of the science of caring to nursing philosophy and practice. However, despite the ANA's inclusion of caring in its definition of nursing, recognizing the provision of a caring relationship as a hallmark of exemplary nursing practice, as well as an increase in research that explores the meaning of caring in nursing; it is not easy to find examples of caring in clinical practice or in nursing education (Kozier, Erb, Berman & Snyder, 2004). As a nurse educator, I supervise nursing students in the hospital setting. Recently, two of my senior students who had just finished a six week rotation

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on the maternity unit, sought out the unit's nurse manager. Only weeks away from graduation, the students wished to speak with her regarding job opportunities. Both students were articulate, polite and enthusiastic. For six weeks, they had worked diligently on the maternity unit, demonstrating competence and caring. Both had shown a willingness to help the overworked nursing staff in any way they could.

The nurse manager was seated at a desk in the nurses' station, reviewing a chart with one of the staff nurses. The shift was a relatively quiet one. In response to the students' request to speak with her, the nurse manager rudely ignored them. They then asked if she would give them one of her business cards, so that they could contact her at a more convenient time. She coldly informed them her business cards were in her office and that she was too busy to get them. It was obvious to the students (and to me when they shared this story) that the nurse manager was not too busy, only disinterested in them. Their feelings were hurt by her rudeness. After I understood what had occurred, I felt angry and frustrated by this all too common experience. Nursing's reputation of eating its young is not undeserved. My efforts to teach caring and model caring practice for my students are often undermined by members of the "caring" profession.

Unfortunately, it is not unusual to overhear staff nurses telling students horror stories about their experiences in nursing and advising them to pursue other careers. I attempt to counteract these negative interactions by asking students to imagine what might prompt a nurse to speak or behave in this manner. An instructor's willingness to facilitate a candid discussion of uncaring nurses affords students an increased understanding of the health care crisis, burn-out among nurses, and the importance of self-care. Further, by doing so, the instructor models caring and emphasizes its importance in both nursing and nursing education.

Where has all the caring gone?

Diekelmann's research (2003) explores the complexities of the clinical environment, where students routinely encounter unstable, acutely ill patients, stressed-out nurses, and intimidating technology. Hospital units are chronically short-staffed and have a rapid patient turnover. Most nursing programs acknowledge the benefit of low student-teacher ratios in the clinical area. However, expanding enrollment and the scarcity of qualified clinical instructors has forced many programs to increase student-teacher ratios to the legal limit of 10:1. The clinical instructor's stressful challenge is to safeguard both patients and students while facilitating the student's learning. Addressing clinical safety, Diekelmann (2003) stresses the importance of interpretive pedagogies that reveal "the thinking students bring to their emerging practice" (p. 482). In addition, Diekelmann calls for research

based innovation and reform for the clinical component of nursing education, as well as for the theoretical component. While today's nursing educators and researchers see a need for an increase in scientifically validated, evidence based practice; Watson, a nursing theorist, has maintained that nursing must shift from theory based practice to practiced based theory for more than a decade. Watson (1994) states that, "theory is meant to be lived and experienced" (p. 14).

The current health care crisis, precipitated by a sky rocketing rise in health care costs which dramatically increased the cost of medical insurance, has left millions of people without coverage and more importantly, without care. Additional factors contributing to the crisis are the nursing shortage, which affects bed side nurses as well as nursing faculty; a changing health care environment with increased technology and patient acuity; limited educational resources; and an additive curriculum. Nursing has much to contribute as strategies are developed to address this crisis. And nurse educators must formulate a response to the resulting challenges facing nursing education.

The media has focused the nation's attention on the nursing shortage. In the next decade, one half of all nurses currently in the workforce will retire. Then who will be left to provide care for all the aging baby boomers? In 1996-1997, the National League for Nursing (NLN) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsored studies that demonstrated declining enrollment in schools of nursing. Factors affecting the decline included school budget reductions, perceived loss of status of the profession of nursing, perceived lack of job opportunities within nursing, a salary base that was not competitive with other professions, and expanded career opportunities for women.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation initiated a national marketing campaign to promote nursing as a profession and thereby increase enrollment. While the Foundation's campaign was successful, the resulting increased interest in nursing exceeded the ability of programs to meet the demand. Programs of nursing scrambled to expand the number of students they could accommodate. Class sizes swelled and the number of academically disadvantaged students admitted to programs increased. Nurse educators continued to use the familiar, teacher-centered pedagogy which they had experienced as students. Educators maintained that conventional pedagogy was the only teaching method that could be relied upon to assure successful program outcomes (Ironside, 2001).

Conventional, outcome-based pedagogy has been the prevailing methodology used by nurse educator to achieve the educational outcomes necessary to ensure passage of NCLEX, the National Computerized Licensing Exam (Ironside, 2001). In times of limited educational resources and a shortage of nursing faculty, teacher centered pedagogy

is particularly attractive: it is efficient for large student-faculty ratios and for the evaluation of student outcomes (Ironside, 2001). Nursing has long relied upon outcome driven pedagogy to achieve high pass rates on national licensure exams. Failure to maintain acceptable pass rates on NCLEX can result in a loss of program accreditation.

Driven by the nursing shortage, communities and boards of nursing have exerted pressure on programs of nursing to expand while decreasing attrition rates and simultaneously increasing on-time completion and pass rates on NCLEX. Admission to nursing programs has become increasingly competitive. In turn, programs pressure students to successfully complete their programs of learning "on-time" and to pass NCLEX, since student failure exacerbates the nursing shortage.

Complicating the ability of programs to expand are space limitations, as well as a pervasive shortage of qualified nurse educators. As hospitals increase RN salaries in an attempt to attract bedside nurses, schools of nursing experience increasing difficulty in attracting nurse educators; an experienced RN can earn more working in a hospital setting than teaching in a school of nursing. The median starting salary for a registered nurse in the United States is \$41,642; while the median salary for an assistant professor of nursing is \$58,262. On average, a two year graduate of an associate degree nursing (ADN) program will begin her career earning 71.5% of what a masters prepared, assistant professor of nursing will earn.

The ever expanding body of scientific, nursing knowledge has resulted in an additive curriculum, all of which is reflected on NCLEX. The pressure to maintain high pass rates on NCLEX in the face of an additive curriculum has further driven educators to the exclusive use of conventional pedagogy. Diekelmann, Swenson & Sims (2003) explored the legacy of conventional pedagogy combined with an additive curriculum: courses "so full of content there is no room for thinking, dialogue, or reflection" (p. 103). An additive curriculum makes it challenging to introduce any additional material, even fundamental topics such as caring.

Andrews, et al. (2001) and Ironside (2003) reported that nursing students enrolled in nursing programs utilizing conventional pedagogy experienced feelings of competition, anxiety and isolation. Gardner (2005) demonstrated a relationship between nursing students' experience of isolation and the high rates of attrition found in many programs of nursing. Attrition results in crushed dreams and unmet student goals, while draining limited financial and educational resources, and further exacerbates the nursing shortage.

However, the traditional, competency-based methods produce results. If the high attrition in nursing is overlooked, the majority of graduates do pass NCLEX and become registered nurses. Ironically, it is due to this relative success that nurse educators resist attempts to implement change in curriculum or pedagogy (Diekelmann, 2005). Hence, the poisonous pedagogy that most nurse educators experienced as students continues to be perpetuated.

Students who manage to survive the traditional, teacher centered pedagogy in programs of nursing experience little caring. The reality of a test driven learning environment means nurse educators are teaching to the test. Class time is not sufficient for the teaching of the niceties of nursing; caring truly is a lost art in many if not most programs. The message is unmistakable: a program's ability to maintain high pass rates on NCLEX is more important than ensuring that its graduates are caring. In addition, in the clinical setting where students routinely encounter acutely ill, unstable patients, caring is rarely modeled by faculty or staff. If schools of nursing are not teaching caring, isn't it unreasonable to expect practitioners to exhibit caring?

An example of learning to care

In her memoir "A Very Easy Death," feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir (1965) describes the challenge of caring for her dying mother, a member of the intimate, inner circle of caring as described by Noddings (2003). The memoir chronicles the accident, diagnosis, illness and death



of de Beauvoir's mother, "Maman". Although mother and daughter loved each other on some level, they experienced difficulty overcoming their emotionally tumultuous history. Thus de Beauvoir states she both loved and hated her mother: "I thought I had made up my mind about our failure and accepted it; but its sadness comes back to my heart." (1965, p. 103) Mother and daughter had established a truce in their troubled relationship. However, the mother's accident shattered not only Maman's hip but also the regimented schedule that had regulated their contact. The accident forced de Beauvoir to once again set aside her hard won autonomy and assume the role of dutiful daughter. Some years earlier, de Beauvoir had described her difficult relationship with her overbearing father in "Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter". In both memoirs, de Beauvoir artistically reveals her analysis of the socially constructed roles assigned to women.

In describing her carefully controlled points of contact with "Maman", de Beauvoir provides evidence of both self-care and care for her mother. Before her mother's fall, de Beauvoir had protected herself from overexposure to her mother. She limited the time they spent together to occasional lunches, filling in with telephone calls between visits. This schedule served to protect de Beauvoir and the fragile mother-daughter relationship, while still providing them with time together which both she and her mother did desire. Noddings (2003) states that caring for oneself (the care giver) is primary before one can provide care for the other.

When her mother was diagnosed with cancer, de Beauvoir abandoned the established routine and devoted herself to caring for her hospitalized mother. In her memoir, de Beauvoir expresses the frustration, exhaustion, guilt and grief that she experienced during the weeks of her mother's illness. From a sense of duty, she shared the task of caring for "Maman" with her sister, Poupette. Together the sisters devised a schedule which ensured that their anxious mother was never left alone: de Beauvoir stayed with Maman by day and Poupette spent the night. Demonstrating the caring relationship between the sisters, de Beauvoir relieved the exhausted Poupette by spending a night by her mother's bedside. But this substitution made Maman uneasy. She quizzed the detached de Beauvoir, "Will you be able to manage? Will you know how to put your hand on my forehead if I have nightmares?" Despite her personal misgivings, de Beauvoir reassured Maman that she could manage. To her surprise, de Beauvoir learned that providing physical care for her dying mother allowed her to uncover and express her feelings: "And the early tenderness that I had thought dead for ever came to life again, since it was possible for it to slip into simple words and actions."

The emotional trauma of caring for her dying mother allowed de Beauvoir to rediscover her tender feelings for Maman, and to learn that she was capable of caring actions

towards her. Probably she had always cared. But in her self-care, attempting to protect herself from her mother's criticism and control, de Beauvoir had turned that caring part of herself off. Must it be like this? Is it possible to experience caring and learn how to care without such extremes, such emotional pain?

In *The Second Sex* (1949), de Beauvoir wrote "One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman." She recognized that over time, one learned and developed into a person who happened to be a woman. De Beauvoir was an intelligent, successful feminist author who did not know how to communicate caring towards her mother. Did she worry that demonstrations of caring were social constructions and therefore artificial? Did she believe it was false to play a part solely for the sake of convention? Perhaps de Beauvoir lacked what Noddings (2003) refers to as natural caring, which she states springs from love or natural inclination. Caring may not have been modeled for de Beauvoir in a way she could recognize as caring or in a manner she wished to emulate. Like de Beauvoir, there are many women for whom demonstrations of caring do not come "naturally". When these women choose nursing as a vocation, how can nursing education best instruct them to be caring? Can we reproduce the self-learning that de Beauvoir achieved without having to duplicate the emotional trauma of watching a loved one die a protracted, painful death?

How do we put the caring back into nursing education?

Health care continues to evolve at a dizzying pace. Technology in health care grows in complexity and sophistication, exponentially. Nursing professionals must continually reexamine the theories which inform their practice, insuring that these meet the needs of a changing profession as well as the needs of the diverse populations for whom they care. While today's nursing educators and researchers are calling for an increase in scientifically validated, evidence based practice, for more than a decade nursing theorist Jean Watson has maintained that nursing must shift from theory based practice to practiced based theory. Watson (1994) formulated her Theory of Human Care to be practical and applicable, to "be lived and experienced" (p. 14).

As a nurse educator, the ethic of care with which I am most familiar is Watson's Theory of Human Caring. Watson considers her work to be both a theory and a philosophy. As she first developed her theory in 1979, Watson was influenced by existential phenomenology. She believes the practice of caring to be central to nursing and the unifying focus for practice. Watson's definition of caring is both moral and human; she describes caring as grounded in a set

of universal human values (kindness, concern, and love of self and others). Her concepts include: caring is a universal social behavior; care for the self is necessary before care for others; and finally, care and love are the cornerstones of humanness. Watson made humanism in nursing scientific and credible; she stresses the humanistic dimension of nursing, which she emphasizes can only be practiced interpersonally. Watson (1994) provides an overview of her theory:

Caring is the heart of nursing and the ethical and philosophical foundation for our acts. As such, caring involves a deep level of commitment...caring is an ontology, a mode of being human. Professional caring is a special way of being in relation to self, to other, and being in the world...it is important to remember that the art and science of caring practices requires balanced attention to the doing, the knowing, and the being...in the history of nursing, focus has fallen more acutely on the *doing*, and in contemporary terms via medical-technical knowing, than on the *being* or *knowing* of caring. Only in more recent times have we begun to acknowledge that aspects of human "being" related to caring-healing relationships and practices are critical to health and quality of living, coping, growing, and dying. (p.3)

Watson (1994) described nursing interventions related to human care as narrative factors. Although not prescriptive, the theorist identified ten narrative factors which ground her theory:

1. A humanistic-altruistic system of values
2. The instilling of faith-hope
3. Sensitivity to self and others
4. Helping-trusting human care relationships
5. Expressing positive and negative feelings
6. Creative problem-solving caring process
7. Transpersonal teaching-learning
8. Supportive, protective, or corrective mental, physical, societal, and spiritual environment
9. Human needs assistance
10. Existential-phenomenological-spiritual forces

Watson also formulated a number of major assumptions about caring, which may be reviewed in Addendum A.

When caring is continuously delivered as selfless acts, the care giver may become exhausted. At this point, the caregiver often expresses feeling of guilt and burns out. Watson (1994) recognized this risk and devoted an entire chapter of her book to care for the caregiver. Watson's recommendations include self-care as well as care by others.

"Caring for ourselves, remaining full of vital energy, allows not only our patients but all who come in contact with us to drink from and be nourished by a deep well of abundance, rather than struggling to drain the last drop out of an already empty cup" (1994, p. 64). Caring is grounded for Watson in a set of universal human values which includes love of self. Because we are in a caring relationship with ourselves, we have a responsibility to behave in a caring manner towards the self. Caring for self then, is necessary in order to care for others.

Watson (1994) highlighted the critical need for the profession to embrace the lost art of nursing – the "holistic, integrated" modalities of care that have been squeezed out by advanced technology, medical specializations, and the homogenous, business model of health care management. Watson identified the need for nursing to shift its focus from function, with its emphasis on procedure, documentation, and technology, to form, incorporating caring into practice. Nursing educators must determine strategies which will allow for the inclusion of caring in their already overcommitted curriculum. Alternative pedagogies, including narrative pedagogy, are among the strategies which hold promise for nurse educators who are seeking more efficacious ways to utilize class time while infusing caring into their programs of learning. Diekelmann (2003) stresses the importance of interpretive pedagogies that reveal "the thinking students bring to their emerging practice" (p. 482). In addition, Diekelmann calls for research based innovation and reform for both the clinical and theoretical components of nursing education.

One way to integrate caring into nursing education would be to teach Watson's Theory of Human Caring (1994). While Watson's theory is a logical approach to teaching caring, there are several reasons why it is not widely utilized. Some nurse educators look upon Watson's theory as too touchy-feely and not sufficiently scientifically rigorous. But it is primarily due to its lack of concrete pedagogical practice in an environment of high stakes testing in an additive curriculum that Watson's theory barely warrants a mention in most programs of nursing.

As an alternative to using Watson's theory as a model to teach moral education in nursing, Crowley (1994), explored the use of feminist philosopher Nel Noddings' Ethics of Care. For Crowley, the philosophy of caring is foundational to nursing education. Since Noddings' theory is a pedagogy of caring, Crowley recognized its potential fit with nursing education. In addition, Noddings theory is rife with examples of pedagogical practice.

Noddings (2005) posits that teachers are responsible for creating caring teacher - student relationships and for assisting their students to develop a capacity to care. To this end, Noddings has proposed that education be organized

around centers of caring. These centers or domains would include care for self, care for intimate others, care for associates and distant others, for nonhuman life, for the man-made environment of objects and instruments, and for ideas. As Noddings (2005) explores the domain of caring for nonhuman life, she asks, "What good does it do to have students in biology class draw the digestive system of a mammal and label its parts if they are not taught to have compassion for the animals they study?" (p. 127). Noddings is prepared for the frequently heard complaint that there is already not sufficient class time to cover the necessary material. Noddings' response is that the wrong material is being covered. Whatever the subject, opportunities for collateral learning abound. For Noddings, teaching caring is foremost.

Utilizing Noddings' model, Crowley examined the caring relationship of unequal pairs, focusing on the teacher - nursing student relationship. Crowley was attentive to the three processes which Noddings states serve to enhance the teacher - student relationship: dialogue, practice and confirmation. Noddings and Watson agree that authentic dialogue is dependent upon the creation of a trusting relationship, in this case between teacher and student. Trust is enhanced through the establishment of a cooperative learning environment and caring practice is then modeled for students when the teacher shares how she thinks. Confirmation comes as a result of the teacher assuming that the motives of the other (student) are noble, and acting upon that belief. Crowley posited that the implementation of Noddings' Ethics of Care would be an appropriate strategy for infusing caring into nursing thus transforming the nursing curriculum.

The provision of a caring relationship that facilitates health and healing is one of the four, foundational features of contemporary nursing practice identified by the American Nurses Association. Both Watson and Noddings write about the caring relationship as reciprocal. Watson (1994), states that caring relationships are mutual and reciprocal. Noddings (2003) uses the term caring to describe a particular kind of relation or encounter: "Caring is a relationship that contains another, the cared-for; and we have already suggested that the one caring and the cared-for are reciprocally dependent" (p. 58). From a phenomenological point of view, Noddings asserts that the one aspect of caring that can be universalized is the desire to be cared for.

For Noddings, caring and the memory of being cared-for form the basis of moral action. Similarly, educational philosopher Matthew Lipman, posits that the good is the regulative ideal of caring thinking and is manifested in action (2003). "Human caring and the memory of caring and being cared for, which I shall argue form the foundation of ethical response, have not received attention except as outcomes of ethical behavior" (2003, p. 1). Noddings stated that one

is ethically enhanced or diminished within the context of one's caring relationships. The motivation for caring begins with a moral attitude and a longing for goodness:

The choice to enter a relationship as one caring, Noddings argues, is grounded in a vision that we hold of our best selves, which she refers to as our "ethical ideal." This ideal self is rooted in two things: our history of having been cared for in past relationships (beginning with the original caring relationship of mother/child) and a remembrance of ourselves in our best caring moments as we cared for others. Our desire to preserve the fundamental goodness at the heart of these experiences inspires us to enter caring relationships now and in the future. (Crowley, 1994, p. 74)

For Noddings, there is no hierarchy in the ethic of care. She recognizes the contribution that the one cared-for makes to the relationship as significant, even if the one cared for is a newborn infant. Noddings specifies that caring may or may not involve action or verbal communication. Indeed, the most caring act may be non action if that is what is desired by the cared-for.

Noddings (2003) writes about the position of caring women: "We find ourselves at the center of concentric circles of caring. In the inner, intimate circle, we care because we love" (p. 46). However, even in those loving relationships, one may act out of an ethical sense of obligation at times. As the circles begin to expand out from the center, they are comprised of people for whom there is personal regard: neighbors, friends, and co-workers. The circles continue to spread outward until they include even people not yet known. In all these relationships, Noddings posits that one's ethical behavior is guided by three considerations: "how we feel, what the other expects of us, and what the situational relationship requires" (p. 46).

A historic overview of caring

Since the origin of humanity, women have cared for infants and children. Mothers, daughters and sisters have provided what Noddings (2003) refers to as natural caring, which she states springs from love or natural inclination. Women were expected to provide care and nurturing for their families and extended families, as well as nurse the sick. If for any reason women refused to assume this traditional role, their femininity was suspect. The assignment of women (as opposed to both women and men) to the role of caregiver is socially constructed. Sharp (1999) observed that for many hundreds of years, women were the ones "primarily concerned with the nurturing of children at the expense of their own development" (p. 2). In addition,

women's contribution of care giving was not highly valued by society (McIntosh, 2005).

Historically, women had few role choices beyond marriage, motherhood, and religious orders. Within the constraints of social norms, women's place was in the home. Only in the last one and a half centuries could women choose a life beyond the insular circle of their home or family business. Increasingly in the nineteenth century, women became shopkeepers, factory workers, teachers and nurses. However, society viewed nursing with suspicion. Indeed, nurses were often poorly educated, and considered to be of questionable moral character. Charles Dickens' portrayal of Sairy Gamp, an abusive, incompetent nurse in the novel "Martin Chuzzlewit", revealed nineteenth century society's image of nursing. After the Crimean War (1854-1856), negative perceptions of nursing began to change. At last, nursing came to be accepted as a suitable occupation for "respectable" women. The shift in societal attitude was largely due to the wartime heroism of nurses Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole.

In 1847, Nightingale overcame her wealthy parent's objections, and trained as a nurse. She accepted the position of superintendent in a charity hospital for distressed gentlewomen. During the Crimean War, the British Government appointed Nightingale Lady Superintendent in Chief of female nursing in the English General Military Hospitals. She recruited nurses, ordered supplies, and set sail for Turkey. Immediately upon their arrival at the barracks hospitals, Nightingale implemented basic sanitary measures, such as hand washing and the washing of linens and bed clothes, and improved the soldier's diets. Within months of Nightingale's arrival, the mortality rate for wounded soldiers dropped from 42% to 2%.

After her return to England, Nightingale remained active, writing prolifically on nursing, hospital reform, and public health. In all, her publications numbered one hundred and forty-seven. The most influential of all her publications was the book, *Notes on Nursing*, published in 1859. Described by some as the first nursing textbook, this book was

actually written for all women caring for the sick, including "the good housewife". Recognizing the need for formal, systematic preparation of nurses, Nightingale established the first school of nursing, the Nightingale Training School of Nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital in London in 1860. Considered the founder of modern nursing as well as the profession's first nursing theorist, Nightingale's theory was based on an epidemiological approach to illness and the practice of nursing. Nightingale envisioned the role of nursing to include prevention as well as health promotion.

Born in Jamaica, Mary Seacole was the daughter of middle-class parents. Seacole learned the art of nursing from her mother, an herbalist and healer/doctress who maintained a boarding house for invalid British soldiers in Kingston. In 1854, Seacole volunteered to join the nursing contingent that Nightingale was forming, but was turned down. Possibly due to her ethnicity, the War Office refused to see her. Despite this negative experience, Seacole understood that the British soldiers needed her. Some of the regiments sent to the Crimea had been stationed in Kingston, and Seacole felt a personal connection to them. At her own expense, she traveled to the Crimea and established the "British Hotel" in Balaclava. It contained a store, a canteen

for enlisted men, a kitchen, a mess hall for officers, a medical dispensary, and a hospital. Highly regarded by the troops, "Mother Seacole" became a familiar sight on the battlefield where she tended the wounded and dying, indiscriminate of the soldier's uniform. As a result of her altruistic caring, she was awarded not only the British Crimean medal, but the Turkish Medjidie, and the French Legion of Honor. Written in 1857, her autobiography is entitled, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*.

Increasing in the twentieth century, women choose to pursue independence through a career in nursing. Because it was a care giving profession, twentieth century society viewed nursing as an appropriate career choice for women. Although nursing offered women a degree of freedom and autonomy; Noddings (2001) refers to the profession of nursing as one that both coerced and exploited women.



As late as the 1960's, schools of nursing abused nursing students, using them as unpaid labor to staff patients units whenever floors needed additional staff. And not until the mid 1980's did salaries for nurses begin to be commensurate with equivalent occupations.

No longer limited to being teachers, nurses, or secretaries, contemporary women have expanded career opportunities. The exciting variety of professions newly opened to females has resulted in a reduction in the number of young women entering teaching and nursing. As a result, the traditional fields of education and nursing have experienced shortages. Certainly girls deserve to be educated for expanded occupational and economic opportunities. However, as Noddings has noted, people still need care. Hence, Noddings appeals for girls and boys to be educated as caregivers. Although nursing is still a predominately female profession, males currently make up 20% of the student population in schools of nursing. Compared to thirty years ago when males made up only 2% of nursing school enrollment, some progress is evident.

Clearly, many challenges remain in the education of males and females as caregivers. Noddings (2005) places, "top priority on the moral purpose of caring for students and educating them so that they will be prepared to care..." (p. 66). Formal education in care giving professions should both teach and model caring as well as be gender appropriate for females and males. Noddings states that the first lesson in learning to care is learning to be cared for. Therefore, formal education in nursing and other care giving fields should first of all be caring. This will necessitate curriculum change in pre-service education programs for teachers, and in the education of educators for nursing as well as other health care professions.

Teaching caring thinking

In the 2nd edition of "Thinking in Education", Lipman (2003) describes three types of thinking: critical, creative and caring. In his discussion of the dimensions of caring thinking (appreciative, active, normative, affective and empathic), Lipman calls particular attention to the constant relationship between creative and caring thinking, calling it "instructive" (p. 253). Lipman addresses the teaching of caring thinking, suggesting a study of Shakespeare's sonnets, Donne's poetry, or Van Gogh's paintings. This study would grant the student an enhanced appreciation of the degree of passion and caring required to write like Shakespeare or Donne or paint like Van Gogh. Lipman feels their work reflects a balance of critical, creative and caring thinking, and is the result of their intense feelings and passion for life. Lipman states:

We fail to see how profoundly our emotions shape and direct our thoughts, provide them with a framework, with a sense of proportion, with a perspective, or better still, with a sense of different perspectives. Without emotion, thinking would be flat and uninteresting. (2003, p. 261-262)

When Watson (1994) was asked how to best teach caring theory, her answer was to utilize interactive methods that would increase self knowledge and encourage self-reflection. Lipman also stressed the importance of self-reflection, which leads to self-correction. Like Lipman, Watson suggested using innovative teaching methods, including music and poetry. Poetry attempts to reconstruct an experience. When one writes poetry, her consciousness is raised so that she learns to pay attention to her own experience. When poetry arises from experience, the individual adds the personal meaning and the result can be deeply meaningful. Poetry is a useful medium for self-expression which can lead to self-discovery.

To allow for creative self-expression, Watson encouraged the exploration of educational alternatives such as art activities (painting, sculpting, and collage-making), writing (especially poetry), journaling, and gardening. Activities which support creative self-expression assist the learner to grow in self-knowledge. And as aesthetic projects are shared and discussed, the learner experiences enhanced understanding and an increase in empathy for others. The similarity between Lipman and Watson's ideas regarding best practices for the effective teaching of caring thinking is striking. (1994, p. 15)

J. Mohr Lone (March, 2006) stated, "Philosophy, in my judgment, is the most powerful intellectual tool we have for enabling people to unmask the socially constructed belief systems we have internalized..." Philosophical inquiry, then, is an ideal way to reexamine the socially constructed role of women as care givers. In *Philosophy for Children* (P4C), children are invited to explore the philosophical dimensions of their world through a classroom community of inquiry. P4C curriculum is artfully designed to interest children in the logical, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of life. A number of P4C texts supply rich story lines designed to stimulate ethical discussions of gender appropriate behavior related to care giving. In "The Doll Hospital", Jesse, whose gender is not specified for the reader, models tender caring for his/her doll and towards family and best friend, Vanessa. The accompanying teacher manual contains a number of exercises and activities that relate to caring thinking.

Philosophy for Children fosters moral as well as philosophical dispositions. The disposition to empathize with another allows one to better understand the world and leads to caring thinking. The narratives in the P4C stimulus texts allow children to see the world through the eyes of the

other, fostering empathy and compassion. Caring thinking is cognitive as well as affective. Sharp (2006) posits that caring thinking focuses on

the preservation of values and relationships, enabling the child to deal with the relationship of self to other, learning how one can put one's ego in perspective in light of the other's views, interests and concerns. Caring thinking attends to the feelings of students as well as their thinking. It aims at preserving, cherishing and celebrating that which they value... It consists of the sharpening of numerous skills of translation involved in the understanding of different world views and the making of new meanings. It relies on communication, translation, empathy, compassion, understanding and dialogue. When it is embedded in communal dialogical inquiry, it constitutes an education of the emotions, a necessary constituent of global intelligence. (p. 11)

Philosophical inquiry is an ideal way for nursing students to examine the role of caring in contemporary nursing. Nursing students spend part of each week working in the hospital, supervised by a clinical instructor. At the end of each clinical day, the students gather with their instructor for an hour long post conference. Since most clinical groups are composed of ten students, the size is ideal for a community of inquiry (CI). Post conference could be CI time, and during CI, caring could be explored from a number of perspectives.

Lipman (2005) identifies five discreet stages within Philosophy for Children's community of inquiry in order to help the teacher/facilitator identify what is happening pedagogically at each stage. The five stages include: 1. the offering of the text, 2. the construction of the agenda, 3. solidifying the community, 4. using exercises and discussion plans, and 5. encouraging further responses. Lipman states, "It remains to be seen whether communities of inquiry in other disciplines will be successful only to the extent that this prototype is approximated" (p. 101).

In nursing education, a community of inquiry offers an ideal way to break away from the exclusive use of conventional, teacher – centered pedagogy. Adapting Lipman's five stages to the infusion of caring thinking in nursing education, the following suggestions might be taken into consideration:

1. In offering the text, the instructor/facilitator may select a stimulus text with a eye towards fostering caring thinking. The instructor could make use of engaging material from professional journals or draw from literature (de Beauvoir's *A Very Easy Death*, for example). In the clinical setting, the text might be selections from students' "Thinking in Action" journal entries. As outlined by Lipman (2005), these choices would provide texts that serve as mediators between the culture and the individual, as objects of perception that encourage self reflection, or as portrayals of human relationships that are analyzable into logical relations.
2. The construction of the agenda illuminates what the community (facilitator and students) considers important in the text and is a cooperative, collaborative effort.
3. The community is then joined together through cooperative reasoning and community solidarity is achieved through dialogical inquiry.
4. The facilitator may create an exercise and/or discussion plan to focus the inquiry on specific aspects of the text so as to compel the making of practical judgments. Thoughtfully designed exercises and discussion plans may direct the inquiry to examine overarching regulative ideals such as personhood, community, health, illness, and caring.
5. The facilitator is responsible for encouraging the community to recognize, "the synthesis of the critical and the creative with the individual and the community, celebrating the deepened sense of meaning that comes with strengthened judgment" (Lipman, 2001, p. 103). Additional, thoughtful responses may be elicited in the form of story telling, writing, (prose or poetry), drawing, and collage making. These are practical approaches which aid students to discover and express what in the text and discussion held importance for them.

Conclusion

No contemporary nurse educator would deny that caring is the moral ideal of nursing. The challenge for nurse educators is finding additional space in their overstuffed curriculum to teach caring and caring thinking. Noddings would accept no excuse as adequate for neglecting the teaching of caring. For Noddings, the teaching of caring is foremost. The application of Noddings' theory within nursing education is articulated by Crowley. Although Watson's theory is underappreciated and her interactive strategies largely unutilized, Lipman reiterates the importance of interactive strategies as effective techniques for teaching caring and caring thinking. Philosophical inquiry is an ideal way for nursing students to examine the role of caring in contemporary nursing. The community of inquiry holds promise as a practical strategy to infuse more caring into nursing education.

Addendum A

Watson's Major Assumptions of Caring

- Human caring is not just an emoting, concern, attitude, or benevolent desire. Caring denotes a personal response.
- Caring is an intersubjective human process and is the moral ideal of nursing.
- Caring can be effectively demonstrated only interpersonally.
- Effective caring promotes health and individual or family growth.
- Caring promotes health more than does curing.
- Caring responses accept a person not only as they are now, but also for what the person may become.
- A caring environment offers the development of potential while allowing the person to choose the best action for the self at a given point in time.
- Caring occasions involve action and choice by nurse and client. If the caring occasion is transpersonal, the limits of openness expand, as do human capacities.
- The most abstract characteristic of a caring person is that the person is somehow responsive to another person as a unique individual, perceives the other's feelings, and sets one person apart from another.
- Human caring involves values, a will, and a commitment to care, knowledge, caring actions, and consequences.
- The ideal and value of caring is a starting point, a stance, and an attitude that has to become a will, an intention, a commitment, and a conscious judgment that manifests itself in concrete acts.

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The Community of Inquiry: A Struggle Between Self and Communal Transformation for Female Students and the Other

Mor Yorshansky



Abstract: There may be a possibility that young women find it difficult to express their female ways of knowing and gain equal public representation. This leads us to reflect on a possible gap between a well developed theory of justice in P4C and pedagogical practices of social influence. In this paper I attempt to reflect on these questions provisionally, and suggest an initial theoretical framework for discussing such issues within the P4C movement. First, I report some personal and social narratives that were described by individual writers. These narratives reflect, mostly, female authors' personal histories from childhood to adulthood, and how their career choices were influenced by prevailing constructed gender roles. Second, I discuss the theory of the Community of Inquiry (CI) and examine the possibilities for self transformation and women liberation that this practice allows. Third, I introduce Hannah Arendt's argument that education should not attempt to present the future of the human condition as finite and resolved.

Introduction

Earlier this year I interviewed Jen Glaser about the influences and connections between the feminist movement and Philosophy for Children (P4C). In our conversation the possibility that young women still find it more difficult to express their female ways of knowing and gain equal public representation was raised. These difficulties are manifested in general education but also in the community of inquiry (CI). Perhaps such issues represent a gap between a well developed theory of justice in P4C and pedagogical practices in which social influences on students and teachers are manifested (Glaser, 2006). This discussion made me wonder about personal and social processes of consciousness raising and change. How does one come to recognize her social position and grapple with questions of personal identity? To what extent is it the responsibility of educators, especially those practicing P4C, to provide opportunities

for changes? Can we¹ guarantee social equality through certain pedagogical practices such as CI? And what if we cannot?

In this paper I attempt to reflect on these questions provisionally, and suggest an initial theoretical framework for discussing such issues within the P4C movement. First, I report some personal and social narratives that reflect, mostly, female authors' personal histories from childhood to adulthood, and how their career choices were influenced by prevailing constructed gender roles. Second, I discuss the theory of the Community of Inquiry (CI) and examine the possibilities for self transformation and women liberation that this practice allows. Third, I introduce Hannah Arendt's argument that education should not attempt to present the future of the human condition as finite and resolved.

Feminism and Philosophy for Children in Personal Narratives

I agree with Marie France Daniel (1994), and identify with her reflections on her childhood (63-64). As a young woman, my father's little girl, I was encouraged to obey and admire men, not to think critically. While I was reading and learning about the history of Philosophy for Children, and women leaders in it, I was amazed by the repetition of this narrative in so many personal biographies.

Being a 'dependent' but intelligent daughter, I quickly learned that, in order to please my father and get his attention, I should not play the role of partner when he was doing odd-jobs. On the contrary, I knew he would give me almost anything if I set silently, watching him work. I loved my father! So, how many afternoons I remember sitting passively on the stairs, watching his expert moves and admiring his skills (Daniel, 1994, p. 63).

Many more women in the P4C movement reiterated this personal realization. Their identity was constructed to carry traditional gender roles by family, education or both, which were challenge through the practice of

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philosophy (Birkhahn, 1997; Mohr-Lone, 1997; Pac, 1997; Turgeon, 1994; Turgeon, 1997). Most telling is Ann Sharp's narrative of her secondary and college education in Catholic institutions. Despite her excellent ability to reason and practice philosophy, her teachers and philosophy professors advised her not to pursue a professional philosophical career, since "women can teach philosophy but they do not become a philosopher", and "Philosophy is a man's discipline" (Sharp, 1991, pp. 42-46).

However, these women were not discouraged and continued to pursue their philosophical interests. It seems that the ability to think critically and become not only reflective and autonomous, but also an independent leader of others in the social spheres, was influenced by those women's exposure to domination and hierarchical gender roles, and not democratic practices. Following Daniel and Sharp's descriptions it seems that the exposure to such subtle violence that coerced them not to think, feel shame and guilt about allegedly doing something wrong (Daniel, 1994, p.64; Sharp, 1991, pp. 42-46) pushed them and many others even more to ask "who am I?" and seek answers.

When asked what may liberate young girls from similar silencing experiences one answer that these women suggested was the practice of egalitarian education, particularly philosophical inquiry in a community of learners, such as the Community of Inquiry (CI). In a community of inquiry, in a way similar to feminist philosophy, every individual can speak in her own voice while working with other members, establish caring and ethical relationships and build on others' ideas. The meaning that is attributed to the diversity of experiences, expressed through personal narratives, fosters personal growth and change, as well as, collective inquiry into the social, ethical, aesthetical and political conditions of humans' collective existence in the world (Birkhahn, 1997; De la Garza, 1994; Sharp, 1991, pp. 48-50; Sharp, 1993a, p. 52). This practice can liberate those who belong to a "culture of silence" (Freire, Cited in Sharp, 1991 and Sharp, 1996b). Children of various social groups, many of them female and members of disenfranchised groups who were not able before to participate in the public exchange of ideas, can speak and be heard in a democratic space in which egalitarian procedures regulate the discussion (Sharp, 1991; Sharp, 1993b; Sharp, 1995).

The practice of CI and philosophy seem to present, in P4C educators' perspective, an opportunity for young women to escape the oppressive conditions of education and male domination in society and become conscious

of who they are. However, this assumption requires examination particularly in light of the experiences that many of them share. Here I want to present two questions. First, can we assume that the relationships developed in the CI resolve prevailing power structures due to the process and assumptions that are built into this pedagogy? Second, if such resolution is possible do we want and need to encourage it?

The Community of Inquiry as an Egalitarian/ Feminist Pedagogy

The development of a philosophical discussion in a community of inquiry will reflect the interests of those participating, rather than being imposed from the past, or outside..... What is often so refreshing about the philosophizing of little kids is their very own conceptualization of a familiar problem in philosophy. With their own formulation comes a natural relatedness to their own concerns. This is the way in which I foresee a fruitful potential of Philosophy for Children for opening philosophy. The values of participation, relatedness and relevance mesh well with feminist demands for the recognition of women's experience, and political action (MacColl, 1994, p.8).

San MacColl's argument is a representative claim about the opportunities for liberation that the CI holds. While practicing CI the participants are engaged in philosophical inquiry that is related and relevant to both their particular experiences and those of their peers. Members relate to each other and are motivated to form caring and meaningful relationships. Furthermore, CI allows community members to reflect on their interests, including female interests, and establish collective solutions for future amelioration that may apply to political, public and ethical matters (Gregory, 2004a, Gregory, 2004b, Sharp, 1993b; Sharp, 1996a). It is a process of reasoning in which past, present and future, are investigated in light of the particularities brought together by the personalities that practice the CI.

Jen Glaser (1994) further elaborates how the CI opens opportunities for change through the dialogical and egalitarian encounter it creates. These opportunities reside particularly in the encounter between persons, between self and other. Thus, it has the potential to bridge differences and social constructions, including socially constructed gender roles. When persons encounter in dialogue, the ethical and social dimensions of their personalities become equally important in the encounter,

and inform the inquiry as the issues they inquire do. Persons experience each other through gestures, speech and silence which together represent a whole. Through this whole one can learn to identify differences as examples of existence, from which her own self is one. Such encounter necessitates examination of other points of view, including points of view that represent feminine and masculine preferences, as valid and equal ways of being in the world. Persons come to recognize other participants in the CI as subjects with particular histories and preferences that are as valid to life as theirs and should, therefore, inform the inquiry and the members' awareness of possibilities for change.

These possibilities for self-other encounter are feasible since CI is a process of deliberative democracy. The solution that participants reach is informed by reasons instead of power. When public deliberation is concerned each individual can equally express her opinion, even if otherwise privileged or disadvantaged, and deserve the right to participate and be heard in the public (Gregory, 2004a, Gregory, 2004b, Sharp, 1993b; Sharp, 1996a).

These claims, and many others, present the CI in idealist terms. It seems that if only educators could guarantee that certain pedagogical practices take place in the CI, self and society would transform and change, and gender inequalities may be dismantled. Despite the long list of dispositions and attitudes that are needed for a successful CI², this discourse usually present their realization as an unproblematic process that can be reached, and is conceptually a hopeful discourse (Arbones, 1994; Sharp, 1986, p.25). While I believe that CI is a meaningful pedagogy, and hope³ is in place when democratic education is concerned, I want to closely examine the idealist terminology in which relationships that are formed in the CI are presented, particularly when gender roles are concerned.

Examine, for example Sharp's description of self transformation through the practice of CI. In her description, Sharp relies on Pierce's perception of the self as constantly evolving through self correction and fallibility, while influenced by others in the community to suggest opportunities for new insights and growth. There is a sense in which the self is always a mystery to a person. She depends on others' sources of insight to recognize and become familiar with her self, but also on contradictory forces within her. Because self knowledge necessarily implies a continuing journey towards self recognition, the self is always in a process of becoming. The role of consciousness is crucial in this process of becoming a person. Becoming powerful and autonomous

depends on the person's ability to be more aware of her habits and blind spots, and on her willingness and courage to let go of her ego and habits, while exposing her ideas to public deliberation that may change who she was in light of new criteria for betterment that others in her community present to her.

But how does the self become who she is? What forces construct her ego and habitual self? What is the role of the innovative self in constructing ones identity? Feminist writers demonstrated how a woman is not born but becomes one (de Beauvoir, 1952; Butler, 1987). Her feminine habits are formed and constructed from birth by forces outside of her. Yet, it is the innovative self, which struggles with these norms and chooses to transform and interpret them over accepting established gender roles, even when ones community constantly encourages her to obey and surrender her ego, accepting what she ought to be. Furthermore, it is a quasi-conscious endeavor. In many cases a woman becomes aware of her choices only after she chose them (Butler, 1987). Thus, becoming a self, choosing ones gender as a project, is a burden and a struggle. A woman becomes a woman by constantly assessing and choosing her gender from available cultural practices and those she invents. Becoming a self is a struggle between acceptance and opposition, between becoming an-other and contesting ones otherness. The self is a sight of struggle, which involves power. When choosing herself a woman has to face the disciplinary gaze of the public and claim her voice in it. The presence of others, ones community and family, do not resolve the tensions in the journey towards self recognition but intensify and complicate it. Even the closest and most caring relationships may stand in a woman's way of becoming a self.

In declaring individuals as equal in the CI, and relationships as caring and cooperative, we do not negate power. Interpersonal dynamics among members of deliberating communities always imply different interest, and it is not unproblematic to settle the collective will with the particular interests of the participants. It is always possible that even public spheres that embrace egalitarian attitudes enforce particular forms of cultural conduct which establish and exclude otherness. Such domination may wear different forms, and is particularly vulnerable to unconscious influences on personal encounter, speech, silence, and body gestures. If women are only partially aware of their choices, or lack the courage to represent who they want to become, it is very likely that they will be pressured to cooperate with others while following the latter's social practices and criteria of good reasoning,

thus, relinquishing their own social projects for becoming and inventing themselves. More so, clear voices of young women that do not accept the collective social practice may be excluded and subjected as others, outsiders. The community signals to such voices “you cannot participate with us unless you agree to our norms and methods of inquiry”.

How then can P4C establish that female students will not be culturally constructed in feminine practices and discourses in the CI? What processes are in place to assure that female students will not be coerced to surrender to the community’s ways of knowing and social conduct while inquiring together in a CI? How can we overcome the possibility that caring relationships and the aspiration to collaborate in the CI will not in fact change the social reality but reproduce it? What is the source of alternative female insights to consider? And if those female points of view and innovations come up what skills or strategies can assure that the community of inquiry acknowledges their importance and not let them die with many other ideas that do not become the focus of the inquiry?

What could seem to observers of a CI discussion as agreement and cooperation and attentively listening to each other, may mask domination of particular attitudes and individuals. Dominant attitudes may establish subtle, unconscious group culture and coerce young women by gestures and reason to obey the community instead of expressing their insights. When feminists speak about women’s liberation, they do not attribute importance to the occurrence of speech alone, but to women’s ability to represent their own interests and concerns in their deliberations. The cooperative spirit of CI may condition young women in the process of becoming to realize that their voice can only be heard if they agree and conform to those in power, those who enforce the acceptable and desirable in the community. Furthermore, the desire to care for the process and inquire together may elicit particular ideas and issues that do not question the status quo of any particular CI. This desire does not

easily translate into challenge and opposition that may be brought by voices of those who hold alternative position and represent otherness.

It is not easy for women, men, children or adults to evaluate, or even self-evaluate, when a person’s decision not to speak is an autonomous attempt to care for the inquiry and refrain from engaging in extended monologues that preempt dialogue or do not really call for a response, and when it is a response to domination, fear and censorship. CI is expected to cultivate two ethical

values, caring for the overall interest of the community and developing autonomous self conscious personalities simultaneously, but the tensions between these values are not emphasized.

If individual members feel discriminated against in the CI, they have no outlets to oppositional emotions such as anger and rage, or even critique that will not subject them to criticism and ridicule for breaking the communal ties and connectedness, or not surrendering their ego to the common solution that the community is committed to. The CI is described through a certain discourse that expects

members to collaborate and accept responsibility for sharing their perceptions of the world with others (Sharp, 1993b). This discourse does not resonate well, and does not necessarily coexist, with the aspiration to liberate those who were silenced by powerful social groups.

It is consciousness and unconsciousness that I want to focus on here. While children become more aware and autonomous persons, and acknowledge the presence of others in their lives, some aspects of the self remain in the shadows of the unconscious. Children and adults are not fully aware of their words and gestures and of the collective meanings that emerges when words interact. Sharp herself claims that “self correction assumes a regulative ideal of truth to which the entire community is committed whether they are conscious of it or not” (Sharp, 1996a, p.43). While some questions can be inquired philosophically and liberate children from being unaware ‘pawns’ in the technological system of the written, printed and spoken word (Sharp, 1995, p. 74), other



aspects unconsciously commit the community members to their own hidden regime of truth with its practices and regulations. While P4C may liberate children from the authoritarian position of adults allowing them to reason autonomously informed by their own experiences, it may not liberate them from the oppression of their equals. Children may still coerce each other, especially young women, to adopt certain opinions, use certain style of speech, and use certain examples and criteria over others.

One possible example of domination in CI may be the way that gender related differences in expression styles are used. Feminists have long argued that women speak and think differently than men, and that their language and thinking differ in both form and substance (Gilligan, 1982; Slade, 1994). Girls ask more questions, attend to others' needs, use narrative and collaborate more, while boys compete and use analytic and abstract reason. These aspects of discourse may influence the ways young women participate and argue in a CI, and how their contributions are appreciated and taken by the group.

In this claim I do not wish to argue that the female voice and reason follows some essential rules and procedures. I do not wish to reduce femininity to some sort of material existence in body and emotions (Butler, 1987). I refer and extend the feminist critic that was directed at the communication model offered for public spheres in deliberative democracies. I argue, as Marion Young (1987, 1996) and Benhabib (1987) did, that extending public deliberations to include arguments that represent particularities and differences still subject all arguments to a form of reason that wishes to transcend it and achieve consensus. The democratic public sphere reproduces the opposition between the universal and the particular because utterances are only evaluated as reasons, as linguistic expressions, that can more or less contribute to a project of finding an impartial truth and consensus. Other aspects inherent to the utterance, are excluded, leaving reason alone to influence the collective enterprise. This model excludes women and other groups, since their different forms of expression voiced against power cannot be included in the on-going process of finding public solutions and truth.

Between Old and New: Egalitarianism and Agency in the Community of Inquiry

From the above discussion it seems that the answer to my first question is in the negative. The relationships that are developed in the CI do not always resolve prevailing

power structures, particularly the exclusion of women, despite the egalitarian processes and assumptions that are built into this pedagogy. But here I want to pay attention to my second question, which may seem as if I am contradicting my own previous claims. If equality in power was possible do we want to encourage it? It is my belief that equality in power between female and male students should not be over emphasized as an ideological/political goal for the relationships that are formed in CI.

I think P4C educators should not be alarmed by critique that point to the existence of social in-justice and unequal power relationships between participants in CI. Following Arendt, herself not a traditional feminist (Kristeva, 2001), I believe that such a realization motivates and inspires agency in young people to challenge and further expand the political public sphere when they join it as adults, just as women in P4C were motivated to do in light of their childhood experiences.

In Arendt's view, any educational vision that presents the future as if it already happened shapes the future with the ideas of those who hold these beliefs, whether democrats, progressive, or conservative. Such pedagogy disables the freedom of the young to influence the common world with their newness and originality, natality in Arendt's words (Arendt, 1998). The message of utopian political ideologies that were introduced in modern education is that the future is already active and resolved the problems of our common world, therefore the young need not bring their own actions to the common world. Children who are exposed to such educational pre-political spheres cannot help but understand that they are left to obey the rule of the future, and that the common world does not expect their initiatives, since its problems were solved before they even joined the political sphere as equals. Children as political agents are striped out of their individuality and positioned as identical entities in a public sphere that could only develop in pre-determined directions (Schutz, 2001; Arendt, 1998).

For Arendt, education is first and foremost a conservative project. Educations must preserve the newness in children, their natality, from the old world they joined by birth (Arendt, 1977). This newness is the world only hope for renewal and change. Adults' temporary authority in education assures the protection of newness in children. Facing their temporary subjection to others and their separation from the public, they have time to become familiar with the world as it stands and respond with their fresh insights. The awareness that they can only participate in the world, which exists beyond life, when they are no longer in a state of becoming, inspires

children to renew what they see as fixed, superannuated and close to destruction.

It is teachers' responsibility to keep the opposition between the old and the new, between them and their students, by stressing the unequal conditions that dominate the pre-political sphere of education. As long as students understand that they are not equals they could aspire to change the common world with new understandings of how it should be set anew.

Similarly in CI, the realization by female students, and those who are silenced, that their subjection or discrimination, their inability to influence the public and be heard, results from their temporary exclusion from the public sphere, can instill in them the drive and power to renew the public with their voice when their apprenticeship period in education is over. In this respect the experience of young women is not their misfortune, but their advantage, since they more than others preserve their newness and natality; more than others they may contribute what has not yet been said to the world. However, if the movement chooses to concentrate on erasing inequality in CI, and against our common world, tries to create ideal communities, which overcame all social conflicts and signs of destruction this newness and potential for renewal, will be destroyed.

The desire to change the world and present a new social and political order; a noble and just political order that liberates people from the old constraints of thought and action, conceals authoritarian assumptions. Such vision imposes a certain model of thought and action on the activities of new agents, and evaluates their future actions according to criteria that were established before the new could contribute their own thoughts and express their interests. In P4C students are considered before anything else as future citizens of a deliberative democracy, in which their autonomy, freedom, critical, creative and relational dispositions can be realized and open spaces for a new vision, for a new and better world (Kohan, 2002; Vansieleghem, 2005). Although it is clear from the P4C theory that this endeavor is on going and that any collective product of thought is subject to revision, the movement nevertheless, evaluates the outcomes of educational practice by the consequences they may help to achieve in the world in view of the ends they established in advance (Schutz, 2001, pp. 110-11). This vision of democracy excludes other visions, other possibilities for social betterment that were not yet imagined, or those that were imagined by different social contexts and represent other utopias. In other words, in this educational practice the 'only' organizing principles of democracy are logic,

dialogue and critical thinking. In this sense, P4C cannot be seen as an experience of freedom because every act, every thinking process is determined by a future goal – namely creating autonomous, self-reflecting citizens (Vansieleghem, 2005).

In his response to these claims Phil Guin (2004) particularly stresses democracy as a justified end for educational interventions. When the here and now are explored in their complexity with thinking skills that promote reason, and democratic procedures of impartiality and respect, the old and the new can be bridged by responsible and engaged capable future citizens that can critically evaluate any political order (pp.41-44). However, as I argued above, the democratic procedure is likely to create its own regimes of truth when female voices are concerned, and is exclusionary as much as it seeks inclusion for women and various others.

My point is that the tension is inevitable. However hard P4C practitioners will try, and I include myself as one, we cannot represent everybody in CI exactly because our thinking is contextualized and because we care for children and their rights. However caring we will be some among us will be silenced. So we should continue and try to be inclusive but renounce the utopian discourse and be aware that we may be able to get closer but not imagine all that is possible to imagine, and solve all the interpersonal or social conflicts. We need to acknowledge our own weaknesses in reason and the influences of our own position on what can and cannot be established. One can only imagine the consequences of institutions, or their agents, declaring that they are democratic and therefore treat everyone equally and resolve all social tensions, and education is an institutional act.

I agree with Guin, our reason and ability to think are mostly constrained by our experiences. This exact realization should be kept alive and remind us that our practice may always be further challenged by the thinking of those new to this world (Arendt, 1977; Arendt, 1998). Every utopian end, justified as it may be, may be further expanded to represent additional views and original thinking that may influence freedom and justice. It is our job as adults, old and familiar with the world, to allow originality in children and be conscious of possible fractures in the utopian spaces, mature communities of inquiry, that we in good faith want to introduce to the young. Whether they speak their minds or stay silent and wait to find their voice in the public sphere, we should embrace these manifestations of natality, however uncomfortable they make us feel and think.

In analyzing Brian's silence in the novel *Pixie*, Sharp

(1996a) tells us that “it is a mistake to view silence as the opposition of language. It is that which opens the way for meaningful language. Philosophical dialogue, in particular, must hear speech and silence together, must capture both Brian and Pixie” (p. 227). In Pixie, Brian found his voice with the help of the community of inquiry. He was given a space to express his unique perspective. However, not all silenced voices share Brian’s luck, nor will it be safe to assume they could always be liberated by the caring relationships in their communities. Perhaps there were other students in Pixie and Brain’s class that were silenced while Brain found his voice. Perhaps they were so silenced that the community did not even pay attention to their silence. If we renounce the self assuring examination of the CI, perhaps we too can hear and pay attention to others who speak to us with their various forms of silence. Perhaps all we can assume is that while some students can represent their interests in the CI, others will learn that they cannot speak but further search to find their way into the public sphere to challenge it.

Conclusions

Many have discussed the demanding conditions that the CI process has to meet to reach a true community. However, Arendt’s philosophy, and the experiences of women in the P4C movement possibly assure that individuals’ aspiration to better the world and turn it into a more egalitarian and democratic representation of differences will inevitably continue. While we try to include expressions of difference and otherness in CI, and aspire to achieve mature and equal deliberative spheres for female students, we should be aware that our own situated reason may stand in our way. The voices of newness, if we try to hear them, can help us renew and improve our practice. But if, despite our good intentions, we overheard these voices, they may find other ways into the public spheres, as long as we do not persuade them that in CI we created the only solution for a better future.

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Footnotes

¹ I use the pronouns we and us when I refer to persons involved in the P4C movement, in which I include myself.

² This list includes fallibility, reasonableness, relatedness, caring, self exposure, open mindedness, attention to particularities, equal treatment, taking turns democratically during class, collaboration, self transformation, dialogue, pluralisms, process oriented, orientation towards the future as a continual process of becoming, critical thinking, and is not exclusive.

³ In hope, I do not refer to a “pie in the sky” kind of optimism, but for hope that is based on critical examination of what is and active consideration of what could be (Kohan, 2002).

Some Notions About African Feminism



Richard Odiwa

Abstract: This paper explores prevailing notions about gender, based on African realities, and their possible implications for the education of girls. Without ignoring the basic parameters articulated by European and American feminist movements, this paper takes the stand that an understanding of gender in the context of African realities is fundamentally connected to questions about the cultural identity, social experience, interests, and priorities of the purveyors of feminist knowledge or feminists positions across the African continent. The main goal is to render the concept of gender, and subsequently girl-child education, within an approach that is more realistic and consistent with the history of women vis-à-vis their station in present-day, postcolonial Africa.

Introduction

The concept of gender is one of the primary analytic constructs used for describing the salient socio-cultural, psychological and political forces which have historically given shape, form and direction to the situation of women and their comparative status in relation to men (Oyewumi 2002). On the global stage, much of the prevailing knowledge of women and gender is popularly woven within the frame of symbolic overtones associated with patriarchic norms, values and structures in most parts of the world. Although most questions bearing on the conceptual architecture of gender hierarchies have moved in phases since the 18th century, the most concrete prescriptions for the resolution of gender asymmetry have been distilled from the experiences and discourses of mainly 20th century European and American feminist theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Nancy Chodorow, bell hooks, Alice Walker, Martha Nussbaum, etc.

Central to feminist philosophies is a set of issues and interpretations focusing on, but not limited to, justice for women as it relates to dealings with women and women's

bodies. Illustrative examples include the representation (or misrepresentation) of women in literary discourse, the education of women, the access of women to economic means of survival, motherhood, women in the domestic sphere, women as part of their communities, women's role in politics and revolution, sexuality, and the direct treatment of women by men and men by women (Akatsa-Bukachi 2005). To this end feminist discourse - questions, concepts, theories and concerns - emerge as universal for all women and men, for all peoples and cultures.

However, in terms of the focus and implications of specific feminist theories, a chasm exists between the themes advanced by the feminist movement in Europe and North America, on the one hand, and that of women's activism in Africa and Asia, on the other. This variance is largely the outcome of differences in history and culture, and disparities in living conditions within the two contexts. For example, the feminist thinking emerging from Europe and the United States mainly consists of women's interrogation of the conditions under which linguistic, psychoanalytic and ideological constructs precipitate the bifurcation of gender identities, roles and relationships, based on sexual imagery, and subsequently, to the exploitation and repression of both women and men. In contrast, the representations of Africa's feminism (or African gender activism, as some prefer) are directed mainly towards women's critique of prevailing notions about patriarchal guardianship; in particular, the socio-cultural, religious and ideological delimitations that were systematically imposed by decades of colonial hegemony and racist ideologies (Maerten 2004). Where European and American theorists are preoccupied with the notions of freedom and liberation as these relate to the *self*, Africa's gender activists are more interested in the idea of justice as it relates to gendered roles and relationships.

This paper explores prevailing notions of gender, based on African realities and their possible implications for the education of girls. Without ignoring the basic parameters articulated by European and American feminist movements, this paper takes the stand that an understanding of gender in the context of African realities

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is fundamentally connected to questions about the cultural identity, social experience, interests, and priorities of the purveyors of feminist knowledge or feminists positions across the African continent. The main goal is to render the concept of gender, and subsequently girl-child education, within an approach that is more realistic and consistent with the history of women vis-à-vis their station in present-day, postcolonial Africa.

Main themes in Africa's feminism

In the main, the split of thinking between feminists from the Euro-American world and their African counterparts is underlined by the latter's rejection of the notion that all women share a common experience and desire. Instead, Africa's feminist critique is directed towards the social and cultural traditions and events that perpetuate unequal sexual or gender practices, thereby resulting in injustices against women. Drawn from various traditional African communities, (see Akatsa-Bukachi, 2005; United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women [INSTRAW], 2000), some of the most ubiquitous controversies circumventing contemporary African feminist debate include:

- Women that give birth to sons are exalted whereas mothers of daughters are derided. In this inferior situation the woman does not stop to think or reason that she is not the one responsible for deciding the sex of the child. Such information is not usually available after all; and if it is, its not freely broadcasted;
- If a woman has no means of economic independence, she becomes even more vulnerable to marital rape and other forms of domestic violence such as wife battering because she has no alternative but to stay with her husband;
- Marrying off young girls to "wealthy" older men is also common among some communities. This presumes that the girl is reared for marriage and thus she has no need to spend too much time in school. Lacking any meaningful formal education, the girl-child falls into that category of women whose sexuality is used as a tool to oppress them. She dutifully submits to her husband, doing what an African woman should do best, giving birth, washing, cleaning, cooking and obeying her husband. Occasionally she is 'disciplined' with a few slaps to bring

her back in line. The term 'discipline' is used here to denote and emphasize the submissive and inferior role carved out for the African woman;

- Female genital mutilation (or "female circumcision") is done in order to reduce the sexuality of the woman so that she may become less sexual and remain chaste for the full and sole enjoyment of her husband;
- In some communities wife inheritance is a common practice. A man's funeral rites are incomplete until his widow has been "inherited." Custom dictates that once widowed, the woman is "unclean." Under customary rites, she is obliged to undergo a cleansing ritual immediately after her husband's death by remarrying or at least being "cleansed" through sexual contact with a member of the deceased's clan, usually her brother-in-law or a suitor chosen by village elders. If she refuses, she is ostracized by the community, confined to her home and prevented from planting crops on her husband's farm, or even allowed to visit her neighbors' homes, because she will bring a curse to the clan;
- Others issues are succession and property rights, child maintenance, equity in political representation, and access to reproductive health

Trends in Africa's feminism

At least three shades of feminist theory relevant to African realities have been present since the second half of the 20th century. These are global feminism, gender feminism, and multicultural feminism. Africa's link to these schools of thought and practice is not quite explicit as feminist or gender theorists in the African context hardly align themselves to any of the movements or brand their positions according to any of the perspectives. Nevertheless, where the subjugation and marginalization of African women are attributed to structural inequalities imposed by imperialistic or nationalistic practices, one gets a feel of the connection to global feminism (e.g. Afonja, 2005). Similarly, where the focus is on the moral, psychosocial, and linguistic dimensions of patriarchic discourse, one assumes the link to gender or cultural feminism. Furthermore, where the emphasis on revalidating femininity is tied to the subversion of masculinity, a picture of cultural feminism is captured.

And where African theorists insist on the recognition of women's diverse cultural backgrounds, interests and local priorities, a tendency towards multicultural feminism can be traced (Mbire-Barungi, 1999; Oyewumi, 1997). This last affinity is perhaps the most visible trend that Africa's feminism appears to assume. It casts the African woman as an *anatomistic* individual occupying new and wider socio-political space and demanding a new and dynamic gender contract within a socio-cultural system that is vastly patriarchic.

Conceptually, the tendencies and manifestations of Africa's feminism are limited and are mainly entwined within the wider context of current literature on social and political theory. Central to this literature is the notion that the maturation of patriarchic beliefs and arrangements in Africa, and the resultant oppressive practices, are historically a product of colonial appendages and Africa's colonial experiences. Correspondingly, there

is a growing feeling on the continent that the prevailing patriarchic ethos has been or is being reinforced by current global trends: the systematic globalization of Africans and people of African ancestry, and a rapid hegemonization of the United States (Mazrui, 2006). Associated with globalization are the spread of universalistic religions and ideologies, the expansion of new technologies, the emergence of a world economy, and the migration and dispersal of peoples across continents. Parallel to these is an ever-growing influence of American culture - American media, Hollywood films, American pop-culture and television, American fast-food, the jeans and T-shirt culture, have all added up to the *coca-colonization* of the world (Mazrui, 2006).

For Africa, the impact of these forces has been both negative and positive. On the one hand, we have evidence that shows how conditions of poverty, suffering, as well as political and economic marginalization have been heightened by the demands of capitalism and the global economy in the African world. On the other hand, because

of human migration and spread, the world has been witnessing remarkable outcomes from the participation of Africans and peoples of African origin in the global forces external to the African continent: Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Condoleezza Rice, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, etc. "Although the world has been changing Africa, the people of African descent have been changing the world" Mazrui (2006). Within feminist theory we can talk of the Black feminist movement in the United States.

Championed by renowned feminists such as bell hooks and Alice Walker, the Black feminist campaign encompasses the participation of African women in the American Diaspora and/or the participation of women of African origin in interrogating hierarchical forces external to the African continent. Key to the movement is an emphasis on the necessity of creating a feminist theory that takes into account the possibility of



transforming the social milieu and experiences of women of color, race, class, and varied sexual orientations within the context of a multiplicity of personal and local settings (hooks, 1994; Tong, 1998).

Arguably, the patriarchic value order, which has been the attention of the advocates of women's emancipation in Europe and North America, is gradually being rekindled in the Africa world through the forces of globalization and Euro-American hegemonization. One of the strongest slants of Africa's feminism is gender advocacy. Although mainly a product of women of African descent in the USA, Black feminism has been a great inspiration for African women and a source of justification for gender activism. For most gender activists, the nationalist struggles for independence, during which African women distinguished themselves in the same way as men, are fundamentally linked to progressive values conjectured by Black feminism (Toure, Cellou & Diallo, 2003). Just as the women in the American Diaspora rejected Western notions of gender differentiation or the Euro-American

versions of women's struggles, Africa's activists are interested in producing discourses that recast the vestige of matriarchal tendencies that largely prefigure the patterns of traditional African communities and granted privileged status to women resulting in practices of gender equity and amity (Toure, Cellou & Diallo, 2003).

And drawing from the global feminist trend, Africa's gender advocacy obliges women to reshape the entire patriarchal value system including the formal structures that are embedded within this value system by affirmative action measures (INSTRAW, 2000). Of course, affirmative action entails a balance of power between women and men particularly in socio-economic and political spheres as based on the re-orientation of structural hindrances to women's active involvement in governance in economic and in political affairs of their communities. Furthermore, this re-orientation requires a wider recognition of women's capacity to galvanize the transformation of male-dominated values and institutions, the transformation of patriarchal discourse as well as the changing of peoples' ideologies and mental constructs (Afonja, 2005). Some manifestations of this structural re-orientation are currently being witnessed in some parts of Africa, most notably Uganda and South Africa where women are well represented in national parliaments and in local assemblies, a product of affirmative measures that women negotiated at different times during the political struggles against marginalization and authoritarian rule.

Obviously, Africa's gender activisms, precipitated by affirmative action calls, portray a somewhat popular dimension of women's status as upheld by the African exponents of gender equity. The question immediately raised is whether there exists any conceptual dimension to the perspectives and activities of Africa's gender activists with explicit outcomes. In other words, is there any discourse that permits serious philosophical reflection on African women's condition, and the appropriate solutions to the ensuing problems; any discourse that allows African women to redefine quite clearly, not only their status, but also the whole notion of justice in gender relationships? (Toure, Cellou & Diallo, 2003)

It will be recalled that the concerns and struggles of the Black feminist movement were, in part, endogenously constructed. This means that Black feminists were largely moved by the quest for identity - a transforming worldview or principle that connects women with their heritage and image in multiple and diverse contexts. Similarly, the search for identity has been one of the key interests for African women theorists. This identity concern has amplified the necessity of appropriating a

consciousness theory that is supportive of the women by maintaining a position that is relevant to the *African-ness* of the African woman but at the same time sufficiently flexible to permit a bridge with "White" or Euro-American feminist ideologies (Akatsa-Bukachi, 2005).

Unlike the Euro-American ideologies which anticipate a feminist theory that casts gender distinctions in terms of the notion of liberation, as constructed out of common psychological, emotional or linguistic details, African women derive the basic tenets of African feminization theory from the notion of justice as built upon gendered functions associated with the integrity for the physical female body as well as sexual and reproductive integrity. Maintaining that feminization cannot be conceptualized outside the capital-labor divide within the family, Africa's theorists take the stand that the existential elements located in the very nature of the hierarchical ethos of traditional African communities reveal the manner in which gendered functions and relations should be constructed and construed.

In this regard, the works of the anthropologist Sudarkasa (1996) and sociologist Oyewumi (2002) on the contrast between the *conjugal*-based European nuclear family system and *ancestrally*-based African system is especially illuminating. Because the European nuclear family is built around a couple, Oyewumi (2002) notes:

Gender is the fundamental organizing principle of the family, and gender distinctions are the primary source of hierarchy and oppression within the nuclear family. By the same token, gender sameness is the primary source of identification and solidarity in this family type. Thus the daughters self-identify as females with their mother and sisters. In turn, marriage encapsulated and reproduced antagonistic relation of the two coherent social groups, men and women.

By contrast, to the extent that the traditional African family system is built around a core of blood relations, *motherhood* (as opposed to gender) is the dominant category necessary for appropriating African women's identity. Motherhood is defined as a relationship to progeny, not as a sexual relationship to a man. In traditional African families, motherhood represented a cultural institution and an experience associated with the social function and ranking of the female person. Oyewumi illustrates:

The traditional family among the Yoruba tribe of Western Nigeria can be described as a non-gendered family. It is non-gendered because kinship roles and

categories are not gender-differentiated. Significantly then, power centers within the family are diffused and are not gender-specific. Because the fundamental organizing principle within the family is seniority based on relative age, and not gender, kinship categories encode seniority not gender. Seniority is the social ranking of persons based on their chronological ages. Hence the words *egbon* refers to the older sibling and *aburo* to the younger sibling of the speaker regardless of gender. Seniority principle is a dynamic and fluid; unlike gender, it is not rigid or static.

Therefore the interest in motherhood, as opposed to gender, is the dominant identity construct of the African woman and forms the core dimension of Africa's theory of feminization. The value of this theory derives from the fact that it diffuses the thinking that feminism embraces the attempt by one gender to upstage another. By looking at gender as a social rather than a physiological construct, Africa's feminisms permit the thinking of *mutuality* instead of *competition* where attention focuses on imbalances created by social stratification. In significant ways, the theory upholds Carol Gilligan's critique of (Nancy Chodorow's) psychosocial and moral differentiations of male and female, pays tribute to Noddings' ethics of care, and endorses Martha Nussbaum's notion that any meaningful feminisms must recognize the woman's intrinsic nature as manifested by attributes such as feeling, desire, compassion, love, devotion, patience, tolerance, etc. The following poem illustrates:

Mother of Children

*She rummages through her life,
for what the children will eat;
from the break of dawn to dusk
She juggles with the little at hand
to feed the spilling household*

*Her hands, blistered with labor
till the unyielding piece of land;
from the start of rains to drought
she gleanes the grains of hardship
to fill the barrel of tolerance*

*Her feet, roughened by treks
walk the unending paths of struggle
from the turn of day to the turn of night
the endless search for water
takes her beyond the emaciated hills*

*Through the wilderness of the plain
her mind wonders about the man
long gone with the hunting season
her melodies voice fills the air
bringing hope to the sullen children.*

*Daughter of the Toiling Clan
donor of cattle to your father's homestead,
the cocks are crowing for you
to get up from your rugged bed
for another hardening day*

*I watch your youngest suckling
the same breasts the others suckled,
my eyes fill with tears of admiration
your courage, your devotion,
your patience for biting questions*

*What happened to our father?
why do you always sing
songs from an "unburdened" heart,
soothing us all to a "painless" sleep?
when do you rest mama?*

*Mother of children,
all the yesterdays built on your motherhood,
listen to the song I sing to you
before the final blow from old age
for I too am your child.*

*Needing your motherly care,
fireside stories full of wisdom,
the readiness to sacrifice for the sake of all
and your ability to out-live to-day,
waiting for the sun to rise again.*

Some implications of Africa's feminism

Although the quest for *identity* has been at the center of African feminist debate, it has been a perennial question in African philosophy. Identity symbolizes the integrative category that characterizes the historical circumstances, the physical and mental endowments, as well as the ethical, the epistemological, and the ontological constraints within which a society interprets and assimilates their experiences (Appiah, 2005). For contemporary African thinkers, the quest for identity

is underlined by the fact that it forms an indispensable apparatus for the processing of and transformation of the prevailing socio-cultural and political terrain in Africa (Masolo, 1995). In the realm of African feminism, identity precedes and forms the foundation for a harmonious articulation and integration of the moral constraints that oblige the thinking of *mutuality* in social relations. In turn, this allows for the thawing of seemingly complex gender relations and provides the appropriate context for making feminism an African discourse.

The necessity of keeping the feminist debate alive in Africa borders on several conjectures. Firstly, if gender is defined in terms of relations of power that structure the chances of both men and women, then Africa's feminisms should afford women the opportunity to reflect on this aspect of their lives. But even more importantly, if gender divisions are not fixed biologically but constitute an aspect of our wider social divisions of labor, it is necessary to place discourses on gender in terms of production and reproduction while paying attention to the cultural, religious and ideological systems prevailing in contemporary African society (Kabaji, 2006).

Clearly, it is evident that patriarchal structures that exist in present Africa have made it possible for the production and consumption of a culture that purports to effectively give one sex control over another. In this case the biological male controls the female in power relations. Nevertheless, this categorization of persons, drawn upon sexual imagery, allows for the concretization of our ideas about the nature of gender relationships, and is more likely to give impetus to the practices that strive to redress the women's place in culture, society and history. For Africa's feminisms, the concretization of gender relations is subsumed under the quest for identify if not tied to insights about the role of *motherhood* in traditional African societies.

Secondly, the feminist philosophies of hooks, Walker, Gilligan, Noddings and Nussbaum, adequately serve African feminist discourses in the sense that they shed light on contradictions about sex and gender in seemingly systematic and coherent fashions. In return, they give African women the ground on which to examine ordinary notions of gender and social relations. It cannot be gainsaid that contemporary feminist thoughts are tied together by an external perception that is keenly rooted in Simone de Beauvoir's question as to why women are the second sex, or in post-modern terms, why the woman is the *other*. Rather than view this condition as something to be transcended, Africa's feminists must proclaim its advantages. Certainly, the mere interrogation of the

phenomenon of *otherness* might enable Africans to unpack the norms, values and practices that patriarchy seeks to impose on all, women and men (Kabaji, 2006). In this interrogation, it is necessary to take into consideration all possibilities of interpretation and explication that recognize women as active agents in the struggle for space in patriarchal societies. How African women strategize within this set of concrete constraints should reveal and determine the nature and identity of *African feminism* or African feminist ideology (Kandiyot, 1988).

Africa's feminism and girl-child education

The question of girls' participation in education has been a key subject in Africa's postcolonial discourse. Central to the debate is an understanding that marginalization of girls and women in education and training is a travesty that the civilized world cannot countenance (Assié-Lumumba, 2001). Obviously, a lot of resources and energies have been expended in the gender debate and some significant achievements have been made. For example, following years of gender activism, Africa is now witnessing a transition in the identity of the African woman from the most *wretched of the earth* to a reasonably effective agent of social change. Nevertheless, given that contemporary African values are typically patriarchal, the distance to be covered to realize the ideal of justice for girls and women is still long despite emerging recognition of women as equal social agents.

With regard to education, most formal school systems are vastly soaked with hierarchical setups, thus providing a fertile ground for the reinforcement and perpetuation gender imbalances. This, in itself, is a contradiction of one of the key goal of education: fostering equity and social justice for all. Thus, it is imperative to initiate educational experiences that empower girls and women. This requires alternative and innovative instructional approaches that are not only based on democratic values and but also take cognizance of the subtle and transformational dimensions, such as those obtained in Africa's feminism, which are more likely to promote social change, enable girls to achieve their full potential, and contribute to the creation of a just and democratic society (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005).

One of the boldest educational innovations especially cognizant of the transformational aspects of learners is Philosophy for Children (P4C). Through the *Community of Inquiry* (CI) approach, P4C dissolves some of the most "artificial" social distinctions and divisions,

such as those that have been so apparent in theoretical discussions about gender roles and relationships because it is founded on the principles of social equality, mutual understanding and respect for persons. This aspect of CI has several advantages. By emphasizing egalitarian practices, CI not only promotes dialogue among gendered bodies, but also affords girls and boys the opportunity to engage in social inquiry, and thus discover and develop their unique sexual identities or gender functions (in the case of non-gendered African societies). For the girl-child, as for the boy, taking part in CI allows an open-minded examination of women's strategies and coping mechanisms in patriarchal systems. Because the methodology of CI is such that it orients participants towards a systematic interrogation of the themes as well as the judgments linked to the appropriation women's identity or women's consciousness, the practice has the advantage of affording both the boy and the girl-child the possibility of making free rational choices in matters of equity and social justice.

In view of the dichotomy between Africa's feminism and CI, the double adherence to women's emancipation and children's liberation go hand in hand. By virtue of emphasizing women's emancipation by drawing attention to the legitimate concerns of African women, Africa's feminism provides groundwork for deconstructing the *mythological* perception of womanhood as an appendage of a patriarchic social order and elicits a consciousness of egalitarian gender relations and gender functions. This in turn, signifies a framework or a theory of autonomous dialogical relationships between women and men. Congruently, by virtue of giving children a voice and choice in an erstwhile hierarchical social system, which institutionalizes the interpretation of childhood as posterior to adulthood, the CI vision alters our view of human possibility, and provides for children's participation in the structuring of social order.

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Let's Talk About Emotions¹



Dina Mendonça

Abstract: This paper testifies the crucial importance of Philosophy for Children for Emotional Growth. It begins by establishing the open ended character of emotional processes, showing how feminist philosophers have criticized the fixed conception of negative valence of certain emotions, and how, ultimately, the normative structure of emotions is open to modification. Then, it shows how talking about emotional processes and emotional situations can foster emotional growth once we understand that the acquisition of language and emotional vocabulary is one way to best capture the open-ended character of emotions. Finally, attention is turned to Philosophy for Children. Taking as an illustration the emotion of hope and its importance to inquiry, the paper concludes by examining in what way P4C both benefits and reinforces the previous insights about emotion theory.

Introduction

Talking and writing about emotions is an exciting matter. The amazing development of research on emotions is a proof that such a topic can be taken seriously. No doubt the rise of the study of emotions is partly due to feminist philosophers who have, among other things, placed emotions and emotional processes in the center of various philosophical debates.

In this paper I want to focus on the fact that there is an aspect of such development that is liberating: I can talk, think, research on emotions! Wow! I want to show that the liberating feeling that accompanies the possibility of the study of emotion is at the center of emotional reality

itself: for there is a sense in which emotions are open ended entities. This open-ended character of emotional processes means that they are open to modification, to re-creation, and that talking about them, fortifies the continuing lively transformation of our emotional world.

The contribution of feminist philosophers is fundamental to appreciate the lively openness of emotions. Therefore, I begin the paper by showing the way feminist philosophers have criticized the fixed conception of negative valence of certain emotions, and ultimately showing that the normative structure of emotions is open to modification. Then, I explain how understanding acquisition of language and emotional vocabulary best captures the open-ended character of emotions, and how talking about emotional processes and emotional situations fosters emotional growth. Finally, I turn my attention to Philosophy for Children seeing in what way Philosophy for Children both benefits and reinforces the previous insights, and how its practice provides opportunities to explore the dynamic nature of emotions. In order to show how Philosophy for Children is a crucial element for emotional education, I take up the emotional process of hope as an illustration of the impact of dialogue for emotional development. I conclude by pointing to several suggestions for future inquiry in the fruitful connection of Feminist Philosophy, Philosophy for Children and Philosophy of Emotions.

Feminist Philosophy: Negative emotions and their meaning

Despite the common sense belief that women are more emotional and more emotionally expressive than men, the contribution of feminist philosophy for the topic of emotion is not due to that mistaken interpretation of gender reality. What studies show is that males and females express emotions differently (Simon & Nath 2004, 1162-3), though they do not necessarily differ in the experience of emotion (Simon & Nath 2004, 1142-3, 1149-50). Nevertheless, studies also show that there are different expectations concerning gendered emotional

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expression. For instance, not only women are viewed as feeling and expressing sadness more frequently than men, and men are viewed as feeling and expressing anger more frequently than women (Simon & Nath 2004, 1138) but, in addition, there is the general belief that women are both more emotional and more emotionally expressive than men (Simon & Nath 2004, 1138). As a consequence, women's emotional reactions are overestimated, and when women fail to express an emotion which is expected from them, they are negatively evaluated (Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux 2000, 515-517). This harsh reality is difficult; not only because it stands as a mode of social pressure, but also because it diminishes the importance of emotional reactions that lay outside of expectations by solidifying and petrifying conceptions and expectations about the world of emotions. This means that social conceptions about our emotional world have clear effects on the way we judge the appropriateness or inappropriateness of emotional displays.

It is at the center of this difficulty that we find one of the interesting contributions of feminist philosophy to the theory of emotions. Feminist philosophers have pointed out how social expectations about emotional processes format emotion evaluations, and how such evaluations determine and reinforce emotional processes plus their subsequent evaluations. Perhaps more importantly, the possibility of criticism by feminist philosophers makes us realize that this state of affairs is not eternally given, that is, that the norms that rule emotional expectations are not immutable and eternal. Feminist critique illustrates how it is possible to jump out of the social determination and reevaluate emotional processes differently, and by doing so, enrich our emotional world, enabling us to change social expectation.

Let us look more closely at the contribution of feminist philosophers regarding emotion interpretation. Feminist philosophers re-evaluated several seemingly negative

emotions such as anger, resentment and bitterness pointing out that the evaluation of emotional processes is formatted by social expectations and that, when one changes perspective, the same emotional processes can be seen, understood, and evaluated under a different light. As Bell writes, "many feminist philosophers have argued that emotions traditionally considered immoral or detrimental should be considered moral or political accomplishments when they are felt by women within a context of male domination" (Bell 2005, 80).

In "A Woman's Scorn: Towards a Feminist Defense of Contempt as a Moral Emotion", Bell makes an insightful summary of the reasons by which negative emotions can be seen positively. First, some feminists have argued that the negative emotions are ways by which women try to refuse and fight social norms and constraints. In this way, negative emotions have been seen and praised for their subversive quality. This type of insubordination may be a way to sustain self-respect (Bell 2005, 81). In the second place, it seems that these negative emotions



have an important epistemological role because such emotional states directly format the epistemic position of the subject in a context of oppression, giving subjects an insightful perspective in which one can see to certain aspects invisible for those without those same states (Narayan 1988). In addition, emotions can have indirect epistemological import by providing a way to gain knowledge of the position of the subject. As Bell writes, "through the process of noting, analyzing, and categorizing circumstances in which we become angry and have our anger be given uptake, women can map out others' conception of who and what we are (Bell 2005, 82). Also, seemingly negative emotions can be seen as moral and political achievements when they are seen as ways to witness and testify injustice (Bell 2005, 82). Finally, the information given by emotional processes

may transform their negativity when they become means of initiating, maintaining and leading others to social change (Bell 2005, 82).

The feminist analysis of seemingly negative emotions changes the meaning of valence by enlarging and showing the complexity of such emotional processes, and by doing so illustrates how feminists show that emotions' norms are subject to criticism and reevaluation; and consequently to transformation. Given that the sense of appropriateness and inappropriateness of emotions lies at the base of the notion of rationality of emotion, it is of crucial importance to recognize the possibility of transformation. For if emotions' norms are formatted by social expectations and such reality is capable of modification, it is important to continue the work of revising and reevaluating the role, impact of various emotions, and continue to construct the rationality of emotions.

Open Character of Emotions

What the feminist critique allows us to recognize is that one of the missing insights from theories of emotion is that emotions reveals something about ourselves and the world, and this revelation has an impact in the way we will be in the future, because it may allows us to transform the colors of our emotional world. That is, appealing to criticize and place under the focus of dialogue emotional processes, and be willing to accept a different interpretation of them, may transform our engagement with emotional process themselves. An appeal voiced by John Cogan in "Emotion and the growth of consciousness. Gaining insight through a phenomenology of rage". Cogan writes that when he appeals to engage with emotion he is in fact claiming that there is an alternative understanding of emotion provided by emotion itself (Cogan 2003, 213). There is something truly revealing in the eruption of emotion. Cogan writes, "the eruption of emotion produces an awareness of enlightenment and revelation—a revelation that is reminiscent of the Greek word *charis*, meaning grace, a kind of divine gift. I become informed about the world and myself" (Cogan 2003, 223).

What this means is that understanding the rationality of emotions does not mean to discover connections of emotional processes with the rationality already put forward, but that emotions embody, as an ultimate illustration, the dynamic relationship between others and myself, between the world and myself. I think this is how we should understand Solomon's claim for the rationality of emotions. It is not simply that once emotional processes

are interpreted that we find their reasonableness, but that they are reasonable because they make explicit the intensity and the mode of our relationship with the world. Thus, when Solomon writes, "the rationality of emotions is a prereflective (or "intuitive") logic, but one which, like all logics, can be brought to the surface upon reflection and rendered explicit" (Solomon 1993, 182), he is not claiming that the rationality of emotions is there, simply to be grasped as a complete and finished logic. Instead, it indicates that continued reflection upon emotional processes helps us to better understand the crucial relevance of participating in the emotional character of the narrative of being in the world.

In sum, when one agrees to accept that there is a sense in which emotions can be adequate or inadequate, one must be careful to avoid the sense that such appropriateness is already determined and closed. For emotions are essentially interactive and, as Wholheim writes,

This interaction is embedded in the narratives that we associate to our emotions, and in these narratives, conscious or unconscious, lie the identities of the emotions. But we must not think that these narratives are stories that we can make up at whim or at will. They are probably as deep as anything that we know about ourselves (Wholheim 1999, 224).

Without recognizing this lively interaction, emotions lose their identity, and any account of their appropriateness or inappropriateness must incorporate their dynamic nature. It is important that we allow stories of emotion to appear but we must avoid thinking that once given, these stories are finished. Otherwise, we will limit the life and insightfulness of emotional processes, and we will close the needed continuity that attunement with the world requires.

In sum, emotions are open-ended entities, that is, they are not closed and finished modes of interaction, but on going and moving realities. In order to truly profit from emotional insight it is important not only to recognize this livelihood, but also to foster and cultivate it.

Let's Talk about Emotions

It is all very nice to claim that emotions are open-ended entities but how can we aim at capturing their insight if they are continuing moving forces? One way to look into this is to inquire into the way we become

familiar with emotion language². In *The Rationality of Emotions* (1987), Ronald de Sousa argues that we are made familiar with the vocabulary of emotion by association with paradigm scenarios. He writes,

My hypothesis is this: We are made familiar with the vocabulary of emotion by association with *paradigm scenarios*. These are drawn first from our daily life as small children and later reinforced by the stories, art, and culture to which we are exposed. Later still, in literate cultures, they are supplemented and refined by literature. Paradigm scenarios involve two aspects: first, a situation type providing the characteristic *objects* of the specific emotion-type (where objects can be of the various sorts identified in chapter 5), and second, a set of characteristic or “normal” *responses* to the situation, where normality is first a biological matter and then very quickly becomes a cultural one (De Sousa 1987, 182).

I think it is accurate to state that we become acquainted with the vocabulary of emotion through paradigm scenarios, but I think the story of how these paradigms are drawn is more complex than de Sousa describes them. It is not simply that stories reinforce paradigm scenarios, though I'm sure that experience before story telling is crucial for emotional relevance of stories. However, I think, they also introduce new paradigms that are reinforced by daily life existence (or not). That is, stories not only point out possibilities of paradigms as they also increase the complexity of paradigms, and there is probably a creative process of building these paradigm scenarios that consist in articulating relevant intersections between stories and daily events. And only this explains that, as de Sousa writes, “a paradigm can always be challenged in the light of a wider range of considerations than are available when the case is viewed in isolation” (de Sousa 1987, 187). Consequently, part of understanding well this notion of paradigm scenarios is to understand their malleability and how they function as models of emotional life, just as we have models of molecules to understand certain chemical reactions. However, in order to properly understand models requires understanding how they are used in laboratory practices, and how these practices are connected to life occurrences. In summary, understanding well the malleability of paradigm scenarios is to understand that emotions are open-ended. Why open? First because emotions change impact they have “as time does by,” second because they are subject to multiple modes of revision, and finally

because as emotions reveal something about ourselves and bring to the surface how we feel about our feelings and emotions, they modify the emotional tone of previous and directs future emotional processes.

The literature about children's emotional growth points out again and again how acquisition of language is crucial for emotional growth (Oatley & Jenkins 1996, 181, 187, 191, 202-203, 227). It places the question: why is it that becoming familiar with the vocabulary of emotion should be so crucial to emotional development itself.

I want to propose that being able to talk about emotions (saying one is scared, describing situations of fear, identifying why we weren't scared in similar situations, telling a scary story, etc.) allows us to better grasp, explore, and experiment paradigm scenarios, and consequently maintain and explore the open-character of emotional processes. More forcefully, what I am suggesting is that to the dynamic understanding of forming paradigm scenarios (story telling and daily life events) we should add that dialogue is a fundamental part of creating that intersection, for it is the way we incorporates reactions of others, emotional tones of environments, etc. That is, language is a tool of emotional life that helps to modify and solidify emotional activity because it allows us to describe emotional situations and such descriptions are simultaneously revelations about the situations at stake. The creative participation of language in emotional life lies in the ability of language to 1) direct attention in a specific situation, 2) naming the salient comparisons and contrasts with other emotional situation, 3) be part of the group of consequences (for example, making it possible to say “I'm sorry”) and allow enumeration of different consequences, and finally 4) allow the construction of a narrative in different ways, which means that somehow language is able to mimic the evaluative processes that underlies emotional activity. This last contribution of language partly explains why one can overcome emotional difficulties by talking about emotionally problematic events. At the same time, talking about such events is not sufficient³, for after one uses language to re-created the paradigm scenario of a certain emotional situation one still has to return to the daily life and experiment living with the reassessed paradigm scenario. In summary, language use in the emotional world implies development because it can emulate the evaluative process that underlies emotional activity, and consequently, allow not only a better experimentation of the complex identity of paradigm scenarios but also a creative tool for handling emotional difficulties.

Philosophy for Children and Emotional Growth

It has become more and more visible that emotional literacy should be promoted in schools (Kristjánsson 2006, 53), perhaps not so clear is how such emotional education should be done, and what does it mean to take up emotional literacy. I think Philosophy for Children can have an important role to play in participating in emotional education.

There are many ways in which one could show the relevance of Philosophy for Children program to foster emotional development and growth. For this paper, I want to concentrate in showing that Philosophy for Children keeps alive the lesson of feminist philosophy of aiming to keep at the surface the open character of emotional processes in at least two ways.

First, Philosophy for Children fosters the open-ended character of emotional processes by giving, through its novels, situations that are capable of being explored in the on going dialogue of the community of inquiry. This provides opportunities for participants of a community of inquiry to listen to other descriptions of the emotional connotation of emotional situation as well as explore their own descriptions. As some developmental psychologists assume, the realization of the possibility of emotional ambivalence of situations and episodes marks an important step in emotional development (Harris 1989, 109-125), and the sharing process of the community of inquiry is a constant place to compare and contrast emotions of the different participants. The practice of Philosophy for Children promotes the search for the sense of mixed emotions of situations and episodes and makes it part of the emotional growth of the members of the community. Clearly supporting the wise comment that different emotional realities are not “a psychological and

educational problem to be negotiated or overcome but, rather, as an avenue for emotional learning and growth” (Kristjánsson 2006, 51).

It is not just the case that talking about emotions in communities of inquiry helps participants to become more aware of the surrounding emotional world and thereby more capable of emotional control and emotional management. Of course, this increase of control is also desirable and the literature on children emotional development seems to indicate that language acquisition is determinate for emotion regulation. But in addition, dialogue about emotional situations and episodes, provides tools for continuing questioning and exploring the emotional world. For the argument that emotions are not closed entities (that is that emotional processes can be transformed, developed, changed



through new emotional experiences and reflection) is necessarily connected to the conception that emotions are also very revealing of what is important to us and how to we relate to the world. If we have this in mind, it is very important that children’s emotional reactions are not denied, like when we say “Don’t cry, don’t be said.” Instead we must develop practices of dialogue to engage with children in exploring what are they feeling, how it is revealing. When such continuing dialogue about emotional processes takes place, there is an interchange in creating the ability to name emotional processes, and simultaneously cultivate the ability to make such emotion-words sensitive to context and make them an integral part of the larger vocabulary of our emotional world.

The insights provided by dialogue about emotional situations in Philosophy for Children are, of course, neither automatic nor immediate. Learning emotional literacy is obviously a long-term process (Kristjánsson 2006, 54). This leads me to the second way in which I think Philosophy for Children lively embodies emotional

education. For in addition to providing situations and episodes through its novels, *Philosophy for Children* fosters, in its own practice, the cultivation of crucial emotional abilities. It is possible to illustrate this by showing how *Philosophy for Children* cultivates the ability to practice and learn empathy, or by showing how *Philosophy for Children* increases self-esteem, or how *Philosophy for Children* enables and develops trust, or how *Philosophy for Children* embodies the practice of Caring Thinking. For the present purpose of the paper I think it is insightful to acknowledge how *Philosophy for Children* gives rise and promotes hope because the sentiment of hope is crucial for a good understanding of the notion of inquiry that underlies its educational methodology.

In a very interesting article entitled “Transcendental Hope: Peirce, Hookway, and Pihlström on the Conditions for Inquiry” (2005), Elizabeth Cooke shows how hope is a necessary condition for inquiry. She begins by showing how for, Charles Sanders Peirce, logic is based on the sentiments of faith, hope and charity (EP1:150, 1878) and that, “in inquiry, the role of hope is willingness to ask questions” (Cooke 2005, 663). Taken this way hope can be seen as a habit of openness, for it stands as an attitude of willingness to ask questions despite the lack of expectations (Cooke 2005, 664). However, the willingness to ask question is not born out of nowhere but arises from the practice of dialogue with others, which is internally connected to the achievement of thinking and keeping dialogues with oneself. Thus Cooke describes,

Asking questions is a linguistic habit. And when we develop these habits it is with the response of others in mind. Questions are directed to another person, either a hypothetical person, an actual person, an internalized person from one's memory, or one's future self. How one asks a question (to oneself, or another) is conditioned by one's experience of asking actual questions and the responses one has received, in the same way Mead describes how an utterance acquires its meaning. When we learn to think through dialogue with other, the scope and content of the hope which we develop may be conditioned by the responses we received to our questions in the past. If our questions are ignored by those around us, or pursued with interest, or our ideas are entertained and imaginatively explored, then a corresponding attitude of hope develops, further conditioning the kinds of questions one entertains on one's own. What is important is that the question is responded to—not necessarily with

successful or correct answers (Cooke 2005, 669)

The previous description is amazingly a wonderful explanation of what goes on in the establishment of the community of inquirers in *Philosophy for Children* and how participants of a community of inquiry carry the community with them. The social sphere of constructing and maintaining hope allows us to reaffirm that when hope stands as a willingness to ask questions it appears as a condition of all thinking because it embodies how

the individual (implicitly) hopes that another will respond in one way rather than another, even if that other person is her other self. While there may be different content to our different hopes, all hopes have some minimal content in common, namely, that there is another to respond (Cooke 2005, 668).

Therefore, hope is both a condition of inquiry and conditioned by the development of inquiry, for while hope stands as a condition to ask questions, hope also allows for more hope because asking questions and receiving responses reinforces the sentiment of hope. What this illustration shows is that the continual revision of emotional processes does not necessarily mean a modification of valence in emotional evaluation (like in the case of seemingly negative emotions), but can also be the reinforcement of the emotional process at stake. That is, open-ended character of emotional processes does not necessarily mean openness to change but includes openness to the continual assertion of the value and meaning of an emotional process. Taken in this way we can see how *Philosophy for Children* embodies the necessary acquisition and maintenance of hope as a condition of inquiry.

Hope for Future Research

When I started to write and collect material to write about this topic I found myself having too much material. Such that it seemed I had accepted to write a book on this subject. Honestly, I had no idea it would have been so productive and so full of insights and suggestions for future inquiry. As I organized the material and choose what was to be said and what was to be left aside I continually felt like I was leaving out some very important issues. Granted part of my motivation and justification was that I wanted to highlight the open character of emotional experiences. The following suggestions for further research are a way to make justice to some of the many

crucial topics that appear in the intersection of Emotions, Feminism and Philosophy for Children.

For a more detailed account of how Philosophy for Children provides opportunities to talk about emotions it would be very interesting to identify all possible emotional episodes and situations presented in the novels plus their material in the manuals (exercises and discussion plans) and examples of how they have been taken up in communities of inquiry (it would be an interesting starting point to compare different cultural reactions to emotional situations of the novels). In addition, it should be further investigated how the practice of Philosophy for Children cultivates trust, self-esteem, and empathy given the recent development of research on emotions. Also, emotional process seems a good place to delineate the attitude of the facilitator in the community of inquirers, for emotional development is an on going achievement and consequently an excellent way for the facilitator to test her genuine participation as a facilitator.

Finally, Caring thinking has long been a topic of Philosophy for Children and it would be very interesting to analyze the connections between Lipman's insights about caring thinking and the recent developments of emotion research.

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Footnotes

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² In this paper I refer only to use of natural languages, but there is a very important issue of how language of the arts in general and other forms of communication that either are used with natural languages or on its own (tone of voice, facial expression, body language, etc) is connected to emotional literacy and emotional growth.

³Newirth argues in his book *Between Emotion and Cognition. The Generative Unconscious*. He writes, "I have argued against the analytic injunction to make the unconscious conscious and have rather presented a neo-Kleinian argument for making consciousness unconscious. My paradoxical playing with Freud's famous statement is an attempt to rethink the linked concepts of consciousness and unconsciousness, subjectivity and objectivity, reality and fantasy, and the paranoid-schizoid and depressive modes of experience. It is the development of this active capacity for the creation of meaning ... that I have thought of as the subject of the unconscious, as each participant in the psychoanalytic dialogue attempts to speak from his unconscious symbolic perspective, the generative unconscious."

Reading Feminist Desires



Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd

Abstract: Philosophy for Children educators facilitate awareness, wonder, and the practice of philosophy. I consider that this is a process of a 'turning-towards' philosophy. Through a consideration of this process in three works of Western philosophy; Plato's Symposium; Augustine's Confessions; and Beauvoir's Ethics of Ambiguity; I will conclude that aspects of desire permeate the process of turning towards philosophy. I then focus on a reading of Luce Irigaray to elucidate desire within philosophy. This feminist reading of desire can become a pedagogical focus for Philosophy for Children educators.

Turning Towards

What does it mean to turn towards philosophy? The simple answer is - becoming a philosopher. Yet, this hardly satisfies the question. Simply asking a philosophical question or posing a hypothetical consideration does not make one a philosopher; nor, does being acquainted with the history and discipline of philosophy. The following paper assumes that becoming a philosopher is a process and this process entails a 'turning-towards', a becoming.

We first look at the idea 'turning-towards'. First we recognize that to turn is an action; it is a doing in the world. Secondly it is not a nothing which turns. In order for there to be a turning we must have something. Thirdly, one does not merely turn, one turn towards. Henceforth, it is a moving in time, a consideration of process as well as a direction. Importantly the turning towards does *not necessarily* signify a completion of the turn -there is not a realization of the goal. What we find in the history of philosophy is that this turning-towards is a significant moment, so significant that it is transformative. Thus, we have four criteria for that which is the turning towards philosophy: action, direction, subject/object, and transformation.

In practicing Philosophy for Children, I sense in myself

a struggle to facilitate that same process - a turning towards philosophy. While I do not seek to replicate my own transformation I am very much aware that the curriculum and the pedagogy of the community of inquiry allow me to facilitate this process, in fact, direct me to. In the practice of P4C we find an activity, a novel one for most children, where children are moved away from simply viewing the world as it appears. Through modeling and practice, children begin to wonder about the world and to ask questions. The community of inquiry engages children in the process, noting that once a question is asked it is manipulated and critiqued for implications, assumptions, and truth. The philosophical community of inquiry entails the uncovering of the subject, concept, or belief at hand in a constant process of critique and reflection. The philosophical community of inquiry is one of action and movement. This reflection is not an empty practice it is directed towards the finding of truth, validity, reliability, constancy, or consistency; it is a philosophically directed uncovering. Notably it is a process of change, merely discussing a belief does not constitute valid practice; instead, it is a practice which has either strengthened, weakened, or modified beliefs or knowledge. In this regard then, a central tenant of the program can be read as the process of turning towards philosophy.

The practice is transformative, according to Splitter and Sharp (1995). Each individual within the community is transformed through the process of inquiring together as a group, into a problematic concept, idea, or experience.

As an educator in this curriculum then, I am engaged with the process of turning; questioning the process, asking what a moment of turning-towards philosophy entails. As I am transformed within my own practice, constantly turning towards the philosophical components of teaching, facilitating, and uncovering knowledge, I recognize that I lack understanding of my own transformation and that of my students. I desire to uncover the questions of this lack.

As P4C is a turning towards philosophy then I may begin to compare it to other examples of the same process. Using three examples historically significant in the Western philosophical tradition, Plato's *Symposium*; Augustine's *Confessions*; and Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*, I can begin to piece together a picture of the process of turning towards philosophy. Though, these three examples in no way encapsulate the whole of philosophy, or even Western

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philosophy, there are some similarities between them. One characteristic which is problematic and complex in all three are the aspects of desire which occur throughout the process of the turning towards philosophy. Regarding desire within each example I can begin to problematize and characterize desire in Philosophy for Children.

The following three pictures of desire within three philosophically significant works are merely that, pictures, a reading of desire within a work. Reading desire in a work is to read desire onto a work. Thus, in my reading of desire I may ask myself, what is my desire here, what do the spaces in my reading want to be filled with? As I pose this question, I understand that the traditional definition of desire does not satisfy me as a teacher and I know that I am searching for another definition.

Teacher

What we find in the Plato's *Symposium* are four arguments on the nature of love. The four arguments have been considered by various philosophers and read for the insights on Love and Platonic Philosophy. However, in regarding the moment of turning towards philosophy specifically in this text, I would like to consider the interaction between Socrates and his ex-lover, Alcibiades, and the readings of desire from the fifth and final argument.

It is necessary to review what Socrates argued previously in the discussion. Socrates begins to discuss love by recalling his own education of love by a woman, Diotima of Minea. We will soon find that this relationship is as full of love as that between a man and woman. Love is portrayed as lacking, Love is not empty but neither is Love a totality. Love can only be considered Love if it is seeking.

Love is powerful (in that it is immortal and is full of desire) however it is also powerless (in that it is a seeker of that which it desires). Because Love is a desire for the good and the beautiful there are two kinds of love; that of natural reproduction (birthing of a child) and that of reproduction of wisdom - the love which a philosopher can bestow upon (in this case) a young boy. It is a certain kind of love at the center of the relationship between a teacher and student, and it is this love which moves one towards the good and beautiful.

The one who loves correctly will turn towards the beauty in *all* instead of finding the beauty in, merely, the *one*. Socrates ends his monologue on Love by exhorting all who are with him to follow this path of correct love.

At this point, one of Socrates' young ex-lovers Alcibiades enters the discussion, seemingly drunk and cavorting with many friends, "Will you have a very drunken man as a companion of your revels?" (Plato, 355). What juxtaposition to the calm and lovely previous discussion! From him there

is no general or universal claim on love's nature. Instead, we are privy to a personal story on Alcibiades love affair with Socrates/Philosophy.

He begins by praising the beauty that bewitches him. Continuing he relates how he soon believed Socrates to care for his own beauty as well. However, ironically Alcibiades, the beautiful young boy is unable to seduce the old and ugly Socrates and his advances are rebuffed. Alcibiades tells us,

Moreover, I have felt the pang; and he who has suffered, as they say, is willing to tell his fellow sufferers only, as they alone will be likely to understand him, and will not be extreme in judging of the sayings or doings which have been wrong from his agony. For I have been bitten by the viper too; I have known in my soul, or in my heart, or in some other part, that worst of pangs, more violent in ingenuous youth, than any serpent's tooth, the pang of philosophy, which will make a man say or do anything (Plato, 360)

And he warns the others that their desire for Socrates will only be used to turn them towards philosophy. The pang of philosophy is the unfulfilled desire of the one who turns towards the universal desire for knowledge of the good.

It is a desire to pay homage to Socrates that allows for the turn towards philosophy. But, even if this desire is able to be used, to propel young boys into the love of wisdom and the knowledge of the good is it worth the cost? Certainly, as Alcibiades entered, carousing with his merry band we do not see a man who desires the good or tries to imitate Socrates. In fact, he would seem to be the opposite of Socrates example; if only in his inability to hold his drink! Did Socrates turn Alcibiades towards philosophy or did he merely play with and tease a young boy?

The picture of Socrates is of a teacher willing to use desire to propel his student. Alcibiades's desire has not touched his teacher. Desire thus, in this turning towards philosophy is the pedagogical mover. It is that which allows the teacher to secure the relationship between the student and himself. Love and its desire; love's active fulfillment of the lack allows for education. It is in first attraction and the teacher's ability to resist the student's advances that propel the student to imitate and finally recognize the desire for wisdom.

Confession

In Augustine's *Confessions*, the moment of turning is a turning towards God in wonder. Augustine cannot merely only turn towards philosophy for philosophy is immersed in seeking only the truths of the natural world and does not seek a further and more final truth.

But although they [philosophers] can predict an eclipse of the sun so far ahead, they cannot see that they themselves are already in the shadow of eclipse. This is because they ignore you and do not inquire how they come to possess the intelligence to make these researches (Augustine, V. 3, 93)

It is towards God –the final Truth to which Augustine must turn. The turning is a turning towards wonder from bodily desire.

This at first appears similar to the movement of Alcibiades towards Socrates. It is desire that allows for the turning. Unlike the move in the *Symposium* however, Augustine is turning away from his bodily desire; it is a sinful desire. The love of Alcibiades towards Socrates is not a bad or sinful desire it is merely a lower desire. Instead of building and developing desire however Augustine will move away from his desires.

Body desire is something to be despised. “It is truly your command that I should be continent and restrain myself from gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, the empty pomp of living” (Augustine, X, 29, 233). Augustine turns towards a personal relationship with God. This is again, a very different move from the Socratic turning. The love of philosophy Socrates inhabits is the love of the universal, the many, the ideal form. While this closely relates with Augustine’s concept of God it does not portray the intimacy and closeness found in Augustine’s love of God.

It is through confession, conscious guilt that forces the turn. Without this fear of desire, without the constant confession of bodily desire; Augustine’s epistemological knowledge is fallible. If Augustine knows he confesses then he knows he refuses his bodily desire and knows that he has moved towards God.

It is Augustine’s expression of bodily desires, which allow for him to move towards a willing of faith towards God. Desire is not the motivator in this instance; instead desire is the signifier that Augustine is not yet united with God. When he has made this choice, to confess and

to abstain from the body, then he has chosen to be free from desire of the body. Without the recognition of bodily desire, Augustine will have no choice, without choice then Augustine’s turning towards God is an empty one, *sans* intention.

Furthermore, this constant turning towards desire creates a new desire to resist bodily desires. As with the turn towards philosophy in the *Symposium*, the good life, the life sought after is not free from desire, here the turn is towards a desiring of God’s abundant love. “I have long been burning with desire to contemplate your law and to confess to you

both what I know of it and where my knowledge fails; how far the first gleams of your light have illuminated me” (Augustine, XI, 2, 254). Thus, the turning away from body desires leaves a space that is then filled with faith.

In this story it is through a constant conscious reflection on his life, on his habits, on his desires, which allow Augustine hope that his turning is towards final Truth. Although Augustine acknowledges his desires he turns away from them in fear and is then filled with the faith in God. These powerful desires, however, are what allow him knowledge of God and Truth.

Yet, if body desires are so powerful and create a system of certainty for the subject

then we may ask if turning away from bodily desires creates a specific type of subject. Desire thus, in this turn is a move from fear. It is that which allows the subject epistemological certainty and dispels anxiety and fear. What would occur if Augustine were to acknowledge his body desires and turn towards them? Augustine separates his desire for God from his bodily desire; yet, we see an ecstatic and passionate Augustine during his turn towards God. Augustine’s desire for God seems inimical to his body desire; what kind of turn is it to turn from desire towards desire?

Choice

The concept of constant turning is seen again in Simone de Beauvoir’s treatise, *Ethics of Ambiguity*. Beauvoir considers the world which Sartre exemplifies in *Being and*



Nothingness, as impossible but not un-livable, if there is a turning towards the choice. Contrary to most of the work of Sartre, Beauvoir gives us the living world, the ethical world. Living in this ethical world is difficult. In the first few paragraphs Beauvoir (1957) warns us of the danger of Philosophy,

As long as there have been men and they have lived, they have all felt this tragic ambiguity of their condition, but as long as there have been philosophers and they have thought, most of them have tried to mask it (7).

Like Augustine, Beauvoir is suspicious of the philosophical tradition, saying, “cowardice doesn’t pay” (Beauvoir, 8) for they are men manipulating the word so that they feel as if they understand it well and completely. There is, however, a philosophical turn which is not a cowardice, which entails living courageously in the ethical world. This turning towards the philosophical lived life is a turn towards living with the ambiguity and the limits of the choices one will confront within the lived life.

Beauvoir then does not set up a turning towards Philosophy in finding complete truth or final and total knowledge. Instead she locates the turning towards as constantly living within the choices of existence. “On the contrary, it appears to us that by turning toward this freedom we are going to discover a principle of action whose range will be universal” (23). It will be an action that all persons may turn to but it will be an action that is situated with the individual subject: Particular choice found in the plurality of human existence.

The choice is always a choice between two desires: the desire to be and the desire to be free. Being is the existence between boundaries. I am a woman, I am white, I am middle class, I have a college education, and so forth, these are the boundaries where I find myself. Being free is the knowledge of my intentionality and consciousness in this situation. Thus, at every moment I have the desire *to be* and the desire *to be free*. For instance, what if we consider the typical Manhattan cat; she sits on her window ledge and looks outside. She has full use of her claws and is quite capable of scratching through the screen and climbing down the fireplace. But she never does; what is more she never even tries. This is existence. The cat is secure in her life and does not contemplate the choice to escape, to be free. Now, it is possible that cats are unable to contemplate the choice between freedom and between existence. But as a human the contemplation of this choice is ever present.

As I turn towards choice I turn to the impossibility of being caught within my desires. Knowing these limits, intentionally turning towards these limits however, allows me to live.

Beauvoir regards men, who live like the cat, as serious men. These are the priests, the scientists, the philosophers, who are unable to entertain the choice beyond their boundaries. These boundaries are reinforced by the men themselves through their habits and study. The serious man is a man who is a being but a being who is not free and denies himself this freedom by denying himself the lived ambiguity of the knowledge of two choices between two desires. See what the turning towards process looks like when she talks about the child and how some “women and children” will always live in the infantile world. “To exist is to make oneself a lack of being; it is to cast oneself into the world” (Beauvoir, 42). Women and children caught in the objectification of culture and others are unable to throw themselves out of the world of being, they have no sense of choice.

Desire then plays a significant role in Beauvoir’s turn. It is through fulfillment of the desire to be free that catches me inside my desire to exist. I am always thrown against the tension between these two desires and reflection upon these two choices that makes me ethical, turns me towards the good. I must choose to turn at every point in my life. When I reflect upon the implications for either choice, I am living well. Yet, what does it mean to live with this impossibility of life? Beauvoir claims that I am choosing freedom when I contemplate these choices. Yet, I would question the choice to fill either desire (to exist or to be free). What happens if we leave our desires unfilled, and we choose this?

Desire

We have considered, desire, as a central tenant common to each of these philosophical treatments of the turning towards philosophy. We then turn to our own moment of turning towards philosophy, the community of inquiry practicing philosophy with children. If we neglect to read desire into this process we may be neglecting a significant aspect of the practice; both pedagogically as well as philosophically.

One reading of each of the three works leads us to ask questions about a traditional definition of desire; that is, a desire is something to be filled. These kinds of questions are central to the pedagogical processes. There are desires which students want and need filled. Addressing these concerns of desire allows educators to use desire in their classrooms. Thus, like Socrates do we move our students desire for fun and excitement and relationship towards more fulfilling desires of knowledge and experience? As teachers we use our student’s desire to please and emulate us as teachers in order to move them towards learning. Do we understand what it means to capitalize on this temptation? Do we consider our own desires in the classroom? As educators, even in a

progressive curriculum such as Philosophy for Children we cannot release ourselves as subjects within the classroom. The classroom is not an ahistorical space, it is specific and situated. Teachers have authority in their classrooms; this authority is given to them through the culture and society of which they are apart.

What about our students who turn towards philosophical knowledge in order to win, to satisfy a desire to succeed, to never question again? Do we turn them into Beauvoir's serious men who are never free because we do not allow them to play within ambiguity? In our desire to hold philosophical dialogue do we only attempt to be serious? Does the curriculum allow for jokes, art, and play of language? Does the curriculum allow our students to expose and uncover the boundaries in their lives? Life is ambiguous and discovering and uncovering ambiguity allows us room to grow and develop.

Like Augustine, can we recognize that we can only hold a truth for a moment without again turning towards questioning our motives and desires for holding that truth? Again, and again we must turn and question these intentions and these truths.

But these kinds of questions conceive desire as something to be filled, a space that must be taken care of in the subject. Socrates fills his students with a more developed desire towards knowledge; Augustine turns towards God in an effort to fill the space of his confessed desires with a desire for faith; and Beauvoir, while admitting that desire is constantly denied to us as we make choices between two desires indicates that by choosing one, fulfilling it, we deny ourselves the other choice. In a sense, we cannot fill desire in more than one way.

But what happens if we use a non-traditional conception of desire, what if desire is regarded as something that is not a negative lack, a missing of something but is instead a positive force within and for the subject? Then our questions may change.

In our desire to turn our students towards the, good life, the love of wisdom, do we take our students from the lived world where they experience tension, trauma, and anxiety? If we remove them from this world (if that is possible) do we force them from themselves as subjects?

And, unlike Augustine what if were to acknowledge our bodily desires and turn towards them? Learning which is situated within the body looks very different than learning that is away from and disregarding of the body. Reading the desires of the body onto curriculums allows us new insights onto teaching practices.

And if instead of choosing to fill one desire, as Beauvoir incites us to do, what happens if we leave desire unfilled?

Feminine Desire

As a teacher, I cannot allow desire in my room if it is merely present - if it is the children and me grabbing at things with which to fill our wants. I cannot have desire in my classroom if the chaotic messiness of the body only serves to cover the dark horrors of trauma and anxiety. But I may entertain the notion that desire can move within my classroom actively creating space.

When desire takes up space, as *something*, desire is seen as a possibility that creates but does not have to be filled. It is this conception of desire which is read by Luce Irigaray as a feminist desire, a desire that is not merely a lack, something with which to fill or where my attention is held; instead, a desire which multiplies caring, creativity, and love.

A short reading of Irigaray's reading of Plato's metaphor of the cave allows me this new picture of desire. Irigaray (1974) reads Plato as speaking of a dark and scary womb, the cave within which all men are housed and which offers no hope but confusion of half-light and shadows. These men have no desire because they have no way in which to turn, they are chained; they only look at the cave wall playing games that have little meaning. But Irigaray warns us that this is merely a representation from Plato, for he assumes from the first that there is something to be rescued from, and that the rescuer is the teacher, who always has his own lack to be filled.

In making his demonstration, the teacher only lifts the veil in order that he may subsequently better conceal the motives of desire, the different kinds of tropisms, even the effects of giddiness you get from swinging from the chandeliers (271).

The darkness is scary, something from which to be rescued and the teacher encourages the students to leave the cave through a path which will take them up into the light. This light is the final (T)ruth, for they have been living in a hall of smoke and mirrors. Yet, Irigaray cautions us, reminding us that Plato is setting us up to believe in this metaphor, that "we are like these men" (267). Irigaray questions the lesson that only the teacher in this story can bring us out of the cave, forcibly and with pain. Instead, she asks us to consider the seemingly empty space of the cave as an active force from which education may arise.

Because desire is something that we are merely fixated on, Plato simply turns our heads for us towards a greater desire—that of knowledge. But Irigaray wants us to reread desire as something other than a filling of lack or want. Instead, we can read desire as an active force within the subject which is constantly creating the subject, and is always, already there.

Practicing Feminist Desire

As understood, the philosophical community of inquiry is a transformative process of turning towards philosophy and we have already seen that desire necessarily plays some sort of role in this process. If we are unable to place the desires of both the community and the individuals in that community within the inquiry process than we are neglecting an aspect of the process.

There are many ways that I can practice this kind of feminist desire within the community of philosophical inquiry in my classroom. When I teach from a place of desire, I teach knowing that desire permeates my classroom. I am able to recognize that both my students and I regard each other as objects and signifiers of desire. These desires which permeate the learning environment are pedagogical movers and motivators.

Philosophical teaching, from this place of feminist desire acknowledges the role that the body plays in the educative process. It allows for teaching of and with the emotions. It calls into question the placement of a teacher as an objective and outside force in her classroom; it makes each person in the classroom community an aspect of each other's educational experience.

Teaching the philosophical community of inquiry from a place of feminine desire requires the educator to bring the undercurrents of desire in a classroom to an active space. Thus, we are able to question the motivations for certain kinds of thinking or procedural moves. We are able to question someone who may be impeding the inquiry process and we may be able to reflect upon the reasons as to why the inquiry led us in a specific direction. Teaching from this place of feminine desire is not merely naming the desires that are upon us however, it is also a realization that we may be unable to speak our desires or fully understand them. Thus, the educator should look for ways in which to uncover desires in the community. We may look at art forms or create our own art. We may write new stories based on our discussions where we play ourselves in our created stories. We may explore music and dance in order to "speak" our desires onto the educational experience.

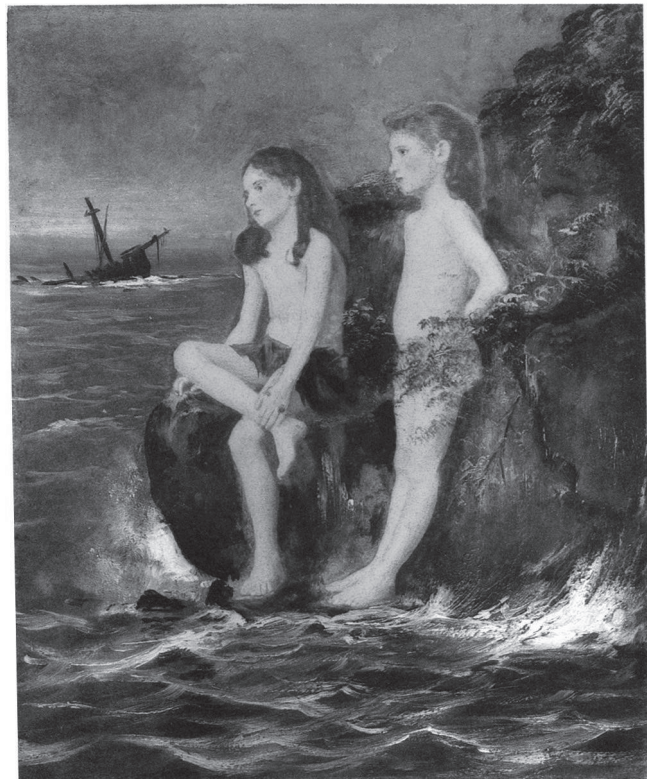
For instance, often P4C sessions begin by students making lists of questions that they want to discuss and listing them on the board. Many ways of choosing the first question to answer are used. But how often do I ask my students, "How will we know when we have answered this question?" or "When will we know that we have answered this question?" or "Why would we want to answer this question?" I am learning to make these educational desires explicit in my teaching in order to facilitate the desire that seems central to philosophical discovery.

Turning with my community, as a feminist educator,

I find that this new definition of desire stills my fears of allowing desire into my classroom. When I regard desire as an active force, that continually turns me and my students; I understand that the educational moment is always there, waiting for us, to be uncovered. In short, it is to be desired.

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Philosophy for Children as a Response to Gender Problems

Jennifer Bleazby



Abstract: This paper will outline some of the ways in which traditional pedagogies facilitate 'masculine' ideals of thinking, while excluding and denigrating the 'feminine'. It will be shown that unlike traditional pedagogies, P4C reconstructs the gendered dualisms (e.g. mind/body, reason/emotion, individual/community) that form the basis of traditional gender stereotypes. Consequently, P4C reconstructs traditional gender stereotypes and challenges the traditional gendering of school subjects, which contributes to the underperformance of girls in math and science and the devaluation of the 'feminine' arts and humanities. It will also be shown that P4C may be particularly valuable for overcoming the current concerns about the educational performance of boys, especially in relation to literacy and behavioral problems.

Introduction

Philosophy for Children is a pedagogy which integrates the methods and content of philosophy and the pragmatist ideal of the community of inquiry (COI) in order to facilitate critical, creative, caring, and communal thinking skills, as well as the social skills and attitudes necessary for democratic citizenship. A typical P4C class involves the shared reading of a narrative, containing philosophically puzzling ideas, followed by a classroom inquiry initiated by student questions and concerns. Through asking questions, articulating problems, searching for solutions and explanations, expressing opinions, constructing arguments, constructing criteria, searching for counter examples, and evaluating arguments, students aim to work through these philosophical problems and construct meaning. P4C may not be restricted to the philosophy class but can be integrated across the curriculum because all subjects have epistemological, metaphysical, aesthetic, ethical, political and logical aspects.

In this paper, I will argue that Philosophy for Children reconstructs traditional gender stereotypes, which are educationally problematic. These socially constructed stereotypes are based upon a system of interlocking dualisms, including reason/emotion, reason/imagination, reason/experience, abstract/concrete, mind/body, individual/community, universal/particular, etc. Those attributes on the left are associated with masculinity, knowledge and traditional education, while those on the right are associated with the feminine and are traditionally considered to be opposed to knowledge and education. As such, traditional pedagogies and curricula often exclude and disadvantage girls because they are constructed in opposition to dominant notions of femininity. Furthermore, both boys and girls are disadvantaged because these dualisms are actually illegitimate and counter the facilitation of good thinking and autonomy. The attributes that make up the dualistic pairs are not opposed to each other but are interdependent and inseparable aspects of all good thinking and autonomy. In this paper, it will be argued that the P4C pedagogy facilitates ideals of thinking, autonomy and learning that reconstruct these dualisms and consequently deconstruct traditional gender stereotypes. By deconstructing these gender stereotypes, P4C challenges the traditional gendering of the curriculum, where supposedly concrete, emotive, and imaginative subjects like arts, English and the humanities are considered feminine, while seemingly more rational subjects like math and science are considered masculine. As such, I believe P4C can help respond to current concerns over the educational performance of boys, especially in relation to literacy and behavioural problems. Before we can assess how P4C may help overcome these problems, I will first outline various ways in which mainstream schools reinforce dominant gender stereotypes and how this affects the educational experiences of both males and females.

The participation & performance of females in math & science

Some feminist theorists have argued that dominant, western epistemology reflects masculine experiences and is defined in opposition to the feminine (e.g. Lloyd 1984, Code 1991, Harding 1991, Fox-Keller 1983, Belenky, et al 1986). According to this dominant epistemology, it

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is only pure reason, devoid of emotion, experience, and the imagination that can transcend the particularities and situatedness of concrete, corporeal experience and deliver us abstract, objective, universal, and absolute knowledge. While reason is associated with masculinity, all that is opposed to reason (e.g. emotion, the body, imagination, experience) is associated with the feminine. Thus, knowledge and reason are defined via an exclusion of the feminine (Lloyd 1984, p. xvii). While the faculties and attributes associated with femininity are considered useful for the reproductive and caring activities of the private, domestic sphere, they have been opposed to the public, productive, and political realm.

This has consequences for education. As Martin argues, the fundamental goal of education is to prepare individuals for participation in the public realm. Thus, traditional education privileges ‘masculine’ notions of thinking and is opposed to women and the family, which are considered “a-educational” as well as “apolitical” (1994, p. 108). This can make mainstream schooling a difficult experience for many women. As Martin states, success at school may require girls and women to reject traditional femininity and conform to dominant ideals of masculinity. Girls who reject traditional femininity may be subject to social alienation and marginalization. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is also a patriarchal construct and may be problematic for both females and males (Ibid, p. 116).

Traditional education’s opposition to the ‘feminine’ is most noticeable in the hierarchical structure of the curriculum. Math and science are typically considered to be ‘masculine’ subjects in virtue of their greater emphasis on abstractness, theory, and rationality (Keller 1985, p. 77; Davies 1996, p. 214). These ‘masculine’ subjects are also considered to be the most prestigious, intellectually demanding, and vocationally valuable. They are prerequisites for many high status university courses and careers, and their content and assessment methods enable them to more reliably discriminate between students (Teese, et al. 1995, p. 10).² The lower end of the curriculum hierarchy is dominated by the arts, humanities, and social sciences, which are considered ‘feminine’ subjects because their content and methods are more concrete, practical, imaginative, and emotional (Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p. 122).

One consequence of the gendered nature of the curriculum is that females have been less likely to participate in math, science, and technology subjects. For example, in the 2006 NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) there were only 2303 females enrolled in Physics

compared to 6951 males (NSW Board of Studies 2006).³ Girls do normally get higher average marks in many math and science subjects. However, this can be explained by the fact that it is generally only a very select group of high achieving, middle class girls that enrol in them in the first place, while the group of boys who enroll in them is larger and more diversified in terms of background and ability (Teese, et al. 1995, p. 84).⁴ While females enroll in humanities and arts subjects in greater numbers and perform significantly better in them, this doesn’t act as a substitute for their poorer participation in math and science. As we have seen, the arts and humanities don’t have the vocational, academic and social status and benefits that math and science do.

One explanation for why girls are self-selecting out of these subjects may be that they appear to conflict with dominant notions of femininity. These subjects often place an “emphasis on technical knowledge, on solutions to problems which are justified in abstract rather than personal terms, on an individual, competitive approach to problems rather than a collaborative one” and on deductive reasoning over induction (Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p. 121). Research suggests that the assessment methods relied upon in these subjects also appear to favour ‘masculine’ thinking styles, such as multiple choice tests, as well as on high risk public exams. In contrast, females students generally do better with open-ended essay questions and class based projects, which are predominantly used in the arts and humanities (Teese, et al. 1995, p. 98). Thus, females have a competitive edge in the arts and humanities but, as we have seen, these subjects are not as lucrative as math and science. Furthermore, public examinations, which tend to favour boys, are still fundamental for calculating university entrance scores (Ibid, p. 105).

The disadvantage of females across the curriculum

It isn’t just the pedagogical methods, epistemological assumptions, and content of math and science that appear to devalue and exclude the ‘feminine’. Kenway, et al. argue, the arts and humanities also often reflect ‘masculine’ experiences and values (1997, p. 74-75). For example, a history teacher interviewed by Kenway, et al. told of an assignment where students were asked to imagine they were a Chinese person living in a particular time and write about their experiences. Out of the whole hundred or so students only one, who was a female, took up the perspective of a women (Ibid, p.76). This is probably because textbooks and other learning material

often emphasize male activities and exploits, which gives students the impression that women haven't done anything historically significant. This is reflected in the comments of a female student interviewed by Kenway, et al.:

We wouldn't normally do anything about women in Social Studies because mostly in Social Studies we learn about history. It would be pretty good if we did I guess but I don't really know if we could because I don't really about any women that was anything in history. (Ibid, p. 77)

It's not just the content of these subjects that may reflect 'masculine' experiences and ideals, but also the pedagogical methods used. While the arts and humanities may be more likely to emphasize classroom discussions, group work, school based projects, and essay writing, this may not necessarily advantage females. For example, essay writing and classroom discussions may emphasize objective, abstract, depersonalised, and aggressive forms of argumentation, which are associated with dominant 'masculine' ways of knowing (Belenky, et al. 1986, p. 200). For example, I currently have a year 11 philosophy class where there are almost twice as many boys as girls. This is unusual for a humanities subject in Australia. Based on my students comments about what they think philosophy is and why they chose it, it seems that majority of them, boys and girls, were attracted to philosophy because they thought it was an opportunity to engage in debates and argue with each other (in the adversarial sense). The problem is that schooling, regardless of the subject area, has traditionally been focused on the cultivation of ideals of thinking and knowing that are incompatible with dominant notions of femininity. Consequently, many female students lack confidence in themselves as learners; underestimate their abilities; enrol in subjects less demanding than what they appear capable of; display greater dependency on teachers; are often more cautious and conservative in their responses on tests; are less likely, or less able, to contribute to classroom discussions; and appear reluctant to challenge, critique, or disagree with teachers or other students (Teese, et al. 1995, p. 97; Belenky, et al. 1986, ch. 2; Gilbert and Taylor 1991; Slade 1994, p. 30).

The participation & performance of males in the arts and the humanities

Just as girls have shown some reluctance to participate

in 'masculine' subjects, boys participate less in the arts and humanities and tend to be less successful in these subjects when they do participate. For example, in NSW in 2006 only 17% of the 3798 year 12 students enrolled in the subject Society and Culture were males. Of the 8833 students enrolled in Visual Arts only 30% were male (NSW Board of Studies 2006).⁵ This is also reflected in the comparatively poor literacy skills of boys. In Australia's 2006 National Literacy and Numeracy Benchmark tests, 4% more year seven girls achieved the national reading benchmark than boys of the same year level. There are similar results for the writing benchmark, with 5.5% more year seven girls showing the minimum standard of writing ability (MCEETYA 2008). International testing has shown similar results. In reading tests conducted in 2006, as a part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), females performed better on average in all 57 countries involved (OECD 2008, p. 5).

At least part of the problem seems to be that the arts and the humanities appear to conflict with dominant notions of masculinity (Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p. 200). Many students still seem to have the impression that reading is a passive, and thus feminine activity, possibly because mainstream schooling still emphasizes taking in and memorizing information rather than constructing meaning and thinking for oneself. Furthermore, school literature frequently deals with 'feminine' themes such as personal relationships and emotions. Furthermore, writing in English often emphasizes imaginativeness, introspection, personal responses to texts, and empathizing with characters (Ibid, p. 211). This conflicts with dominant notions of masculinity, which stress the suppression of emotions, activeness, and a focus on things "outside the self, rather than in the self" (Ibid, p. 214).

Male students and anti-social behavior

Another area of concern is boy's greater tendency for antisocial and disruptive behaviour. Research suggests that in Australia about 80 percent of the students suspended or excluded from school are boys (Commonwealth of Australia 2002, p.16). Research also shows that Australian boys are much more frequently the perpetrators of school bullying and harassment of both girls and other boys. This is overwhelmingly true when the harassment is physical rather than verbal (Collins, et al. 1996, p. 29). Australian juvenile crime rates for 2006, show that boys and young men are about three times as

likely to be arrested than young women (AIC, 2008). While there are many important factors that contribute to behavioral problems, including family background, learning problems, substance abuse and behavioural disorders, dominant gender ideals are also contributors. A common explanation for boys' behavioural problems is that schooling expects and rewards behaviour that is feminine and conflicts with dominant notions of masculinity. Students are expected to be docile, obedient, quiet, still, orderly, neat, work cooperatively and passively receive information. This conflicts with the notion that boys are robust, energetic, assertive, emotionally neutral, risk-taking and independent (Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p. 174). Consequently, boys who are cooperative and studious are frequently perceived as feminine, are socially alienated and the victims of bullying (Ibid, pp. 132-139; Collins, et al. 1996, p. 26).

While, I agree that the behaviour expected of students conflicts with dominant notions of masculinity, I don't believe that this behaviour is valued because it is feminine. Rather, like women, children are considered to lack rationality and thus autonomy and independence. Consequently, like women, children are expected to submit to the authority of more rational, autonomous individuals. Thus, the problem is not so much that schools value the feminine and see masculinity as subversive. The problem is that schools accept a dominant notion of childhood that bares striking similarities to dominant notions of femininity (Bleazby, 2006). Thus, it is not really a feminisation of schooling that contributes to boy's behavioural problems but rather, as Gilbert & Gilbert states, a conflict "between being treated as a child and treated as a boy" (1998, p. 208).

The recuperative masculinist & feminist/pro-feminist response

One response to the problems of boys' education has been the claim that schooling has become increasingly feminised and consequently boy's behaviours and interests are devalued and marginalized. Thus, it is argued that schools must reaffirm ideals of masculinity so that boys can freely and positively develop a masculine sense of self. This recuperative masculinist position is highly problematic. Firstly, the notion of masculinity that recuperative masculinists assert is normally hegemonic masculinity. However, as we have seen, it is actually this patriarchal notion of masculinity, along with its feminine counterpart, that is thought to cause many of these educational and social problems (Lingard and

Douglas 1999, p. 134). Secondly, this position often involves the uncritical acceptance of certain pedagogical methods simply because boys seem to prefer them. For example, Buckingham recommends competitive learning environments for boys because "boy's are naturally competitive" (2004, p. 24). However, the fact that boy's prefer competition, or get higher marks in competitive learning environments, doesn't make competition a good pedagogical method. When students are primarily motivated by competition, their aim is not to understand or do something well but to beat other people. Furthermore, competitiveness is associated with rugged individualism, which may perpetuate boy's behavioural problems (Gilbert & Gilbert 1998, p. 119).

Rather than simply accept dominant notions of gender and try to accommodate them, the feminists and pro-feminists response has been to critically examine existing pedagogical methods, curriculum content, and dominant gender stereotypes in order to create learning environments that facilitate skills and knowledge that will enable all students to live autonomous, meaningful lives (e.g. Lingard & Douglas 1999, Kenway 1997). I believe that P4C can help do this. P4C reconstructs traditional gender stereotypes by promoting an anti-dualistic ideal of thinking and the self. The result of P4C's anti-dualism is a more inclusive pedagogy that is more facilitative of good thinking and social skills and autonomy.

Philosophy for children's reconstruction of gendered epistemologies

There is some concern that P4C's emphasis on logic and philosophical inquiry may promote notions of reason and argumentation that are adversarial and defined in opposition to the 'feminine' emotions, imagination, corporeality, connectedness, and subjectivity (Field 1997; MaColl 1997; Haynes 1994; Valentino 1998, p. 29; Birkhahn 1997, p. 39). This concern is expressed by MaColl:

I have to confess that I have often felt, as a feminist philosopher, some disquiet in advocating philosophy in schools, for the following reason: would you wish on young women or small girls a practice of philosophy, which you yourself have come to see as deeply imbued with disguised, gendered ideals and associations, which are, if not wrong, at the very least, not appropriate for everyone? (MaColl, 1997, p. 6)



However, drawing on Dewey's anti-dualistic epistemology, "the community of inquiry provides an environment in which a number of traditional gender dualisms break down" and where undesirable philosophical ideals and methods are reconstructed (Glasser 1994, p. 16; See also Field 1997; Collins 2001; Redshaw 1994; Haynes 1994; Sharp 1993; Splitter and Sharp 1995). For example, P4C's notion of reasonableness doesn't incorporate an ideal of reason that is opposed to the emotions and imagination. Rather, P4C assumes that reason, emotion, feeling, imagination, mind and body are intertwined and functionally co-dependent. Attempts to completely isolate them from one and other or to suppress any of them will always be unsuccessful and result in faculties that are impoverished and ineffective for constructing meaning (Bleazby 2007). Drawing on Dewey and Vygotsky, P4C's classroom community of inquiry also emphasizes the relational, communal nature of thinking and the self. Thus, P4C rejects the dominant ideal of autonomy as rugged individualism, opposed to 'feminine' dependency and connectedness (Bleazby 2006). P4C's Deweyian notions of truth and knowledge also reconstruct reason/experience, subject/object and abstract/concrete dualisms. In the P4C classroom, all thinking is a way of meaningfully reconstructing concrete experiences and thus all thinking is embodied, situated and subjective. However, the reconstruction of experience also involves abstract and objective knowledge and concepts, including formal logic. There is no real separation between any of these attributes during the actual process of reconstructing experience. It is only when we reflect upon and describe the process of reconstruction that we talk about such attributes and characteristics as if they were distinct and independent (Bleazby 2006). As such, P4C rejects the idea that objectivity and abstractness are in opposition to

subjectivity, corporeality and concreteness.

Far from disadvantaging girls and women, P4C's focus on logic and philosophical inquiry may benefit female students in particular (Collins 2001, p. 21). Of particular value, is the fact that the P4C model of philosophy facilitates cooperative inquiry rather than the debate style or legal competition model. P4C model of philosophy facilitates cooperative inquiry rather than the debate style or legal competition model. As explained, research suggests that many female students lack confidence in themselves as reasoners. The explicit and implicit exclusion of females from certain activities and disciplines, such as math, science, and logic has undoubtedly contributed to this. P4C can particularly benefit those who have less developed thinking skills and/or who lack confidence in themselves as reasoners because it specifically focuses on facilitating good thinking and especially because it facilitates an ideal of thinking which doesn't reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. As Haynes argues, facilitating the development of reasoning skills promotes feminist goals because the capacity to think for oneself frees both females and males from complete dependence on, and control by, others (1994, p. 23).

Most importantly, P4C's anti-dualistic epistemology also challenges the traditional gendered and hierarchical structure of the curriculum. Since P4C assumes that all subjects involve an ideal of thinking, which deconstructs traditional gender stereotypes it rejects the gendering and ranking of subjects. If *all* students were required to engage in philosophical communities of inquiry in all classes they would come to see traditional gender dualisms as fallacious and problematic because P4C emphasises how good thinking is simultaneously abstract, concrete, corporeal, cognitive, rational, emotional, imaginative

and communal. Since P4C involves students inquiring into epistemology and the process of thinking itself, the way good thinking practice involves a reconstruction of these gender stereotypes can also be made explicit. Thus, the integration of P4C across the curriculum may help balance out the gender differences in participation rates and levels of achievement in different subjects. Of course many dominant social values, institutions and practices beyond the school reinforce these gender stereotypes and dominant notions of knowledge. This is why schooling must also enable students to openly inquire into gender issues, including gendered ideals of thinking and learning.

Discussing gender in the philosophical community of inquiry

The P4C classroom is an ideal environment for discussing gender issues because it facilitates the necessary critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking skills, while also providing relevant philosophical subject matter (Collins 2001, p. 29). The many sub-disciplines of philosophy include problems and information relevant to gender issues. Firstly, feminist philosophy provides various critiques of how epistemologies, social practices, public institutions, political systems and values can be patriarchal, as well as racist and classist. Feminist philosophy also suggests feminist alternatives, which may be assessed and implemented by students. Aesthetics and media ethics enable students to analyse how gender and sexuality is constructed and represented in different art forms and popular culture and the ethical implications of this for those working in the media. The study of epistemology and logic enables students to critique how different ideals of knowledge and thinking may be gendered. Importantly, as mentioned, this will also provoke and enable students to question the traditional gendering of the curriculum. Political philosophy can facilitate student inquiry into human rights, citizenship, autonomy, freedom, justice, equality, harassment and discrimination laws, democracy and multiculturalism. All of which are relevant to gender issues. The problems and theories of ethics can provide students with knowledge and skills for analysing the moral dimension of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, bullying, violence and personal relationships. Ethical inquiry will also enable students to construct guidelines and standards for acceptable behaviour inside and outside the classroom. Logic also enables students to construct standards for good thinking, which can facilitate a meaningful and reasonable inquiry

into these controversial and contentious issues.

Gender, literacy and communication skills in philosophy for children

P4C may also help improve boys' literacy skills and, consequently, their participation in the humanities. Unlike traditional schooling, P4C makes it clear that reading is not a passive and thus 'feminine' activity of merely receiving information from a text. While traditional school textbooks are primarily designed to transmit information to students, texts used for P4C must be more open and problematic so as to provoke communal inquiry, where students are considered active participants in creating meaning (Othman & Hashim 2006; Seon-He 2001-2002). In the COI, it is assumed that students have a unique situatedness that will affect their interpretation of the text (Seon-He 2001-2002, pp. 44-45). Attention is drawn to this multitude of interpretations because the whole class jointly read the same text and this shared reading is immediately followed by a communal inquiry, initiated by student questions. While the text will limit the number of possible of interpretations, if there was only one unambiguous understanding of the text, inquiry would be unnecessary. This diversity of interpretations provokes inquiry as a means to critically comparing and drawing connections between them (Othman and Hashim 2006, p. 27). Thus, P4C emphasises the fact that reading a text involves more than just correctly recognizing words. It is an active and creative process of meaning making. As Lipman explains, reading involves a "collaboration between author and reader that results in a common product that goes beyond what the author has stated or implied" (2003, p. 175). This reading process may be particularly beneficial for boys because it is clearly an active, autonomous activity that involves critical and creative inquiry. Furthermore, since P4C accepts that textual meaning is constructed and contextual, it facilitates critical literacy, which encourages children to look for sexism, classicism, racism, and other types of bias when reading texts.

P4C may also help improve literacy skills in general. Since reading is a process of constructing meaning and P4C focuses on facilitating the thinking skills needed for constructing meaning, it is not surprisingly that there is research showing a correlation between P4C and improvement in reading ability (e.g. Othman & Hashim 2006). As Seon-He states, constructing meaning involves making various connections, including connections between different words, between words and things,

between premises and conclusions, between things that are similar and things that are dissimilar, between the general and the particular, between parts and wholes, between causes and effects, etc (2001-2002, p. 45). The study of formal and informal logic in the P4C classroom helps students understand why some inferences and connections are legitimate and meaningful and why others are not (Lipman 2003, p. 176). As Lipman states, facilitating such reasoning skills is more likely to improve literacy skills than focusing on “syntactical lapses, vocabulary weaknesses”, and “spelling deficiencies” because “reasoning skills contribute directly to the reader’s acquisition of meaning, and it is access to meaning that most effectively motivates the reader to continue pursuing the reading process” (Lipman 2003, p. 176).

Participation in P4C’s classroom COI should also help improve language, literacy and communication skills, simply because participation in the COI requires students to choose and structure their words thoughtfully and carefully, give examples, provide reasons, listen to others, and make connections between one’s own ideas and the ideas of others and the text. These skills don’t just characterize good speaking and listening but also good writing and reading. The COI scaffolds students while they are developing these skills because the teacher and students offer each other assistance and model these skills for each other. It is sometimes argued that such an emphasis on classroom discussion privileges girls because they have superior social, communication and language skills (e.g. Buckingham 2004, p. 17). However, while the COI emphasizes inter-dependency, social relationships and verbal ability, as we have seen, it is also *dialogical*, in that it is guided by logic and makes use of abstract concepts and principles. Thus, not only does P4C reject the notion that interdependency and community are feminine, it also emphasizes the fact that community and interdependency are not opposed to reasoning and autonomy because it accepts the Deweyian and Vygotskian idea that in order to think oneself one must be a member of a community.

Gender and student behaviour in the philosophy for children classroom

P4C’s facilitation of communication skills and its reconstruction of gender stereotypes could also help reduce bullying. While bullying takes many forms, including girl’s bullying other girls and girls bullying boys, as we have seen, some research shows that boys are more

likely to be the perpetrators of bullying. Furthermore, the same research also showed that a significant amount of school bullying and harassment committed by both girls and boys is sex based, with gender stereotypes being used as weapons for denigrating and dominating others (Collins, et al. 1996, p. 29). Reconstructing traditional gender stereotypes will require students to question the assumption that the ‘masculine’ is opposed to, and superior to, the ‘feminine’. Consequently, boys may feel less pressured to dominate and control girls and ‘non-masculine’ boys through harassment, violence and social alienation and all students may be less likely to harass students who don’t conform to dominant gender stereotypes. In fact, P4C’s reconstruction of the dualistic construction of gender may help students realize that these gender stereotypes are unachievable because they require a separation of things that are intertwined and interdependent (e.g. reason/emotion, individual/community).

By reconstructing dominant gender stereotypes, P4C may also reduce the disruptive classroom behaviour of boys. Male students who participate in a classroom COI are less likely to believe that care, attentive listening, collaboration and learning are opposed to masculinity. In the COI, these are valued attributes that all good inquirers and autonomous individuals possess, regardless of their gender. Most importantly, P4C also rejects the traditional view that well behaved students are *submissive, passive, silent, and subordinate*. It is understandable that students, both male and female, resist this ideal of the good student since it denies them any sense of autonomy and individuality. In contrast to traditional pedagogies, P4C is a student-centred pedagogy. P4C rejects the child-adult dualism, which posits adults (at least white, male, middle class adults) as fully autonomous and developed, while children are seen as completely dependent. In the P4C classroom children have degrees of autonomy and rights, especially the right to inquire in a community, which is necessary for personal and social growth (Bleazby 2006). The classroom inquiry is initiated by student questions and all students are encouraged to actively participate, give their own opinions, share their experiences and question others, including the teacher.⁶ In the COI, participation and effort is rewarded with meaningfulness and a greater capacity for independent thinking and this helps keep students motivated and engaged. In such an environment students are less likely to be disruptive and resistant because they are less likely to feel oppressed, manipulated and bored.

Conclusion

Thus, it has been argued that P4C may be able to overcome many of the gender inequalities that characterize traditional pedagogies. P4C reconstructs traditional gender stereotypes, which posit the imagination, emotions, corporeality, and experience as feminine, and reason, objectivity and abstract thought as masculine. I have examined the various ways in which traditional education can be seen to perpetuate and reinforce these gender stereotypes. These stereotypes contribute to the underperformance and lower participation rates of boys in the arts and humanities and of girls in math and science. They also contribute to boy's behavioural problems. By facilitating an ideal of thinking that rejects these dualisms, P4C reconstructs these gender stereotypes and challenges the hierarchical structure of the curriculum. Consequently, P4C may offer a solution to these educational problems.

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Footnotes

¹ This paper was written as a part of my PhD research and I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Philip Cam, who read earlier drafts of this paper and provided valuable feedback and advice.

² The content of these subjects is suited to assessments that use short answer and multiple-choice questions. It is presumed that these assessment methods can be marked more objectively and consistently than essays or projects, which are more common in the arts and humanities.

³ The HSC is a certificate awarded to students who complete the final year of schooling (year 12) in New South Wales, Australia.

⁴ Teese et al. explain this in relation to the performance of females in the South Australian year 12 subject Mathematics 1 in 1992: "4 out of every 10 girls in eastern Adelaide occupy the top band of performance compared to only 3 out of ten boys. But these high achieving girls are drawn from a pool of only 9 in every 100 of their cohort compared to the pool of 22 in every 100 from which high achieving boys are drawn" (1995, p. 84)

⁵ The exceptions to this are Geography and Economics, which enrol significantly more boys (NSW Board of Studies, 2006). However, unlike other humanities subjects, these subjects could be seen as more 'masculine' because they emphasize quantification and measurement and may appear to be more vocationally orientated (Teese, et al. 1995 et al. p. 31).

⁶ However, the COI is still rule governed and structured, and the teacher's more developed inquiry and communication skills gives her some degree of authority (Bleazby 2006).

If the Will is Absent

Julia Jackson



*Abstract: For the feminist movement to be effective, certain requirements are crucial. This entails a re-evaluation of the feminist movement's language, approach, myths, and politics. Clearly, language must take on more a substantive definition, specifically, a fundamental understanding of economically disadvantaged and/or women of color's plight. If prudence is shown vis-à-vis the will to demonstrate an awareness of all women's plights; and, as Celie from *The Color Purple* posited, "a voice say to everything listening," the way will be found to ensure the enfranchisement of all women because - IF THE WILL IS ABSENT, THE WAY WILL NOT BE FOUND!*

IF THE WILL IS ABSENT, THE WAY WILL NOT BE FOUND!

"Who you think you is? Look at you. You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman...you nothing at all" is Mister's harsh castigation of Celie in Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple* (1985, p. 213). In response to Mister's discordant denunciation Celie offers, "I'm pore, I'm black, I maybe ugly...a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here" (1985, p. 214).

Finally, having the will to exhume her physical self from Mister's grave oppression; Celie resurrects the strength that had lain dormant within her. Celie's found freedom is so empowering that it has a hegemonic effect on her psychological self. Finding the will, Celie finds the way, which opens up a whole new sphere of autonomy. With the presence of will the way is found, which unfetters Celie's ability to acknowledge her plight, then announce her existence, and claim her place in the world. Thus, it is

Celie's rejoinder "I'm here," which may be construed as: I matter, I exist, I survive - to Mister's condemnation, which is not only intriguing but pushed the inquiry about women of color, and women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds tenuous position in the feminist movement.

Women have been fighting for equality in America for close to two hundred years. However, the movement has been scattered, fragmented and individualized; feminism has never asserted itself for women in general. Although significant gains have been made, the movement has proven to be a hodgepodge of subsets that only acknowledge their individual cause, therefore, significantly minimizing progress. In order for the American feminist movement to be effective, it must find the will to alter its language, approach, philosophy and politics so that it is beneficial to women of all race, class and gender backgrounds.

Finding the will simply entails employing measures or making a conscious effort to use language that exemplifies an awareness of all women's predicaments. If prudence is shown by finding the will to use language that facilitates communication, or as Celie posited, "a voice say to everything listening," the way, i.e., means or approach, will be found to enfranchise all women. Hence, the first part of this paper is to briefly discuss the use of language in the feminist community.

Without doubt, any suitable assessment that would lend an explanation for the feminist movement's present situation must involve an evaluation of how language is used to perpetuate a culture of idiocy¹ within the movement. Language is not merely words on a paper, or the act of speaking to individuals, who may or may not be listening. Language, as used in this paper, is the ability to effect exchange of thoughts whereby individuals are equally engaged with one another, with a full understanding of their communal responsibilities. Language that is mutual, responsive, receptive, analogous, and nurturing for all women.

Conceivably, one may presuppose the impossibility of women arriving at a language that is mutual, responsive, receptive, analogous, and nurturing for all women because of political, race, class or gender differences; however, it is a false presupposition. As argued by Lin Ma (2004):

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[I]t is wrong to take language, culture (and thought) as reified entities and thus accordingly draw a demarcation. . . . It is groundless to speak of an essential difference between communication which involves the same language, and communication which concerns people who have lived geographically far apart and hence might *prima facie* have different customs and habits. . . . communication happen[s] at a certain location where there is an encounter of humans in a particular environment . . . Both depend on mutual attunements, contestations and negotiations. . . . To assume an essential difference between the two is to set up fictional barriers between groups of people. (pp. 6-11)

Accordingly, finding the will to precipitate a substantive language, explicitly, what Celie termed as “a voice to say to everything listening,” will facilitate communication and enable the feminist movement to find the way beyond subsets and/or barriers between women.

Within the context of the feminist community, language has to take on more a substantive definition; language has to encompass a fundamental understanding of economically disadvantaged and/or women of color’s plight. In this sense, language would truly become an effective exchange of thoughts whereby individuals are equally engaged with one another, with a full understanding of their communal responsibilities, in order to deduce practical solutions to real-world problems (i.e., political, social, economic). However, it is important to consider that language is not limited to communication with others; it must also take place introspectively (detailed examination of feelings, thoughts, and motives).

Moreover, in order for effective communication to take place an environment that is conducive to the free exchange of ideas, which provides solutions to our problems, must be present. This environment must be composed of two equally important facets: first, this effective communication must take place within its proper historical context; in short, we must seek solutions that take into account our past and its effects on our present and future. If we are not properly educated about our past, we cannot move forward; and, secondly, before we can engage in effective communication, everyone must have an understanding of her communal responsibilities. We must all take responsibility for everyone else’s edification.

There are two primary reasons why language within the feminist community is needed. First, the central unit from which all communal activity takes place is the individual. Subsequently, in order for the community to function properly, individuals within that community must first develop an understanding of the communal responsibilities that they have to all; and, they must take active steps to

augment their knowledge before they can seek to edify others within the community. Language makes this self-empowerment possible by expanding the individual’s sphere of autonomy. Language provides the platform necessary for self-reflection, which is an integral part of civic/political engagement. Civic/political engagement can only be effective when there are well-informed individuals contributing to the dialogue.

Secondly, language provides the necessary medium for the deliberation of common values. The deliberation of common values is essential for the community’s overall understanding of how problems within the community should be resolved. The deliberation of common values also unifies the community so that the community functions as a cohesive unit. Language effectively unifies the community in order that the individuals within the community all act together with a view to the common goals of the community.

Thus, language empowers the community by providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to interact with one another and reflect on the current conditions of the community, as well as, provide solutions to any problems that the community may face. As a result, the moral bonds between the members of the community are strengthened. The moral bond between community members dictates the ability of the community to be engaged within the politics of that community. When this happens, the community becomes free because it now has the ability to shape its destiny.

This freedom can manifest itself in a myriad of ways, which includes, galvanizing members of the community to promote social change and laying the groundwork for effective criticism of power structures within society, such as systematic and metaphoric patriarchal oppressions. However, it is because of the ineffective use of language that the feminist community places it in its current condition – individualized and/or fragmented. Too many aspects of the language, which is employed by the feminist community, undermines its ability to function as a cohesive unit of aware or knowledgeable individuals acting with a view to the common goals of the feminists community. Hence, once again, this has fostered a hodgepodge of subset in lieu of a cohesive unit.

With this said, in combination with discussing the feminist movement and its language, current approach, philosophy and politics, the second purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss its origins and clarify the connotations and annotations of patriarchy and feminism in order to form conclusions, keeping the following questions in mind:

- What is feminism and/or the feminist movement?

- If patriarchy is a part of that definition, then what is patriarchy?
- Is or has feminism been conducive for all women?
- Is feminism only about the sex of women, or are other issues to be factored?
- What are the shortcomings, if any, of the feminists' movement(s)?
- How can the feminist movement, as it is referred to now, maximize its effectiveness?

While the questions may seem simple, as to their answers, briefly examining the feminist movement reveals that many of the forerunners have neglected to share in this basic, but intrinsic train of thought. Early on, when women began an organized rebellion against their oppression, the forerunners were upper-class, white women who could only relate to themselves.

In the 1840's, anti-slavery and temperance campaigns led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony began to manifest into feminism. Because women were excluded from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840, the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 was organized, which presented a Declaration of Sentiments which asserted that the principles of the American Declaration of Independence ought to be applied to women. Once the process of Black enfranchisement began and no gains were made for women, Anthony and Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association while Lucy Stone simultaneously created the more conservative American Woman's Association (Humm, 1992).

These advances sparked other organizations to come about, such as the International Council of Women founded in 1888, as well as the 1890 National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The NAWSA not only barred Black women from attending its Atlanta conference, but allowed chapters to bar Black women from joining (Davis, 1983, p. 2); this underscores the previous assertion that early on, White women's organized rebellion focused on themselves. As a matter of fact, the NAWSA Resolved:

That without expressing any opinion on the proper qualifications for voting, we call attention to the significant facts that in every State there are more women who can read and write than the whole number illiterate male voters, more white women who can read and write than all negro voters; more American women who can read and write than all foreign voters; so that the enfranchisement of such women would settle the vexed question of rule by illiteracy, whether of home-grown or foreign-born production. (Davis, 1983, p. 2)

Moreover, during a debate regarding the right to vote, Elizabeth Cady Stanton posited:

The representative women of the nation have done their uttermost for the last thirty years to secure freedom for the negro; and as long as he was lowest in the scale of being, we were willing to press his claims; but now, as the celestial gate to civil rights is slowly moving on its hinges, it becomes a serious question whether we had better stand aside and see 'Sambo' walk into the kingdom first. As self preservation is the first law of nature, would it not be wiser to keep our lamps trimmed and burning, and when the constitutional door is open, avail ourselves of the strong arm and blue uniform of the black soldier and walk in by his side, and thus make the gap so wide that no privileged class could ever again close it against the humblest citizen of the republic? (Davis, 1983, pp. 3-4)

One may be quick to understand why Stanton would take this stand considering the era and the tensions that had been inflamed, as well as the tenuous position of the movement. It cannot go without stating that a few other White suffragists, such as Francis Matilde Gage, were not in agreement with Stanton (Newman, 1999); but, clearly as pointed to earlier in this paper, this language, approach, and these actions are not indicative of individuals acting or fighting with a view to the common goals of the community, i.e., for the rights of all women.

Nonetheless, the above mentioned organizations, in turn, led to other organizations and groups so that in 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote under the Wilson administration. However, because legal advances were made in certain states and stifled in other as well as the large multitude of unconnected organizations, in some ways a single suffrage identity of American feminism was unknown. For example, the Woman's Party proposed the Equal Rights Amendments in order to enforce federal equality, which was opposed by the League of Women's Voters. While welfare feminism was the aim of the New Deal feminist campaign against poverty, pacifist feminists led by Jane Addams formed the Women's Peace Party, which later became known as Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at the 1915 International Congress (Humm, 1992, p. 3). The objectives of each group varied and they did not necessarily work together. Even so, they became unified under the 1923 Equal Right's Amendment, which was first proposed by the Woman's Party as an Amendment to the Constitution. It declared that, "men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to it jurisdiction;" and, this became the focus for the new feminist's movement of the late 1960's (Humm, 1992, p.3).

Similarly, the 1960's resurgence of feminism was a reaction to the Civil Rights Movement of African Americans (Humm, 1992, p. 4). All over the nation, college students, and Americans in general, were involved in radical politics; protesting for and against socialism, war, environmental rights and the Black Liberation struggle. Accordingly, the feminist movement emerged, but there was no clear platform, as was the case in the late 1800's. Betty Friedan is often accredited for pulling the trigger with the release of her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, where "she wrote about the problem that has no name" (Humm, 1992, p. 4). Clearly, Friedan was primarily speaking of the sexist discrimination faced by white, educated, economically well-off women.

Although Friedan is revered as a pioneer of the contemporary feminist movement, her book was not written for most women. She was expressing the viewpoint of predominantly white, wealthy women who felt downtrodden with domestication, i.e., shopping, vacationing, and taking care of the children and home. These women felt that career would be more fulfilling; essentially a modern version of the women involved in the first feminist movement. Although this may be feasible, Friedan never mentioned "who would be called in to take care of the children and maintain the home if more women like herself were freed from their house labor and given equal access with white men to the professions" (hooks, 2000, p. 2). *The Feminine Mystique*, and by far the feminist movement at large, has failed to consider that being a babysitter or a maid was and is someone's career; she just happens to be poor and/or non-White. In *Women, Race and Class*, Angela Davis contends that while White women were looking for work, Black women were looking for a break. For centuries, "beginning with slavery, more Black women have worked outside of their homes than White women; and, the working patterns established during slavery have carried over today" (1983, p. 5).

Furthermore, the slave system defined Black people as chattel. Case in point, the landscape design for issues such as, the Black woman as the primary wage-earner, the Black woman working outside of her home, Black women's disenfranchisement, femininity concerns, distrust, or lack of respect were long ago established by entrepreneurs like the alleged Lynch. Presumably, faced with the problem of protecting their economic investment, Whites sought an expedient solution for handling defiant slaves whose defiance affected the economic output of their plantations. The solution came in 1712 by way of a plantation owner from the West Indies named William Lynch. According to Lynch the solution and process was simple, requiring skills that Whites already knew, and his process would not only break the will to resist; but, as Lynch assured the slave owners, "The Black slave after receiving this indoctrination shall carry on and will become self re-fueling and self generation

for hundreds of years, maybe thousands" (Freeman, 2002, p. 1).

In his speech, Lynch explained that the process entailed nothing more than tenacity and a watchful eye:

The breaking process is the same for both the horse and the nigger, only slightly varying in degrees. But...there is an art in long range economic planning. You must keep your eye and thoughts on the female and the offspring of the horse and the nigger. For example, take the case of the wild stud horse, a female horse and an already infant horse and compare the breaking process with two captured nigger males in their natural state, a pregnant nigger woman with the infant offspring. Completely break the female horse until she becomes very gentle whereas you or anybody can ride her in comfort. Train the female horse whereby she will eat out of your hand, and she will, in turn, train the infant horse to eat out of your hand also. (Freeman, 2002, p. 3)

Even today, this pattern of the dominant Black female can be attributed to the design laid out by Lynch. As Lynch proposed:

Understanding is the best thing. Therefore, we shall go deeper into this area of the subject matter concerning what we have produced here in this breaking process of the female nigger. In her natural uncivilized state she would have a strong dependency on the uncivilized nigger male and she would have a limited protective tendency toward her independent male offspring and would raise the female offspring to be dependent like her. Nature had provided for this type of balance. We reversed nature by burning and pulling one civilized nigger apart and bull whipping the other to the point of death – all in her presence. By her being left alone, unprotected, with the male image destroyed, the ordeal caused her to move from her psychological dependent state to a frozen independent state. In this frozen psychological state of independence she will raise her male and female offspring in reversed roles for fear of the young male's life, she will psychologically train him to be mentally weak and dependent but physically strong. Because she has become psychologically independent, she will train her female offspring's [sic] to be psychologically independently. What have you got? You've got the nigger woman out front and the nigger man behind and scared. This is a perfect situation for sound sleep and economics. (Freeman, 2002, p. 4)

In short, a historical system of subjugation left a legacy, in which, since slavery, the Black woman is a primary

presence in many Black families, educational institutions, and the job market.

Conversely, this is perhaps the only time in history where Black women have experienced any form of equality; because women and men were considered to be a profitable source of labor by slaveholders, they were nearly genderless at face value. However, the female slave was a full time worker for her master, a wife, a mother, and a homemaker (Davis, 1983). Davis ratiocinates that, "judged by the evolving nineteenth-century ideology of femininity, which emphasized women's roles as nurturing mothers and gentle companions and housekeepers for their husbands, Black women were practically anomalies" (1983, p. 6).

Davis further explains that the Black women's servitude extended long after slavery:

While Black women worked as cooks, nursemaids, chambermaids and all-purpose domestics, white women in the South unanimously rejected this line of work. Outside the South, white women who worked as domestics were generally European immigrants who, like their ex-slave sisters, were compelled to take whatever employment they could find. (1983, p. 90)

During the post slavery period, most Black women became domestic field servants because it was difficult to find work, and they had to earn money for their families, in spite of how menial the pay may have been, or how hazardous the working conditions may have been. Often times, Black women were brutalized, i.e. raped, brutally beaten, and verbally abused, by white men working these jobs (Davis, 1983).

Undeniably, being a woman comes with social problems, and being a woman from a poor background comes with additional social problems; however, being a Black woman (as underscored at the beginning of this paper via the denunciation of Mister) comes with surfeit of social problems. For example, a woman who is also a minority and economically disadvantaged carries an emotional albatross that often stymies her advancement (educational, professional, economic) inasmuch as "sexism and racism combine with class exploitation to produce a three-edged mode of oppression for women of color" (Marable, 2000, p. 160). Conceivably, Friedan should have named her book *The WHITE Women's Mystique* so that the movement would have also been coined correctly - white women's liberation. With Friedan as their voice, white women began protesting for more meaningful lives via careers, however, under the guise of Women's Liberation. This is perhaps just as fallacious as it is truthful because minority and working class women were looking for something completely different. Inexorably, this purported "Women's Liberation changed faced down the line and became the feminist movement"

(hooks, 2000, p. xi).

Because the movement was so slanted towards White women's interests, as well as American society in general, women such as bell hooks, Ann Moody, Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker and Septime Clark were fighting against the sexism taking place in and being neglected by the national Civil Rights Movement; however, some simply refer to it as Black Liberation (hooks, 2000, p. xi).

As hooks explains in *Feminist Theory, From Margin to Center*, "feminist movements happen when groups of people come together with an organized strategy to take action to eliminate patriarchy" (2000, p. xi). Like any other word, patriarchy has acquired several denotations and connotations, but many feminist do not provide a definition of patriarchy. However, Phyllis Chesler provides us with a definition that accurately captures what feminist mean by the word patriarchy:

[P]atriarchy itself: the church, the state, and private enterprise, as it herds women into sex-typed, lesser lives; it is our own families, sacrificing our female members and defending our male members, even when they are known to have seriously wronged women and children. It is the profound and unending hostility women encounter on street corners on dates, at work; it is the exclusion of women from paid or well paid jobs. (1994, p. 48)

Thus, in the aforementioned statement, hooks is explaining that the movements in the 1960's differed from those in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in that they were more than just political (Chesler's definition is simply for clarity). Women in the 1960's wanted to be treated and respected as autonomous human beings. These movements began by re-examining traditional gender roles as well as ways to end patriarchal control and by the 1970's; feminist thinkers were already critiquing the 60's radicalism and formed what is known as re-visionist feminist theory.

Then again, those involved in the dialogue were still advocating Friedan's myopic point of view where gender is deemed the most important factor when a child is coming out of the womb. In response, hooks contends that:

[W]hen the child of two black parents is coming out of the womb the factor that is considered first is skin color, then gender, because race and gender will determine that child's fate. Looking at the inter-locking nature of gender, race and class was the perspective that changed the direction of feminist thought. (2000, p.xii)

The feminist movement took on Friedan's one-dimensional perspective on women's reality even though she ignored the existence of all non-white and poor white

women (hooks, 2000, p. 2).

Many feminist over the years have argued that economics and race have no bearing on the oppression of women because it is all the same, but since most Black women were of lower economic class, and considered to be of an inferior race, thus subjected to various forms of maliciousness and discrimination, that argument bears no weight. An example of this is presented by Zora Neal Hurston in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. Nanny, the perceptive, protective grandmother in Hurston's novel explains to Janie, her grand-daughter, the plight of a Black woman in America:

Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see. So de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his womenfolks. De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see. (1990, p. 14)

Similarly Hurston, via the character of Nanny, seemed to have echoed sentiments expressed by Sojourner Truth that exposed not merely the oppression of Black women by Whites, but the subjugation of Black women by Black men. For further clarity of this point, note the following exchange between Douglass and Truth. After the Civil War during a debate as to the urgency of Black men receiving the right to vote, more so than women, Frederick Douglass passionately explained:

When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed upon the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have [the same] urgency to obtain the ballot. (Davis, 1983, p. 57)

In response to Frederick Douglass' argument Sojourner Truth reasoned that:

There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. (Newman, 1999, p. 36)

Albeit, Douglass' passionate rhetoric may evoke some sense of pathos, but what is truly provocative about his contention is what can be inferred.

Quintessentially, Douglass' rhetoric underscores the Black man's view of the Black woman, and the Black woman's plight. First, Douglass totally negates the Black woman's existence and experiences with the same system that he so intensely indicts. Secondly, his remarks are not addressed to all women; it is apparent that when Douglass said women, he solely sees women as White women. Moreover, the fact that Black women endured the same kind of brutalization, in which, Douglass exclusively attributed those experiences to Black men, further illuminates the plight of Black women's devaluation, that is, as women they lack value, and their experiences lack value. Thus, Sojourner Truth's strong rebuttal to giving the Black man, which would sustain the oppressive plight of the Black woman, is reasonable.

An additional example is exposed in Morrison's *Song of Solomon* via the character Mr. Tommy, a friendly and observant older man, who engages Milkman in an amusing and insightful spiel about some of the things that they (Black men) will never be able to experience because of the state of affairs of the Black woman. Mr. Tommy asked:

You ever pull fourteen days straight and come home to a sweet woman, clean sheets...? Eh? He looked at Milkman. "Did you?"
Milkman smiled and said, "No, sir."
No? Well, don't look forward to it, cause you not going to have that either. (1987, p. 59)

This short passage reveals much about American society during the Reconstruction Period. At first blush, one may quickly assume that Mr. Tommy is merely teasingly chiding Milkman; but, when examining the text more wakefully, it is clear that Black men have always had the same expectations of Black women as White men have had of White women.

Indeed, the prescribed gender roles are the same, but one has to ask oneself why Milkman will never come home to a sweet woman and clean sheets? Perhaps because of the economic and social second class citizenship, Black women are off at work just as the man. As explained by Davis earlier, Black women were burdened with economics, race and sex unlike their White sisters; and therefore, have been overworked even after slavery. Clearly, had it not been for the emergence of women such as bell hooks, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde and relatively few others, then the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement would have left Black women to be continually treated as second class citizens.

hooks informs us that now people look at gender, race and class when doing feminist work; however, there are still



desperately needed guidelines because:

Opportunistic women applaud feminist success, then tell us the movement is no longer needed, as 'all women have improved their lives' in a world where women are fast becoming the majority of our nation's poor, where single mothers are pathologized, where most females of all ages have no access to basic healthcare. Yet given these dire realities, visionary feminist discourse is increasingly only talked about in corridors of the educated elite. If it remains there the feminist message will not be heard, and ultimately feminist movement will end. (2000, p. xiv)

Subsequently, having briefly examined the history of feminism and how it has emerged and evolved, we will look at some of those guidelines or solutions advocated by bell hooks and others so that, perhaps, the feminist movement can one day become a truly equal community.

Even into the 1990's, the feminist movement was dominated by thin, young, wealthy, giddy, rich, white women. These women have the most media coverage and refer to themselves as radical feminist; women such as Camille Paglia, Katie Rolphe (*The Morning After*), Marianne Williamson (*A Woman's Worth*) and Naomi Wolf (*Fire With Fire*). These women who are highly praised and

highly paid contend that there is no longer any epidemic of rape and female abuse and that women have won the gender war, when women from Paris to Peoria are overworked, unpaid, underpaid, devalued and undervalued. These women also neglect the fact that women are being gang-raped from Bosnia to Boston, sold into sexual slavery as children in Bangkok, Mexico, and Manila, as well as stoned and beheaded for adultery in Saudi Arabia and the Iranian Provinces (Chesler, 1994, p. 56). Although this paper is focusing on American feminism, the international facts remain significant; the war has not been won, stalemated or forgotten.

In order for women, and men, to combat this oppression, they must unite. Just as Black women's views are edited out of the movement, so are those of lesbians and children. Because of this, Gloria Anzaldúa (1983) informs us that the first step is for men and women of all races, economic backgrounds and sexual orientations to band together under the guise of feminism, if there is to ever be an end to patriarchal oppression. The bottom line is that the movement will never be successful if it does not realize that women do not share a common oppression because unfortunately, race, class, gender, religion and sexual preference contributes to ones place in society.

Secondly, hooks adds that it is fine for each group to argue their beliefs; but, if the movement is ever going to be successful, "the more privileged group of women who run the movement must acknowledge that all women do not have the same access to universities, publishing houses, mass media and money, therefore, they must act accordingly" (2000, p.6). Women with more resources have an obligation to step up, that is to say, to genuinely implement stewardship, and convey the concerns of others in order that the movement expresses ideals of all women - or else - the idea of feminism is out of context.

Thirdly, bell hooks leaves us with the most crucial piece of advice: a major problem with feminism is that most people define it as a movement to make women the social equals of men. However, men fall in hierarchies also, in which rich white males are at the top, followed by middle class white males, and the list goes on; however, where does that place Black women in society? As a lesser to a Black man because she is a woman, or as equal to a Black man who would be treated as less to a White man? This definition is flawed because it assumes that all men have the same social status; again, numerous social issues are involved here.

Thus, we should look to feminism as a process of diminishing all forms of hierarchies in human relationships which requires completely breaking down society as we know it so that we are all truly equal (hooks, 2000, p. 20). This rhetoric is inclusive for all people; therefore, no one can be intimidated or left out. It also calls for more than

just legislation, such as the Nineteenth Amendment; we must also realize that the way we treat each other, in many cases, trumps the law. We must be kind, compassionate and understanding when it comes to others, or else no progress will be made.

Essentially, the feminist movement, as we know it, now holds sex to be the primary determinant of one's providence, neglecting that race, religion, sex, gender, economics and even education sticks each person somewhere on the social totem pole. As individuals, we often become infuriated when we face even the mildest form of discrimination; for example, someone can casually comment on your hair, your accent, or a pimple and one may experience a sense of discomfort. Conceivably, this may be why most people tend to form clusters of individuals whom they share commonalities with, such as race, class and gender. As this may be unfortunate, it is even more unfortunate that those who do become activist often only acknowledge their advocacy and reject the rest.

Furthermore feminism, as it has been and is often practiced today focuses on individual concerns and theories. However, as Gloria Anzaldúa in, *Making Face, Making Soul* reminds us:

What is considered theory in the dominant academic community is not necessarily what counts as theory for women of color. Theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world. Thus, we need *teorías* (once that point is set, then that definition must be followed globally). . . that will rewrite history using race, class, gender and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries--new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods. (p. 448)

Ergo, if feminism or any other form of social activism (e.g., children's liberation) is to be effective, it must alter its approach and language so that it speaks to and for all. As Celie (the character from *The Color Purple* mentioned at the beginning of this paper) succinctly and profoundly pointed out – "...I'm here" (p. 214). We - women of all race and class backgrounds - are HERE.

Currently, the women dominating the feminist movement primarily acknowledge one plight – their sex. Consequently, the movement metalinguistically has become akin to the songstress, who in lieu of including all the notes when practicing the scale, for example, do-re-me-fa-so-la-ti-do, sings only one note: ME-ME-ME-ME! Hence, clearly, what women cannot discount, especially if the feminist movement is to be effective, is the will to ensure the enfranchisement of all women because - IF THE WILL IS ABSENT, THE WAY WILL NOT BE FOUND!

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Footnotes

- ¹Term revisited by Walter Parker in Teaching Democracy. This term of reproach in ancient Greece reserved for persons who paid no attention to public affairs and engaged only in self interested or private pursuits (p. xv)

Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Education

Ann Sharp and Maughn Gregory



Abstract: The writings of Simone Weil support a feminist philosophy of education that locates freedom in self-determined creative work within contexts of necessity. In particular, Weil's discussion of Force, the Good, Work, Method and Time provide criteria for a feminist philosophy of education, in terms of educational ends and means. *Philosophy for Children* is relevant to each of these themes, in various ways.

Redefining Women's Personhood

Despite the feminist revolution, women in every part of the world continue to suffer violence and injustice disproportionately to men. Today women comprise two-thirds of the world's working class, yet they receive only one-tenth of the world's income, and own one one-hundredth of the world's property. (Williams, 37.) Women perform over eighty percent of the world's low-skilled jobs and constitute two-thirds of the world's illiterate people. (Ibid.) Women take work in factories, sweat shops, domestic service and sex industries, not out of desire, but out of need and a lack of meaningful choice, in patriarchal societies that not only limit their options but deprive them of educational opportunities to qualify for better-paying jobs, let alone to develop critical awareness of their limited options. To be truly liberated, women must participate in the development of new conceptions of justice, freedom, education and other aspects of personhood, by engaging in a philosophical reckoning with experience. As bell hooks has observed, there are aspects of our lived experience not yet addressed in any of our ideas or language. They are real; they are felt; but they remain inarticulate unless and until we find the means to give them voice: to invent language sufficient to make the experiences into objects of inquiry. In hooks' terms, this is the liberatory potential of theory.¹ By this standard, education that leaves students (male and female) incapacitated to engage in the building and negotiating of theory is neglectful and oppressive.

In thinking toward a feminist philosophy of education from our own locality (early 21st-century, eastern United

States), we have found it helpful to consult the works of Simone Weil. Though Weil could hardly be called a feminist in the modern sense of the term, her writings afford valuable insights into the construction of a viable feminist philosophy. In particular, Weil's work offers feminist philosophy the following:

- A model of doing philosophy that involves reckoning with her own experience and that of underprivileged people with whom she lived and worked, resulting in theory that is not divorced from practice;
- A treatment of some of the issues essential for any philosophy of personhood – including language, relationships, reasonableness, methods, self, attention, time, creative work, and the good;
- A model of doing philosophy that draws on the work of earlier philosophers but is stridently original;
- Theory that is rational, yet practical enough to be applicable to a wide variety of local concerns, and is sufficiently non-traditional to resist easy categorization in terms of conservative or progressive.²

Although Weil would not have considered herself an educational theorist, her writings on metaphysics, social philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics speak directly and indirectly to educational concerns. Therefore, rather than focusing solely on her single essay on education,³ we have selected, from several of her works, five concepts, Weil's treatment of which provide criteria for a feminist philosophy of education, in terms of educational ends and means: Force, the Good, Work, Method and Time. In what follows we begin to articulate these criteria and relate them to one another, and show how the materials and methods of *Philosophy for Children* are more and less relevant to these criteria.

Force

Force, that X that turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing. Exercised to the limit, it turns man into a thing in the most literal sense. It makes a corpse out of him. Somebody was there and the next minute, there is nobody at all. (Weil 1970, 4.)

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When a woman asks herself how it is that she is in the condition she is, she discovers very soon that she is powerless against a number of forces. Weil described force as that which we cannot change, noting that “subjection to it is the common lot, although each spirit will bear it differently in proportion to its value.” (1962a, 26.) Force can take many forms; it can be internal or external. External force can be caused by humans or by non-human nature. Weil described the propensity of human beings to use force on one another as the opposite of love,⁴ and she condemned such force in both its individual and social manifestations.

One force relevant to women’s struggles is political oppression in its myriad forms, which Weil typically categorized as types of totalitarianism, emerging from both the Right and the Left. Weil criticized totalitarianism as an overt political movement, but also as the tendency of monarchies to cultivate the “idolizing of the State in the person of the sovereign,” (2002, 117) as the tendency of democracies to become “inhuman, brutal, bureaucratic, police-ridden State[s]” (Ibid., 127) and as the tendency of political parties to coerce unity “by dint of expulsion for the crime of having an opinion of one’s own.” (Ibid., 31.) It is largely these same tendencies that feminist philosophers have denounced as “patriarchal,” and of course, these tendencies are ubiquitous in all levels of society. They are found in families, in companies, in schools, and in churches, as well as in the offices of government. Bringing such tendencies to public attention and critique must become a preliminary focus of a feminist philosophy of education.

Because of her insights into the temporal and spiritual human needs for rootedness, Weil argued that, “We must obey the state, however it happens to be,” but added that this obligation has one valid limit: “a revolt on the part of conscience.” (Ibid., 176-7.) Freedom of conscience, of course, depends upon freedom of the intellect, and Weil argued persuasively that propaganda—including especially the influences of popular media—is a form of violent constraint upon these freedoms:

[T]he need of freedom itself, so essential to the intellect, calls for a corresponding protection against suggestion, propaganda, influence by means of obsession. These are methods of constraint, a special kind of constraint, not accompanied by fear or physical distress, but which is none the less a form of violence. Modern technique places extremely potent instruments at its service. (Ibid., 25-6.)

The modern techniques Weil had in mind were primarily newspaper and radio. One need not agree with her creative suggestions for legally curtailing propaganda⁵ to acknowledge that the political, economic and moral messages and images that infiltrate so much of our space

and time through the technologies of mass communication constitute a formidable force with which we must continually contend. The commercial success of the fashion and cosmetics industries testifies to the effectiveness of commercial media in encouraging women to think that the good life is one of sensation, consumerism, and projecting a certain image for the public (masculine) gaze. Certainly men fall prey to such propaganda too, but the consequences they suffer are proportionately far less debilitating.

Weil’s insight that objectification is a universal aspect of the experience of force does not imply that women and men, or people of different ethnic, religious, sexual, age, social and economic groups experience such objectification equally. The evils of debilitation and objectification brought about by force and the injustice of social systems in which forces are likely to afflict different populations unequally were two negative moral aspects of force Weil addressed.

Weil also addressed a positive moral aspect of force: the necessity of force as a factor in human cognitive and moral growth:

For there is no self-mastery without discipline, and there is no other source of discipline for man than the effort demanded in overcoming external obstacles.... It is the obstacles we encounter that have to be overcome which gives us the opportunity for self-conquest. (1979, 3.)

This understanding of growth entails an understanding of freedom, not always as the absence of force, but more often as the intelligent integration of, and adaptation to force. And if force is a necessary factor for growth, and if women and men encounter forces different in quality and quantity, it follows that women’s experience can lead to unique forms of intelligent contention.

Confronting necessity and coming to accept it is part of the process of acting to fulfill our own purposes, doing what we think upon reflection is the best, not just for the individual, but for all of us. In this regard, women’s oppression can be a key to greater capacities for creativity and compassion:

The sense of human misery is a precondition of justice and love. He who does not realize to what extent shifting fortune and necessity hold in subjection every human spirit cannot regard others as fellow creatures nor love himself.... Only he who has measured the dominion of force and knows how not to respect it, is capable of love and justice. (1970, 27.)

A feminist philosophy of education must take account of the learner as a purposive being contending with force, and must make creative and meaningful contention with

force one of the most general ends of education. Women's education must help them to critically reflect on their experiences of force, to articulate these experiences to each other and to men, to learn to employ traditional methods for contending with force, to construct new methods, and to evaluate the directions of personal and social growth opened by doing so.

Helping children and adults wake up to the political, ethical, aesthetic and other philosophical aspects of their experience by problematizing what used to be taken for granted—to develop “a philosophical ear”—is one of the most important contributions Philosophy for Children could make to such an educational endeavor. The program's insistence on philosophy as inquiry into the concerns and the lived experiences of its participants makes it an effective vehicle for consciousness-raising. Another important contribution is the method of inquiry practiced in the program. Philosophical dialogue employs sophisticated cognitive and emotional tools for analyzing our experiences of force and for generating novel hypotheses for effective contention with force. However, the tendency of Philosophy for Children to construe the philosophical relevance of experience in strictly discursive terms—in terms of puzzling concepts or conceptual problems, to be resolved through reasoned dialogue⁶—can be a limitation with regard to education for contending with force. Unless the discoveries of the dialogue are tested in action, they can never be efficacious in the resistance and redirection of force, or in human growth.

The Good

If our contention with force is to be meaningful, it cannot be arbitrary but must be oriented toward what we take to be right or good. Autonomy does not consist of self-indulgence, but in self-mastery and self-creation in quest of what is meaningful or good. Weil's conception of the good is at once, and explicitly, both natural and super-natural. The source of goodness, she argues, must be that “realm of what is eternal, universal, [and] unconditioned[, being] other than the one conditioned by facts.” (2002, 4.) Weil's metaphysics are Christian Platonic, and her writings on most subjects are flecked with phrases such as “a spiritual sphere,” (2002, 199) “supernatural grace” (Ibid., 112), “supernatural mechanisms” (Ibid., 261) other-worldly certitude,⁷ absolute good (Ibid., 199), and God.⁸ However, Weil's conception of the good is non-sectarian;⁹ and in spite of being overtly Platonic,¹⁰ it is earthy. Put another way, Weil's supernatural metaphysics was a meta-theory that helped her explain and justify a very naturalist theory of spirituality: one that called for careful thinking, the expansion of consciousness, compassion, and action in the here and now, as the only

legitimate manifestation of the supernatural order of things. For instance, Weil vehemently criticized the “spurious spirituality,” of charity work performed for the love of God, the recipients of which become merely “raw material ... , an anonymous means whereby one's love of God can be manifested.” (Ibid., 156.)

Weil saw our relationship to the good as involving desire, discernment and action. She promoted Plato's non-pluralist idea of absolute Good as “compris[ing] within itself in a superlative degree all forms of the good,” which therefore “possess similar properties to [it].” (2002, 299.) This explains our ability to discern goodness in the beauty of the world (Ibid., 291), in the objects of our compassion (Ibid., 171), and in the soul's authentic needs.¹¹ To become moral agents vis-à-vis the forces with which we contend, we must not only develop our skills of thinking, but also our powers of attention to, and discernment of such instances of the good:

The pure and authentic values, beauty, truth and goodness, in a human being are the result of one single and same act, a certain application of attention at its fullest to the object. Teaching should have no other aim but to prepare, by training, the attention for the possibility of such an act. (1952b, 84.)

This kind of attention and discernment is not primarily intellectual. We must learn to see and hear what is beautiful, just, or compassionate—to touch and taste them in our lived experience—as well as learn how to mediate such experiences with language and thought. In Weil's telling metaphor, “Beauty is something to be eaten; it is a food.” (2002, 93.) Only by seeing ourselves in relationship to the good as bearers of cherished experiences can we become attached to beauty, respect, justice and other forms of the good.

“Generally speaking,” Weil wrote, “the main object of all education should be to increase the feeling of the beauty of the world.” (Ibid., 87.) A feminist philosophy of education must include the objective of helping young women and men, and even very young girls and boys become sensitive to the good, the beautiful, the just, the equitable, the healthy, etc., in their own experiences. This involves learning to recognize what is good as qualities of experience—in what we see, hear and otherwise feel. It further involves learning to discern among varying kinds and degrees of beauty, justice, etc. in our experiences. We must help children become more aware of their responses to what they find beautiful and ugly, just and unjust—their desires, preferences, and yearnings—which awareness can strengthen their capacities to actively look for, listen for, and otherwise seek what is good. Children who cultivate a growing sensitivity to these dimensions of value within

their experience through their everyday activities will be better prepared to make moral choices.¹²

In Philosophy for Children, philosophical inquiry is construed as inquiry into problems or puzzlements articulated by the children as they become more and more aware of the aesthetic, ethical, metaphysical and other philosophical dimensions of their own experience.¹³ This pedagogy relies on the Deweyan proposition that “ethical,” “aesthetic,” “political,” and other philosophical adjectives describe dimensions of most people’s ordinary experience rather than remotely intellectual or esoteric experiences. (Dewey, 17.) It further presupposes that children’s experience is just as replete with these philosophical dimensions as is the experience of adults. The philosophical novels published by the IAPC are meant to help children recognize these philosophical aspects of their experience, though we have witnessed children’s philosophical dialogues in which the emphasis on discourse is made to overshadow any other kind of attention to non-discursive value experiences. Further, the community of inquiry as it is practiced in Philosophy for Children is ideally an educational activity that enables teachers and students to not merely think about but to directly experience such forms of goodness as the stimulation of the free exchange of ideas, the discipline of rigorous inquiry, the aesthetic qualities of the process of inquiry, interpersonal respect, emotional safety, collaborative achievement, collective self-management, and other forms of associational interdependence.

Work

Weil’s writings help us to understand the human condition as being situated between the push of force and the pull of the good. Our autonomy or agency in this position consists in our capacity for creative work, which was one of Weil’s most ardent philosophical themes. Against Aristotle,

Weil argued that the ideal human relationship to the good was not one of contemplation, but of action: “Once one recognized something as being a good, one should want to seize it. Not to want to do so is cowardly.” (2002, 223.) To be a person, for Weil, is to be someone who is constantly trying to create a balance between the necessary in her life and what she perceives as a creative bringing about of the good. Such work is the right of all persons—of women and girls no less than of men and boys.

When our work is self-determined we are giving our consent, our affirmation to the order of the universe; in a real sense, we are affirming the necessity in our own experience. We are determined beings who yet may taste of freedom—a freedom born of understanding, coping with, and transforming our situation in the world. Weil’s ideal of creative work thus avoids the reductionism and the enervation of both materialism and idealism.

This ideal involves what Weil calls, “serious thinking,” which is “to ask oneself and others just what it is which one is trying to do and whether, therefore, it is being done appropriately.” (1952a,

27.) Thoughtful action, or action qualified by continual inquiry, is also our only means for understanding what constitutes the good:

Action ... possesses a double property with respect to incitations. To begin with, an incitation [toward some good] only becomes real to the mind when it has brought about an action performed by the body.... Action [also] possesses a virtue of quite another order. Many different feelings can co-exist in the heart.... As soon as you step into the sphere of action, the limits are even narrower. You are obliged to effect a new choice (2002, 201 & 206)

Of course, not all action is meaningful. Most women in the developing world are condemned to lives of necessity, interpersonal and cultural forces denying them any



opportunity to do creative work. On the other hand, women of privilege have typically been mis-educated into believing that the good life is one in which men take care of them, enabling them to have lives free of turmoil—including the turmoil of creative work—and free for seeking new pleasures. As a result of this socialization many women of privilege have found themselves to be nothing more than parasites on the work of those who do create, as Weil described:

[T]he reality of life is not sensation but activity People who live by sensation are parasites, both materially and morally. And the latter who do not seek sensation in experience, in fact, lead much livelier, profounder, less artificial lives.... The cultivation of sensation implies an egoism which revolts me. It clearly does not prevent love, but it leads some to consider the people that one loves as mere occasions of joy and suffering, and to forget completely that they exist in their own rights. One lives among phantoms, dreaming instead of living. (1965, 12.)¹⁴

For Weil, there is a real sense in which we are our work; our identity cannot be separated from it.¹⁵ Weil's writings contain several criteria necessary for human labor to be meaningful and conducive of growth. The following criteria apply to women as well as to men, in all contexts of labor and at all levels of employment:

- Conditions for work must be physically safe and compatible with physical and mental health. Weil condemned “the herding of the workers into prison-like structures” (2002, 60) and argued that, “a machine ... should be able to be worked without exhausting the muscles, or the nerves, or any organ whatever—and also without cutting or lacerating the flesh, save under very exceptional circumstances.” (Ibid., 56.)
- Work should be organized to provide workers with a livelihood, including a decent wage and some form of job security. As Weil noted, the skills and routines required of one's work should not be so discreet and isolated that they are resistant to being adjusted as the requirements of work change (Ibid., 57).
- Work should be conducive of the cognitive, emotional and social growth of the worker, by offering challenges: “We must change ... the far too small amount of initiative, skill and thought demanded of [workers], their present exclusion from any imaginative share in the work of the enterprise as a whole” (Ibid., 55.)
- Work must be socially meaningful to the worker.

“We must change [the worker's] sometimes total ignorance of the value, social utility and destination of the things they manufacture, and the complete divorce between working life and family life.” (Ibid., 55.) “[If a] workman would be able now and again to show his wife where he works and ... [t]he children would come along, after school, to join [then, w]ork would be lit up by poetry” (Ibid., 60-1.)

- Work must be personally meaningful; something the worker cares about. Weil illustrated this point with a thought/feeling experiment comparing “A happy young woman, expecting her first child, and busy sewing a layette, think[ing] about sewing it properly” with “a female convict ... in a prison workshop ... sewing, thinking too, about sewing properly, for she is afraid of being punished.... The whole social problem consists in making the workers pass from one to the other of these two occupational extremes.” (Ibid., 94-5.)

Weil was not ignorant of the radical social transformations¹⁶ that would be required to make work for all people meaningful in these ways.¹⁷ Yet, she was adamant that “Nothing in the world can make up for the loss of joy in one's work,” (2002, 81) and she proclaimed “the creation of a civilization founded upon the spiritual nature of work” to be the particular mission, or vocation [of] our age.” (Ibid., 95.) In this regard, the fact that many girls in the Western world today are preparing to enter the workforce, even at professional levels, doesn't necessarily mean that they are freer.

Learning to work meaningfully in all aspects of life is the most general objective of any kind of education, and a feminist philosophy of education will establish this objective, without reducing it to preparation for employment. With regard to employment, such a philosophy must call for a radical critique of the economic values that underlie so much of modern society. Education must not seek to enable successive generations to make the most of the status quo, but to see the status quo in terms of forces to be contended with in the struggle for a life characterized by many kinds of personal, social and environmental value. A feminist philosophy of education must also incorporate criteria for meaningful work, such as those above, in its articulation of both the ends and the means of education. A student is a worker in every sense addressed by the criteria above, and the same kinds of criteria must be attended to, to make the student's work safe, interesting, challenging, largely self-directed, and closely affiliated with other aspects of personal and social life.

With regard to this reconceptualization of work, Philosophy for Children has much to offer, as well as much

to benefit from. Reflection on the meaningfulness of our experiences—including our experiences of work—and the reconstruction of relevant concepts and values, while not sufficient to transform future experiences of work, are necessary, and are the *modus operandi* of Philosophy for Children. How a new philosophical judgment might be tested in experience and what difference it could or should make in the lives of those who have reached it are questions that are not emphasized in most Philosophy for Children materials and methods, but are integral to the purpose of reordering experience. Deliberation on the practical consequences of philosophical judgments and experimentation with those judgments in non-dialogical contexts would only enhance the quality and the integrity of the philosophical inquiry, and would make the pedagogy more congruent with the feminist philosophy of education contemplated here.

Method

Weil addressed the concept of method in relation to one or more of the inter-related concepts of force, the good, work, and personhood. It is the entailment of those concepts that justifies Weil's statements to the effect that employing method can stand as a sufficient criterion for selfhood:

What marks off the self? It is a method. When we really employ method, we begin to exist.... In action that has a method about it, we ourselves act because what is unforeseen presents itself to us.... Reality is not something open to proof, it is something established. It is when I employ method that I really begin to exist. Most people hardly ever realize this, because actions which proceed from reasoning are rare. (1978b, 73.)

This passage is significant in the way that it relates together action, reason, method and reality. Although Weil made frequent reference to a supernatural realm of unchanging, absolute good, she described the natural world as one of change and possibility, and therefore of agency. The kinds and amounts of good to be had in this world are determined by means of methodical work, rather than predetermined before our intervention. Furthermore, Weil asserted that spiritual matters, including "points of intersection between this world and the next," were dependent on methods more rigorous and precise than the methods of scientific inquiry. (2002, 187.)

One of the most important types of method, for Weil, was thinking, especially as reasoning. In a work called *Sur la Science*, Weil writes that, "reason seizes hold of the world [and enables us to] use the world insofar as it is an external obstacle in order to resist the world insofar as it is an interior enemy." (1952a, 527.) An important component of the method of thinking is freedom of opinion, which Weil

included as one of only fourteen vital needs of the human soul, akin to the body's need for food. (Ibid., 23.) Two other vital needs of the soul she named point in opposite directions, yet both are necessary for thinking: security and risk. "Security means that the soul is not under the weight of fear or terror, except as the result of an accidental conjunction of circumstances and for brief and exceptional periods." On the other hand,

The protection of mankind from fear and terror doesn't imply the abolition of risk; it implies, on the contrary, the permanent presence of a certain amount of risk in all aspects of social life The absence of risk produces a type of boredom which paralyses in a different way from fear, but almost as much.... Risk is a form of danger which provokes a deliberate reaction; that is to say, it doesn't go beyond the soul's resources to the point of crushing the soul beneath a load of fear. (Ibid., p. 33.)

Weil expands her theory of action as a method of inquiry by means of the notions of execution and transposition. Transposition means the expression or enactment of an idea taken as truth in a different context of experience from that in which it originated, and Weil takes successful transposition as a criterion of truth: "A truth which cannot be transposed isn't a truth; in the same way that what doesn't change in appearance according to the point of view isn't a real object, but a deceptive representation of such. In the mind, too, there is three-dimensional space." (2002, 80.) Dialogue is one method of transposition, but would not count as execution. Successful execution of a theory or judgment, "is a sufficient empirical proof of the possible; [whereas] for the impossible, there is no empirical proof, and a [logical] demonstration is necessary." (Ibid., 69-70.) Further, with regard to action as a method of inquiry, Weil asserts that,

A degree of reality superior even to that of action is attained by the organization which co-ordinates actions, when such an organization has not been formed artificially, but has grown up like a plant in the midst of day-to-day necessities, having at the same time been moulded with patient vigilance and with some particular good clearly kept in view. This constitutes, perhaps, the highest possible degree of reality. (Ibid., 212.)

Collaborative and coordinated action as a method of inquiry brings Weil's epistemology to overlap with her political and social theory.

Weil's Platonic conception of the unity of truth, beauty and goodness led her to criticize the idea of value-



neutrality in inquiry,¹⁸ in which she anticipated some of our contemporary feminist philosophers of science. Weil argued, to the contrary, that attachment to goodness is a necessary condition for inquiry that aims at truth, and she warned against the dangers of pursuing scientific and technological knowledge without regard for moral consequences.

The spirit of truth can dwell in science on condition that the motive prompting the savant is the love of the object which forms the stuff of his investigations. That object is the universe in which we live. What can we find to love about it, if it isn't its beauty? The true definition of science is this: the study of the beauty of the world. (Ibid., 258.)

Weil observed that, "Free children are children whose every action proceeds from a preliminary judgment concerning the end which they set themselves and the sequence of means suitable for attaining their ends." (1978a, 84.) A feminist philosophy of education will take into account the relationship of method to personhood, and prepare children of each succeeding generation in the most current methods of inquiry within each of Weil's categories: technical, valuational, and theoretical. It will provide for education in methods of thinking, action, and collaboration, and for the environments of security and risk that make

these methods possible. Finally, it will not perpetuate the modern divorce of inquiry into facts from inquiry into values, or the privileging of the former, but will find ways to reconcile the two as equally important and methodologically interdependent.

Philosophy for Children is not focused primarily on technical, or means-ends inquiry, though that sometimes emerges within the other two categories of inquiry, on which the movement *is* primarily focused: valuational and theoretical. Themes of valuation including ethics, aesthetics, social relationships and politics run through the IAPC curriculum and most other Philosophy for Children curriculum at every age level. When given the opportunity, children are prone to engaging with these themes in ways that combine seriousness, intensity, and play. Inviting a young girl to practice effective methods for making judgments about what to believe, what to feel, what to make and what to do is the only way to help her discover herself as a person both responsible for, and capable of managing her own beliefs, feelings and work.

Time

However proficient human communities become in methods of value-oriented inquiry, our powers are limited by a number of forces over which we have no control. One of those forces is time:

We are truly flesh and blood and we are obliged to journey painfully through time, minute in and minute out. The travail is our lot and the monotony involved in all work is but one form it assumes. (Weil 1976, 380.)

Our most meaningful experiences of time have to do, not with its measurement but with changes in ourselves and our world. Indeed, the experience of time as change is one of the elemental human experiences that transcends culture, though we may interpret and respond to that experience differently. All selves are tensed, both male selves and female selves. Weil wrote, "I exist in time that is always outside of myself. I am no longer what I have just been. I am not yet what I am going to be. Nevertheless, what I was, and what I will be is still me." (1929, 2.)

Time is responsible for our passing youth, our inevitable loss of vitality, our lack of drive to change and grow, and, inevitably, our death. In an important sense, it is "time that does us violence." (Ibid.) And yet, cultural forces define the experience of aging differently for women and men. It is no coincidence that women are the majority consumers of anti-aging creams, diet pills, spa regimens and reconstructive surgery. For centuries women's identities have been more closely associated with their bodies and their sexuality

than have the identities of men with theirs. The result is that women have tended to experience aging with more apprehension and regret, and with less dignity than have men.

To understand how time affects our identity is to come to a realization that we are not fully in control of our own futures. But a thoroughly negative conception of time is debilitating; it is one of the internal forces that deter women from realizing freedom. Weil believed that “to escape from time, that is a sin,” (Ibid., 3) and even that “all sins are an attempt to escape time.” (1970, 102.) Those of us who no longer think in terms of sin yet recognize human tendencies to contribute to our own suffering by living in the past, fantasizing, or succumbing to regret, inertia, substance abuse, etc.

Sin begins to show itself in terms of time, for example, license = immediacy. Intoxication – a state of passive suspension with regard to the near future or cowardice in the face of time: allowing time to flow by without resolution impinging on a moment of it. (1970, 42.)

Such “sins” are sins against our self-growth and they express themselves in self-deception, for growth is also a kind of change that depends on time.

The question remains: How are we to deal with time and death? Weil’s answer: meaningful work. To work with a purpose and with care is to transcend the experience of being time’s object, for “There is a certain relation to time which suits inert matter, and another sort of relation which suits thinking beings [and] it is a mistake to confuse the two.” (2002, 60.) Thus, one moral import of time is our total impotence to bring anything into being without acting. It is the value of work that makes our attempts to escape from time sinful. Perhaps this is what Weil meant when she admonished us to, “make it so that time is a circle and not a line.” (1929, 4.) Work is the means by which we taste of the relationship between the temporal and the eternal, and also the means by which we bring the eternal into the temporal. In Weil’s words:

My condition is such that I have only to conquer eternity in a certain way which does not consist in trying to traverse time, or to stop it, but in filling it with work, in establishing by work, between the project and the finished product, the link which cannot be given to me in any other way. (1929, 4.)

Nevertheless, in reflective action one is forced to make one’s actions harmonious with the conditions that time imposes. One such condition is our relationship to history. For better and for worse, we and the world we inhabit are largely shaped by history. It follows that our meaningful

work must take into account this temporal situation. As Weil cautioned,

It would be useless to turn one’s back on the past in order simply to concentrate on the future. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that such a thing is even possible.... [T]o be able to give, one has to possess; and we possess no other life, no other living sap, than the treasures stored up from the past and digested, assimilated and created afresh by us. Of all the human soul’s needs, none is more vital than this one of the past. (2002, 51.)

Our material and cultural past constitute our most important resource for managing our present and future. But in order to be meaningful for us, historical materials and methods must be reconstructed. Women and men of the present must enter into a dialectic with our predecessors. “No other method exists for acquiring knowledge about the human heart than the study of history coupled with experience of life, in such a way that the two throw light upon each other.” (Ibid., 229.)

Nor can the idea of history be separated from the idea of community, for as Weil observed, “A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future.” (2002, 43.) We do not create the meaning we invest in our work and our lives *ex nihilo*, but in relation the ideas, values and practices we have learned in our communities. For this reason, Weil argued that,

The degree of respect owing to human collectivities is a very high one, for several reasons. To start with, each is unique, and, if destroyed, cannot be replaced.... Secondly, because of its continuity, a collectivity is already moving forward into the future. It contains food, not only for the souls of the living, but also for the souls of beings yet unborn Lastly, due to this same continuity, a collectivity has its roots in the past. It constitutes the sole agency for preserving the spiritual treasures accumulated by the dead, the sole transmitting agency by means of which the dead can speak to the living. Because of all of this, it may happen that the obligation towards a collectivity which is in danger reaches the point of entailing a total sacrifice. (Ibid., 8.)

Paradoxically, becoming an integrated self involves constructing meaningful relationships to both past and future that extend the self’s very identity beyond the temporal life span. Only by affirming the fact that we must think and act within time can we overcome one of the strongest internal forces that bars us from creativity: the debilitating fear and

loathing of our own death. "The only remedy is consent to death and to the loss of all perishable possessions," Weil admonished (Ibid., 52). Such consent evolves out of our acting in meaningful work. "I must act and it is in the doing itself that I come to accept death and glimpse the me that I would like to be." (Ibid., 218.)

A feminist philosophy of education must acknowledge time as both a force to be contended with and a resource to be managed intelligently. It must call for education that prepares each new generation to take full advantage of the treasures of history, and to refine or abandon them when they find good reason to do so. It must help each generation to become full participants in the lives of their communities, and to work out their identities as individuals vis-à-vis their communities. It must enable the young to see their lives as projects of growth over time, whose identities are neither too stable nor too unstable to accommodate growth. Further, if educational processes are experienced only as *chronos*—as measured sequences or discreet "blocks" of time—and never as *kairos*—as having the quality of timeliness as well as the feeling of timelessness (being unaware of *chronos*)—there is something wrong with the processes.¹⁹ A feminist philosophy of education will entitle children and teachers to use the experience of *kairos* as a criterion for evaluating their school experiences.

Time is a perennial philosophical concept, and one of the most popular in children's philosophical dialogue, because children continually wonder at their own experiences of time. Children know stories about their own past and stories from their cultural history. They experience changes in their bodies and they imagine themselves into divergent futures. They witness the economic value given to time in modern society. Above all, they know the oppression of time that moves too slowly and the timelessness of creative work. Philosophy for Children provides an important opportunity for children to begin to grapple with and make sense of these confusing experiences, and thereby, to begin to become subjects as well as objects of time. Further, the realization of *kairos* is an important regulative ideal for the community of philosophical inquiry. When philosophical inquiry is attempted as merely a logical exercise, when it deteriorates into a drawn-out conversation, when it is dominated by a few participants or dissipated in too many directions, it ceases to be meaningful and the participants feel the weight of each minute. Happily, most communities of philosophical inquiry have experienced the collective achievement of *kairos*, of intense engagement that feels like both work and play, from which the interruption of the bell—of *chronos*—is a rude awakening. These become hallmarks of experiencing time to be sought for in the future.

Conclusion

I believe what I read.
My judgments are what I read.
I act according to what I read.
Thus, the meaning of my acts
Is dependent on what I read. (Weil 1946, 13.)

Only when a woman reads her daily experiences in terms of a self responding to the world does she discover both her power and the limits of her power. A feminist philosophy of education is not derived from predetermined truths, but fashioned from a dialectic between the experiences of women and men past and present. The work of Simone Weil draws our attention to a number of ideas that seem important to the continued liberation of women, through education. The end of such education is young women and men who are prepared to make an intelligent reckoning with the forces that beset them, to make sound judgments about what is possible and what is desirable, to engage in creative work that makes the desirable actual, and thereby to bring the kinds of value and meaning to their lives and the lives of their communities that fulfill time's potential.

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Endnotes

¹ "Catharine MacKinnon reminds us that 'we know things with our lives and we live that knowledge, beyond what any theory has yet theorized.' Making this theory is the challenge before us. For in its production lies the hope of our liberation, ... of naming all our pain ..." hooks, 75.

² T.S. Eliot wrote in his 1951 introduction to Weil's *The Need for Roots* that Weil was "at the same time more truly a lover of order and hierarchy than most of those who call themselves Conservative, and more truly a lover of the people than most of those who call themselves Socialist." Weil 2002,

X.

³ "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God," in Weil 1973, 105-16.

⁴ See "The refusal to use force finds its positive counterpart in the plenitude of love" in Weil 1970, 173.

⁵ Weil proposed that special tribunals of judges of truth be convened to try perpetrators of falsehoods in public media, and that those found guilty be sentenced to prison. See Ibid.

⁶ See Gregory 2004.

⁷ Weil refers to obligations deriving from "an order of certainty very superior to that of formal [mathematical] proof." Weil 2002, 156.

⁸ "For the proper object of love is goodness, and 'God alone is good'." Ibid., p. 132.

⁹ "But for religious feeling to emanate from the spirit of truth, one should be absolutely prepared to abandon one's religion ... if it should turn out to be anything other than the truth." Ibid., p. 247.

¹⁰ "The absolute good is not only the very best good of all—it would then be a relative good—but the unique, total good, which comprises within itself in a superlative degree all forms of the good" Ibid., p. 199.

¹¹ Weil summarized the needs of the soul under the terms Order, Liberty, Obedience, Responsibility, Equality, Hierarchism, Honor, Punishment, Freedom of Opinion, Security, Risk, Private and Collective Property, and Truth. Each of these terms is discussed in the first chapter of *The Need for Roots*, 2002.

¹² See Murdoch 1970, 67, and the section on moral education in Murdoch 1992.

¹³ See Gregory 2006.

¹⁴ This excerpt is from a letter from Weil to a female student.

¹⁵ "Initiative and responsibility, to feel one is useful and even indispensable, are vital needs of the human soul." 2002, 15.

¹⁶ Weil criticized modern industrial capitalism as "a machine of breaking hearts and crushing spirits, a machine for manufacturing irresponsibility, stupidity, corruption, slackness and laziness." 1978a, 105.

¹⁷ "[S]uch a form of social existence would be neither capitalist nor socialist.... Its goal would be, not ... the interest of the consumer—such an interest can only be a grossly material one—but Man's dignity in his work, which is a value of a spiritual order." 2002, 77.

¹⁸ "Since the Renaissance ... the very conception of science has been that of a branch of study whose object is placed beyond good and evil, especially beyond good" 2002, 251.

¹⁹ Eliot Deutsch writes about these different experiences of time and the relationship of creativity to *kairos*. 1992, 114-15.

Review: *Philosophy in Schools*

Tim Sprod



A review of *Philosophy in Schools*, edited by Michael Hand and Carrie Winstanley. Published by Continuum: London, 2008.

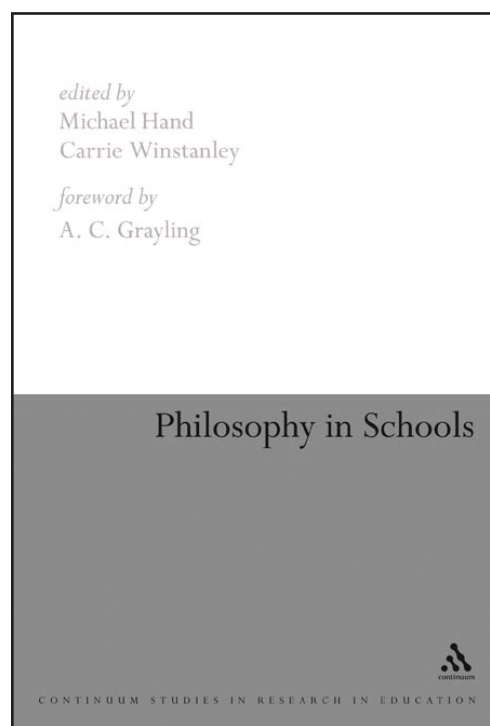
The avowed aim of this edited book of twelve chapters appears in the first line of the editor's introduction: to make the case that it is "time to put philosophy in the school curriculum" (page x). It is only fair, therefore, to judge the book on the basis of how well it contributes to the achievement of this aim. Before coming to a judgement, however, I shall outline some of the main features and themes of the book.

It is interesting that the editors have chosen to structure the book by starting with four essays (by Michael Hand, Richard Pring, Gareth Matthews and Stephen Law) that largely address objections to the teaching of philosophy in schools, before making the positive case for philosophy in eight further essays (by Harry Brighouse, Harvey Siegel, Carrie Winstanley, Robert Fisher, Karin Murris, Lynn Glueck & Harry Brighouse, Judith Suissa and James Conroy). Curiously, this is contrary to the usual order in philosophical discourse, where arguing one's case precedes defending it. I wonder why the editors have chosen such a defensive approach. In this review, I shall follow tradition, and briefly survey the positive case before the objections.

This collection of essays contains much that is of use to the advocate of philosophy in schools: a number of contributors make nuanced and detailed cases. Many claim that children are natural philosophers, or at least have a natural inclination to raise and want to explore questions with philosophical implications. Several contributors question models of childhood that deny children's capacity to be philosophical. Notably Gareth Matthews, claims that philosophical inquiry is not only good for children, but also good for we adults, in that it helps build relations of mutual respect, and alerts us to the fact that children have capacities we may have lost. He characterizes childhood as not merely a time of deficit: apart from philosophical wonder, he instances language learning abilities.

A common theme in the essays is that philosophical inquiry can strengthen and systematize capacities that children already have, albeit in a relatively undeveloped form. Moral reasoning (Brighouse), critical thinking (Siegel, Winstanley), philosophical intelligence (Fisher)

and meaning making (Murris) are amongst the capacities discussed. Many of the authors provide very useful examples of materials and approaches that can be taken.



One frequently heard objection to teaching philosophy in schools, particularly in the primary or elementary school, is that it is just too difficult a subject for young children. It is not surprising that quite a few of the contributors have something to say about it. Hand approaches the problem directly, arguing that philosophy in the early school years is preparatory, and Glueck & Brighouse agree. Hand would have school philosophy concentrate largely on conceptual clarification. Both essays are surely right in pointing out that school level preparatory studies in many other disciplines also lack many features of the mature approach to that discipline. In defending the claim that philosophy is better placed for improving thinking capacities than more empirical subjects, Winstanley points out that philosophical inquiry does not give a 'conversation stopper' edge to the most knowledgeable.

Fisher goes further. In claiming that Howard Gardner's Existential Intelligence is at base philosophical, he draws a distinction between formal and informal philosophy. The latter, he says, is "discursive or dialogical engagement with conceptual problems and questions of existential concern without recourse to the specialist resources of academic philosophy [and]... the encounter with and exploration of those same concerns prior to engagement with the philosophical canon" (100). This, he says, is a highly useful precursor to the formal study of canonical texts.

A second worry that opponents of philosophy in school often air is that it will lead to relativism and skepticism. Hand identifies one variant: the 'no-right-answers' myth. If it were true that there are no right answers in philosophy, then this worry would seem to be well grounded. It is not surprising, then, that quite a few contributors grapple with this issue. Pring carefully points out that there are questions that do not have *certain* answers: we collectively (or even individually) have difficulty coming to the settled conclusion that a particular answer is the correct one. This implies neither that there is no right answer, nor that all answers are equally good. He adds, insightfully, that schools largely avoid such questions, despite their considerable importance. Murris blames such avoidance on the teachers' fear of uncertainty, which clashes with their need for control. Law points the finger at comparative religion courses that avoid making truth claims for any particular religion lest they offend the others.

As Siegel comments, many students are at least vaguely aware of the incompatibility between their strongly held, and their relativist, views, but they are given no opportunity to explore this. For him, philosophical critical thinking assumes the falsity of relativism. Yet he admits that this view depends on several contentious claims, particularly that justification, rather than truth, is fallible. Some educational exploration of epistemology is required, he claims, so that students can handle such contentions, including a reflexive look at the presuppositions of philosophical inquiry. Brighthouse also claims moral relativism is false, and argues that philosophical inquiry allows us to seek a reflective equilibrium.

So far, so valuable. However, I have some concerns about the last two essays in the book: Suissa's critique of the philosophy in schools movement from a Deweyan perspective, and Conroy's call for the reading of great books. While both make some reasonable and positive points, their critiques of the philosophy in schools

movement betray a lack of knowledge of that literature. In attacking ignorance of Dewey and his emphasis on meaning making, Suissa cites very few sources. She is clearly unaware of the deep influence of Dewey's thought on Matthew Lipman, Philip Cam, Anne Sharp and Laurance Splitter. These P4C theorists, and many others, strongly emphasize meaning making – as, in this present volume, does Murris. Although such blatant inconsistency between authors is perhaps an inevitable feature of collections of essays such as this, it is annoying nevertheless.

In attacking what she sees as an undue emphasis on self-understanding through philosophy, which she paints as solipsistic, Suissa ignores the heavy emphasis on the Deweyan notion of community as the route to self understanding in the literature. While she advocates a role for philosophy as space to reflect on the questions of meaning arising within the disciplines, she fails to note the most prominent of informal philosophy courses with such an aim: the compulsory Theory of Knowledge course within the International Baccalaureate Diploma (a course that is cited in the book's introduction).

Conroy makes a good case for the importance of reading and reflecting on important books but, like Suissa, he does not pay sufficient attention to the distinction between two major forms of philosophy in schools: the P4C approach which is strongest in earlier years, and the formal philosophy taught mainly in the final years of schooling. He rightly notes that the call to read the canonical books is less applicable to the earlier years, but ignores the fact that senior curricula, such as A-levels, the International Baccalaureate Diploma and those of various continental countries lay considerable emphasis on reading the classics of philosophy. And, again, Murris and Gleuck & Brighthouse have already emphasized the importance of children's literary classics. Further, when Conroy lays the charge that "conversation is to be preferred to reading, and argument appears more attractive than rumination" (148), he ignores the Vygotskian point repeatedly made by P4C theorists that the developed capacity for the latter of each of these pairs depends on prior exposure to the former.

Let's now turn to consideration of how well this collection of essays addresses its avowed aim. Firstly, in a comment that may give us pause, Gleuck & Brighthouse warn that philosophy in schools might indeed lead to relativism and skepticism if it is not taught well. This worry is real: I cringe when I hear students or teachers – and, regrettably, occasionally teacher trainers – praise the fact that, in philosophy, there are no right answers.

In a book that is advocating that philosophy ought to be central to the curriculum, the possibility that too many teachers will not have the background (and possibly lack the desire) to be able to run philosophy lessons competently needs to be addressed.

While none of the essays make this a central concern, it is encouraging to see that a number at least implicitly acknowledge the problem. Murriss emphasizes the important role of the teacher. Pring envisages that students can be “entering into a discussion that, *if the teacher is sufficiently knowledgeable*, draws upon various traditions of” philosophy (22). Siegel claims “a good course in epistemology, pitched at the right level for students and *taught by a well-trained, engaged teacher*, promises enormous educational benefit” (80). Winstanley advises that “what is needed is the adoption of philosophy as a full curriculum subject, taught systematically by *appropriately trained staff*” (95, my italics in all quotes). Yet, Brighouse (62) points out that there is not a large pool of teachers in the UK with previous exposure to philosophy. Indeed, I recall a discussion I had with an English graduate in philosophy who was rejected from teacher training because he did not have a recognized curriculum subject as his major. Brighouse does claim such a pool exists in the USA, at least in relation to moral issues, though he admits their exposure to any other philosophy is limited.

This problem is not unique to philosophy, of course. Blame for poor school performance in areas such as maths, science and grammar has been directed at the lack of teachers with expertise in these subjects, especially at the primary/elementary level. Nevertheless, advocates of universal philosophy in schools must take it seriously. Many programs that show great promise when taught by knowledgeable, enthusiastic teachers turn to dross when in the hands of the ill equipped and unmotivated. It is a pity that this book, in advocating philosophy for all students, does not grapple with this issue satisfactorily, nor suggests how it might be overcome.

Secondly, the essayists all appear to believe that a careful exposition of the theoretical advantages of teaching philosophy in schools, backed up by anecdotal evidence, will be sufficient to convince policy makers of the strengths of the case. Experience makes me pessimistic about the likelihood of success of this approach. Educational policy makers are increasingly obsessed with numbers and testing. If you can’t measure it, as far as they are concerned, then it doesn’t exist. In light of this, a book with the aim of this collection ought to have contained essays that highlight empirical,

quantitative research. There is no such essay, and I can find only two passing references to the existence of such research: Fisher states that research shows gains but cites few studies, and Murriss mentions the work of Trickey & Topping. The book would benefit immensely from an essay from the latter pair, and from a survey of published quantitative research.

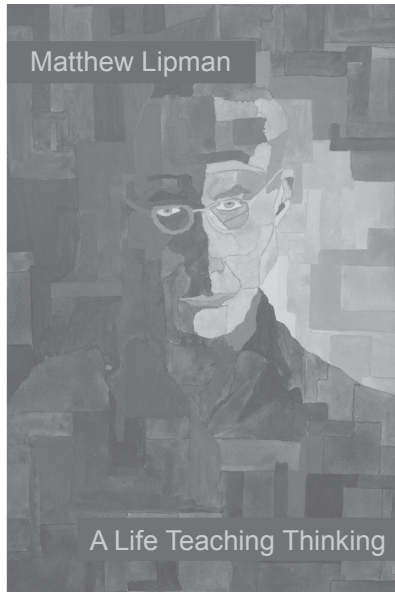
Finally, I must question the geographical spread of the book. In their introduction, Hand and Winstanley survey philosophy in schools around the world. They mention compulsory philosophy in the curricula of France, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Brazil, Norway and the International Baccalaureate Diploma, and optional philosophy courses in many countries, including Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, and several in Latin America. Yet the contributors to this volume come exclusively from the UK (8) and the USA (4). I would like to have read essays addressing why philosophy has proved so popular in schools in Brazil, for example, or why in many continental European countries, exposure to philosophy is taken as an obvious need.

In summary, then, this is a welcome book for those who are already convinced of the need for philosophy in schools. They will find much of value in many of the essays. Yet I cannot help feeling that it preaches to the converted. I do not see it converting many more to the cause, especially the educational policy makers of the world: those most in need of conversion if the book’s self stated aim is to be achieved.



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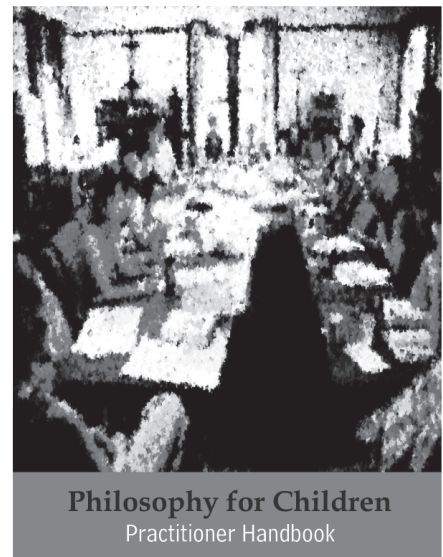
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