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Credits


The last story in the book, "The Dream," suggests familiar problems about deception and the dream world. "Frog," Toad asks after a dream episode, "is that really you?" Frog assures him that it is. If the reassurance is real, it is entirely appropriate that Toad should be reassured. But it might also be appropriate in a dream that Toad be reassured.

The story I have left out, the second one, called "The Garden," is about inductive reasoning. Toad plants some seeds and, becoming impatient about their growth, shouts at them to grow. Alarmed at the noise Toad is making, Frog tells him that he is frightening the seeds. Toad is not amused. He burns candles to keep his seeds from being frightened. He sings songs, reads poetry and plays music to them. When these efforts produce no visible result, Toad laments, "These must be the most frightened seeds in the whole world." Exhausted, he falls asleep. Frog wakes him with the joyful news that the seeds have sprouted. Toad mops his brow and sighs, "You were right, Frog, it was very hard work."

The textbook name for Toad's error in inductive reasoning is given in the Latin phrase, "post hoc, ergo propter hoc." (After this, therefore because of this.) Even very small children laugh at Toad’s comment and thus show some awareness that post hoc, ergo propter hoc is a fallacy. But it is difficult even for a sophisticated adult to be clear about what makes the reasoning fallacious. David Hume sometimes says that causation is conjunction plus a certain human expectation. ("We may . . . form another definition of cause, and call it, an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other."—Enquiry 7.2). So why won't singing to seeds in the fervent expectation of bean sprouts be their cause so long as bean sprouts result?

Hume also speaks of "constant conjunction" (singing always followed by bean sprouts sprouting) and even suggests a stronger condition, a counterfactual requirement: singing won't be the cause of the sprouting of bean sprouts unless, if one were now to do such "hard work," seed growth would result.

Understanding causality is a difficult job, at least as hard work as making seeds grow. Though it is hard work, it can also be, as Arnold Lobel's story should remind us, lots of fun.
Among the questionable legacies of ancient Greek thought, particularly Platonism, to the history of Western philosophy, are some psychological and sociological positions which may be summed up under the word "elitism." Philosophy is an elite enterprise. Only a few have the favored leisure and intellectual capacity to pursue it. Most are too stupid and they have to work besides. This elitism takes at least three forms, three separate kinds of idolatry, or perhaps of subidolatry under Francis Bacon's general idols of the theatre. These are the cults of old age, of the expert, and of the individual. Philosophers cannot be young, they cannot be amateurs, and they cannot come in flocks or committees. Wisdom and its pursuit are a function of mature and solitary professionals, usually invested with an aura of unique genius.

Nor is this merely a descriptive generalization. Philosophy has political pay-off, and only a few should have the knowledge which supports power. The many should have true beliefs only, which means they should obey and be led. In the pursuit of this norm, formal schooling plays a central role. Philosophy is to be exclusively the domain of an elitist institution within the general educational program. In practical terms this institutional embodiment of philosophical activity is (or at least used to be) the university, where philosophy defined the chief tasks, the degrees awarded, the gateway to further professional certification, and the hegemony over subordinate educational institutions. While things have somewhat altered in the past century or so, and whereas philosophy now identifies a micro-elite within the larger higher-education elite, it is still perceived by many as the core discipline of higher education, the aristocratic preserve of a very few Brahmins of learning. It follows a vast schooling, at least twelve years of it, during which most people have been systematically removed or have abandoned the enterprise in despair. The university discovers, develops and rewards a small minority of highly-qualified, well-trained and lucky individuals. In this program, an elitist conception of wisdom and its pursuit has become its chief intellectual defense.

If this analysis seems excessively grim, let me immediately admit the existence of a large number of impressive counterexamples. Even in our antique era, we find philosophy occasionally extended to all men, sometimes with a certain urgency. Consider Epicurus:

Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late
to secure the health of his soul. And the man who says that the age for philosophy has either not yet come or has gone by is like the man who says that the age for happiness has not yet come or has passed away. Wherefore both when young and when old a person should study philosophy . . .

This is philosophy in its practical node, of course, and not the arcane theorizing of the metaphysician or epistemologist. It is also difficult to determine just how widely Epicurus would cast his net. Still his statement can constitute a genuinely universal invitation to pursue the philosophical life, and I am willing to consider it characteristic of an anti-elitist strain in a dominantly elitist history, one particularly counter to the cult of old age.

Similarly, Socrates represents for us the great amateur, in that term's etymological as well as in its ordinary sense. He loves wisdom, but seems content to show his affection in non-institutional, non-systematic and non-specialist ways. We like to think he has more questions than answers. He founded no school, wrote no books, and yet bears the epithet, "The Teacher of the West." He is the great armchair philosopher, the thoughtful philosophical journalist and contributor to the New York Times op-ed page. We joke that he would probably not have received tenure in a modern university, but perhaps Plato, the generous and loyal student, would have awarded him an honorary degree "in recognition of his life experiences." As Epicurus invited the young, Socrates invites the thinking man, to the philosophical banquet.

Finally, even grave Plato who had the answers, who set up the school with its entrance requirements inscribed over the main door, and who wrote the books, preserves for us in his dialogues a communitarian ideal. Philosophy ought to be done in cordial concert, by honest and truthful men who respect and trust one another, who are willing to learn from each other, who have the humility to recognize the insufficiency of their private intellectual lives, and who see the best philosophical activity in shared inquiry and dialogue. However Plato may represent the single most powerful spokesman for the elitism so characteristic of Western thought, even he, almost unwittingly, offers us the model of an alternative in his explicit rhetoric of serious, free conversation.

But these are countertendencies only, and the main direction of our history seems otherwise. It is only in the past 250 years or so that the story has begun to change in any important way. The rise of democratic experiments in political life, the insistence upon free inquiry in scientific investigation, the end of slavery, the emergence of the woman in public life, the extension of popular education, the growth of a cosmopolitan ideal of political association, and perhaps most importantly for our story what we may call the discovery of the child, seem to indicate radical departures from the classic ideal.

The philosophy for children program is one recent instance of this new direction in philosophy and its political and social infrastructure. The extension of philosophy into the earliest grades of formal schooling is directly antithetical to the habitual restriction of such study to late adolescence and adulthood. Immediately entailed by this democratization of philosophical inquiry is its deprofessionalization. Philosophy for children is of necessity free from technical apparatus, since its student body involves a very unsophisticated linguistic community. Finally, in its implementation, philosophy for children focuses on the dialoguing community, rather than on the silent and atomic individual. At every level this broadening of the philosophical community constitutes a body blow against traditional philosophical elitism. We have included the young in a project that has until now been closed to them. The statistics are being altered and the sociology of philosophical instruction is gaining a new chapter. The three idols mentioned earlier, the idols of old age, the expert and the individual are under new siege. Let me address these once again, this time more directly in terms of the philosophy for children program.

The association of philosophy with great age, or at least with maturity, is an ancient theme in Western thought. The sage is almost always represented iconographically as an old man, seldom young, and never a woman. Consider Raphael's famous depiction of Plato in his painting of the Academy. This association of wisdom with age is part of a much larger tendency, exemplified so forcefully in Aristotle's Ethics, to exclude human excellence or virtue from the domain of childhood altogether. No child can be virtuous, because no child is truly human. But wisdom is a virtue. Therefore, no child can be wise. Thus may we paraphrase Aristotle's syllogism. This inclination to demean childhood received an unusually barbarous twist among some Christians who claimed that unbaptized children suffered the pains of hell if they died. Childhood is uniformly seen as an imperfect form of humanity, consequently as having its sole value as tending towards the goal of adulthood. Philippe Aries has shown how, during the Renaissance, the child, even in his modes of dress, was considered a micro-adult, an organism whose whole, reality was nothing more than process, the change of formless matter into the true substance of adulthood. Conformably with this view of the child, educational theory tends to take the form of a discourse on the goals or aims of education, that set of intellectual, moral and practical values that defines the adult world. Where specifically childlike activities are mentioned at all, such as play, they are seen as having merely instrumental value, efficient means to the production of adult dispositions.

The "discovery of the child" does not much antedate the eighteenth century. Rousseau is perhaps its great prophet. It was he who discovered stages of development with the attendant conviction that children are fully complete human beings at each stage, provided their natural inclinations and freedom to grow are given appropriate means of expression. Nothing quite like this is anticipated in ancient thought. Plato's division of knowledge and the curriculum dependent upon it is dictated by his peculiar metaphysics and not by a psychology of growth. But Rousseau belongs to a new age, one in which history is beginning to overtake timeless ontology, and one in which biography and psychological analysis are replacing generalized theories of human nature. His age is the age of the individual existing in time, not of the species subsisting sub specie aeternitatis. This discovery of the child evolved itself into
the child-centeredness of 19th-century educational theory, and indeed reached a level of somewhat comical exaggeration in the highly Romantic notions of childhood entertained from Wordsworth to Froebel. The details of this development are beyond the scope of this paper. But even such hyperbole produced much of lasting value, especially in the realm of early childhood education. The kindergarten is a nineteenth-century invention. Even Dr. Spock’s manual of child-rearing is inconceivable without this long story of reverse discrimination.

Philosophy for children finds itself between the Scylla of classical gerontocentrism and the Charybdis of Romantic “paidolatry.” On the one hand, the “wise child” and “father of the man” are myths. Children are not born with the wisdom of ages somehow innately programmed into them, and then forgotten or forced into the unconscious by the circumstances of early training or environment. Nor are they, on the other hand, species of some intractable tabula rasa, mysteriously dormant until some magic age when their mental responses come to be triggered. Rather they are open, questioning, wondering, curious, growing human beings having original dispositions to philosophical thought which can be cultivated like other intellectual dispositions, or allowed to atrophy. Similarly, insofar as philosophy is characterized as the search for happiness, it should be obvious that children seek it as much as adults do, and that their affective inclinations can be developed as much as their cognitive ones. Here again Aristotle presents us with a wonderfully instructive, if ultimately negative, alternative. With admirable consistency he denies that children can be happy. Amorphously cognitive they are likewise inchoately affective, possibly content like sleeping dogs, but not happy in any important human sense. Philosophy for children holds that children are more like people than they are like animals and that the search for happiness belongs as much to them as it does to adults. Curiosity and the need to be happy constitute the twin psychological spurs to the philosophical life, and they are not foreign to the young child.

Philosophy for children also challenges the cult of the expert. In an age of increasingly specialized knowledge, the claims of the narrow professional are accepted as utterly authoritative. The generalist, now more than ever, is lumped together with the dilettante. Neither deserves a serious hearing. The weight of our philosophical tradition, moreover, supports the cultivation of expert knowledge. It is a commonplace that the philosophical life requires a rich and broad experience, and that only those with extensive theoretical and practical knowledge can be much good at it. It may be argued that it is precisely this lack of experience that makes children poor candidates for the philosophical life. But perhaps we should draw another inference, and reclaim the rights of the unexperienced and the unprofessional. A remark Whitehead made about the university can be usefully applied here. He wrote: “The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning.” What children bring to the philosophical enterprise is what the untrained undergraduate brings to the university, this zest of life and the fresh imagination that so often accompanies it. Children bring to philosophy the shock of the new, a tremendous instinct for the play element in the life of the mind, and a toleration of ambiguity frequently far greater than that of their teachers. They are long on the open-textured, dialogical and problematic
aspects of philosophical thinking, short on the systematic, tidy, reflective, cautious and experiential aspects; long on intuition and brilliance, short on memory and the last word. They are the amateurs of philosophy, not its productive workers, not the intellectual laborers of professional philosophy. Philosophy has more to do in their minds with leisure, with a kind of scholastic recess period. Possibly this is one of the reasons they discuss philosophy outside the classroom and bring it home with them, in a way they seldom bring home the work-like activities of the rest of the curriculum.

It is the rare philosopher who can easily recall the high excitement and delight of his earliest learning experiences. Simple growth, the force of institutional schooling, the accumulation of experience, all of these enfeeble the imagination in most of us. "The tragedy of the world," writes Whitehead in the same passage cited above from his great essay on universities, "is that those who are imaginative have but slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations." But the tragedy is real only where philosophy is exclusively the domain of the professional, or exclusively the domain of the amateur. What if the proper subject is the philosophizing community, rather than any single almighty individual? This is the final myth challenged by programs such as philosophy for children: the myth of the heroic individual. Philosophers, the myth runs, are solitary heroes of the mind, and heroes do not come in crowds. Again there is much to be said for this perception of the philosophical profile. Individuality is insistant and irreducible. I am I and no other. The metaphysics of monadic individualism seems rooted in some kind of common sense. "Know thyself" is expressed in the singular, not the plural, number. Philosophy ought to be reflective and the reflective life needs silence and solitude. Finally, and most profoundly, the production of a higher form of individuality is the paradoxical aim of sound schooling and of sound philosophizing too.

But it is easy for self-existence to slide into solipsistic self-sufficiency. At this point the dialogical mode of the philosophical act provides a powerful corrective. The philosophy for children program capitalizes upon the young child's sociability, and builds into it the habit of serious conversation. It takes as its starting-point the position that philosophy is a community experience, not a disguised monologue. Its task is the building of a community of inquiry. This shared growth in a common wisdom is the theme and tone of the public school, but also the living principle of the Socratic dialogue. The incompleteness of an individual's knowledge becomes the rationale for incorporating him within a body of likewise incomplete individuals. It is a wise society, rather than a wise man, that is its immediate goal. But, in the process, a higher individual must emerge, one less closed to the rich experience of others, less unsympathetic, less atomistic, an individual who reflects the perceptions of others linked with him in a common project, and defines that reflection from a new and unique perspective.

The introduction of philosophy into the pre-collegiate curriculum is nothing more than an extension of the concept of continuity so dear to American democratic educational theorists. It is an enlargement of the "spiral" that John
Dewey claimed was the most appropriate metaphor for developmental theories of learning. It is a further dimension of Jerome Bruner's bold claim that, "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development." It ought to have been part of Mortimer Adler's Paideia proposal, and its absence is a major weakness of that program. Interestingly, Adler dedicates his The Paideia Program to the memory of John Amos Comenius, the great 17th century educational theorist. And we may say that philosophy for children ought to have been part of Comenius's great project too, pampaedia as he called it, universal learning for the whole race of men, "learning pantes, panta, pantos (for all men, about all things, in all ways)."

"All men" should include children; "all things" should include philosophy; "in all ways" should include our earliest schooling.

The concept of continuity, again, is the complex bedrock notion here, a continuity defined in classic neo-Platonic fashion as identity-in-diversity and unity-in-multiplicity. Continuity is not bland and homogeneous sameness, not monistic and undifferentiated unity, not mere identity through time. Nor is it merely a spatial or temporal juxtaposition or conjunction of radically dissimilar atoms of experience, mysteriously connected. Continuity implies internal union or harmonious unification of experience, the elements of which may be logically or analytically distinguishable, but not really or metaphysically separable. The metaphor of music is as usual instructive. The simultaneous sounding of discrete tones produces in the triad a new sound, one only reducible to its elements by destroying the order that makes it uniquely itself. Continuity in development suggests that our powers of mind and will do not magically appear on the scene at some arbitrary moment of biological maturity, but that they are foreshadowed or anticipated in some rudimentary or seminal fashion in our earliest learning experiences. The true encyclopedia recommended by Plato to the learning of his future philosopher-ruler is not simply a circle of learning, closed and perfect. It is rather an "ensperipedia," spiralling ever upwards, in a progress that may be limited only by death. And since, even in Plato, every person is a city within a city, and shares in his own polity some measure of the ruler's wisdom, philosophy ought to be available to all, continuous with their earliest learning. Democracy is a universalized aristocracy. The extension of a properly aristocratic education to all members of the community is its high ideal. Philosophy for children is a step in the realization of that ideal.

This is not meant to be the introduction to a tourbook for some philosophical Disneyland. And some tempering of enthusiasm is called for. Philosophy for children has its pitfalls. For one thing philosophy in its fullness remains an adult enterprise, and caution must be taken that the problems of adults not be transferred to children ill-prepared to deal with them. Some psychologists have argued that the modern child has been deprived of his childhood by premature exposure to the adult world. Philosophy for children can be another instance of this ill-timed disillusionment. Secondly what we may call the "lord of the flies" factor is not without its grain of truth. Young children need training more than argument. The beginnings of virtue lie in habituation, wise Aristotle taught. "Shut up, he explained," is frequently the appropriate conclusion to disputation. But, to the loss of childhood objection, children raise philosophical questions themselves, and it will not do to tell them they shouldn't, as a parent told a sixth-grader I know. And to the second point, children have instincts to fairness and to generosity, as well as to the self and survival. It is training in moral matters that may be of the first importance, but children can begin the rational examination of their own egoism long before their moral education is complete. The point remains that, if we want critical thinking in our adult population, we cannot prepare for it by twelve years of passive, doctrinaire and rote learning. Some preliminary attention to the range of issues understood as philosophical is necessary from grade one.

Philosophy for children, then, whatever problematic features it may present, has an overwhelmingly persuasive logic on its side. Few educational programs in recent memory are so clearly consonant with the main egalitarian tendencies of democratic educational theory and institutions. It challenges exclusiveness in all its forms, and demands the search for what is truly excellent in each individual, rather than for the excellent individual in each group. It challenges us to learn from the young, as well as to teach them, in those very areas of the art of living where adults have traditionally claimed expertise. It challenges us finally to accept as partners in a common quest for wisdom the weakest, the most dependent, the youngest members of the living human community. There are doubtless many other idols to be cast down. Let me mention one in closing. I have hinted at it earlier: the idol of the male. It is my suspicion that philosophy for children has the best chance of liberating woman's mind in truly radical and creative ways. "Woman must write woman." Woman must also think woman, philosophize woman. But it is for this very reason that I only mention this theme. It is another member of the inquiring community who must address herself to it.

NOTES
2. Nicomachean Ethics I, 3; VI, 8.
5. The term is George Boas's. See his The Cult of Childhood (London, 1968), p. 20.
8. Ibid.
12. See, for example, Marie Winn, Children without Childhood (New York, 1981).
Recently, somebody asked me, "How did you become a philosopher?" It was an apparently commonplace question, and this was not the first time I had heard it. Indeed, everyone, whatever his field of activity, has been asked this sort of question. On this occasion, however, I felt a particular unease. I had the impression, not so much of having side-stepped the answer, as of having fled in the face of a different question. Later, this tiny event started me thinking along lines that led me a long way from my starting-point. Since I had for some time been pondering the nature of my contribution to the present volume, I thought that this could provide me with a subject-matter.

How had I become a philosopher? The question had put me in something of a quandary. Why? No doubt because it took for granted something that was not, in fact, self-evident. My answer would imply that I was prepared to take upon myself the identity of a philosopher. It is true that I do not much care to be referred to as a sociologist or a politologist merely on the grounds that my thinking has been largely directed towards social or political facts. I have sometimes had to disavow such appellations. Even less could I represent myself as an historian, although I have often drawn upon works of history. Broadly speaking, I have always wanted to insist that my way of proceeding does not belong to what are called the human sciences. But I have never found it easy to count myself a philosopher. On that particular occasion, indeed, the word had roused in me a new and surprising resistance. It seemed easier to describe how I had come to choose my profession — to say how I had decided to embark on the study of philosophy and upon a teaching career in the subject.

I take no particular pride in being a teacher; I find the academic species far from delightful. My unenthusiastic opinion of it was formed in the school classroom and as a student, long before I became one of its members. It does, of course, include a number of exceptions and I like to think that I figure among them. However, since it would be ridiculous to invoke my status as an exception, I have no alternative but to accept myself as falling under the rule of the common characterization. This profession is, after all, my own; there is no getting round the fact. In any case, of all the criss-crossing classifications that combine to define me, this one, so I wish to believe, is the least essential. For have I not always enjoyed — and maintained, though it becomes less with time — the freedom to change my job? On the other hand, I experience increasing difficulty in accepting the name of philosopher. My reservations in this respect do not, I tell myself, spring from any distaste at seeing myself ensconced in the common characterization; it must be that I fear to usurp a title which I may not deserve and which it demands an ever greater audacity to claim.

In the time of Socrates, as everyone knows, the word "philosophy," in all the vigour of its primitive meaning, denoted the love of wisdom—something which it has become hard to translate, but which combined the search for truth with that for a way of life suitable to man’s nature. For Socrates himself, philosophy was allied to the modesty of a questioning disposition, trusting to
reason alone—in contrast with the assurance, not to say the arrogance of those who did not doubt their possession of the principles of upright judgement by virtue of Tradition, that is, through the religious teachings handed down by their ancestors. This primitive meaning has so degenerated that philosophy has increasingly been conceived of as a discipline having jurisdiction over the principles of knowledge—a particular discipline, while yet the science of the universal—and one whose progress might be measured by the degree of systematization reached in its conceptual operations. I have never been attached to this definition of philosophy. It too, however, now belongs to the past. Nowadays, philosophy has lost the credit that these ambitions had won for it, together with its place in the edifice of academic knowledge. But by the same token, it is on the way to losing its credit altogether. Its disappearance is heard proclaimed from all sides. In France at any rate, certain garrulous souls equipped with university degrees in lieu of whose outlines are discernible at the heart of the great classics and of German Idealism, but which turned into a caricature as a result of the development of the academic discipline known under the name of "history of philosophy"—in the same way I am loath to join in the chorus of philosophy’s detractors. I find it, indeed, somewhat amusing to note that those who flatter themselves that they are able to give an account of Hegel’s alleged system in a few pages are often the very ones who proclaim that he marks the end of philosophy. But here we find the paradoxical consequence of this experience: it seems to me that, in the present conditions, to declare oneself a philosopher is to burden oneself with a quite excessive ambition. To affirm the possibility of an inquiry emancipated no longer from the authority of religion but from that of science, notably the human sciences, to undertake the restoration of meaning to something condemned on all sides as an enterprise both chimerical and defunct—this is sufficient cause for us to lose the modesty of the initial inspiration, sufficient for us to raise our voices by a tone or two.

The image of myself as teacher, so I concluded, pleased me because it placed me beneath myself. By accepting this name, I no doubt preserved the hope that I might surpass the definition. But the name of philosopher disturbed me, for it seemed to place me above myself. Was this not a double error on my part? Would I not do better to moderate both my belittlement of the function of the teacher and my glorification of that of the philosopher? Should I not, furthermore, pay great attention to the interaction of the two—for can philosophy be altogether dissociated from teaching? This, surely, was a point deserving of further examination. Rather than undertaking it, I simply noted that my embarrassment was possibly no more than an effect of the very widespread feeling that there are fewer risks involved in adopting a humble image than in aspiring to a glorious one.

Nevertheless, I have long been aware of how people are only too ready to invoke psychological laws while taking no account of cultural determinations. Were these not at work in my own case? My initial reflection struck me as yet...
another evasion of the unexpected question that had crept in behind my interlocutor’s innocent query. Would it not be better to accept that the teacher-philosopher duality had imposed itself upon me as the offspring of a duality imprinted upon the mind of modern Western man as fashioned by the Christian tradition? Had not the idea of a division between temporal and eternal life, between a natural, functional, mortal pole and one which was supernatural, mystical and immortal, given secret shape to my characterization—and this in spite of the fact that not since the end of childhood have I, consciously at least, embraced any religious faith? I wondered about this only half-seriously at first. But as I questioned myself in this way, my crucial reference to Socrates began to waver. I found my reluctance to call myself a philosopher pointing me in a fresh direction . . . .

It would take too long to reconstruct the process whereby I had been led to scrutinize this notion of **heroism of the mind**. Let it suffice to note that, having resolved some years ago to devote my main seminar to the birth of democratic society and democratic sensibility in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century, I became interested in various writers, of varying political persuasion, who struck me as being similarly haunted by the “impossible” task of disclosing that which is—the being of history, of society, of man—and of creating, of bringing forth through the exercise of a vertiginous right to thought and to speech, the work in which meaning makes its appearance. Far from endorsing the criticisms of certain contemporaries who condemn, under the name of Romanticism, the double phantasy of **revelation and creation**, it seemed to me that the nineteenth century witnessed the formation of an enigma which confronts us still and which lies at the heart of our modernity, detaching us from the classical tradition. Indeed, it seems to me that this enigma was best formulated by a thinker who is still close to us, Merleau-Ponty: “Being is that which demands of us creation in order that we may experience it.”

When I observed, then, that the words which had come to mind—**beneath, above myself**—caused me to waver in my allusion to Socrates, I had no more than an inkling of the fact that the experience of an internal contradiction between the lapse or the relapse of desire under the lure of the figure of the One and the conquest or re-conquest of desire in the immoderation of freedom and of thought, in the unknowable exercise of the work of creation—that this experience cuts us off from any guarantee of human nature. There is nothing here, I reflected, to stop one finding in Socrates or, say, in La Boétie, exemplary instances of heroism of the mind—but only if one holds a conception of their task differing from their own. Nor does this lead, as some muddled contemporaries would have it, to the proclamation that Reason, Nature or Man “do not exist”; but it does mean that we can decipher the signs of whatever exists, of whatever occurs, only at an infinite risk of thought, speect or action. In becoming aware of this risk, I felt justified in wondering whether it was legitimate to base the definition of philosophy upon it . . . .

I have never held the view that there is one specific space for works of thought and another for “socio-historical reality.” I did not study the works of, say, Machiavelli or Marx in order to extract from them a system of thought, still less in order to catch them out in their contradictions. In either case, such an approach would have led me to interest myself less in what was actually written in the work than in the reconstruction of a hypothetical body of statements. On the contrary, I have always taken pains to restitute not only that which is deliberate and organized in a writer’s thinking, but also that which shows itself to be beyond his control, which constantly carries him off or away from the “positions” he has adopted—whatever, in short, makes for the adventures of thought in writing, adventures to which the writer consents and which commit him to losing sight of himself in order to be brought back to the work.

It was just these ordeals and adventures that bound me most closely to an author’s writing: they became for me signs of the place and time of the work’s formation, signs of an experience, of a world of representation out of which the work was extracted and which had given rise to it. It was my awareness of these trials and adventures which led me both to read in the work the questions for which it assumed responsibility, and to perceive or to reformulate the questioning that lies within my own time. I never, moreover, conceived of my analysis of modern democracy or of totalitarianism from the objectivist point of view of the sociologist or politologist who sets himself to define and compare institutional systems. I was trying to understand the point of a totalitarian enterprise, whether of the Fascist or the Communist kind, over and above the goal of the destruction of bourgeois democracy. Convinced that the emergence of totalitarian regimes is not to be explained by reference to transformations in the mode of production, I have endeavoured for more than twenty-five years to demonstrate the existence of a mutation of a symbolic nature.

But how could I have sought to make possible an assessment, or myself assessed, the significance within totalitarian systems of the denial of social divisions—the division between State and civil society, class divisions, the division between different sectors of independent activity—or that of denying the difference between the order of power, the order of law and the order of knowledge (a difference which is constitutive of democracy), without guarding myself simultaneously against providing a justification for the de facto divisions which characterize the regimes under which we ourselves live? How could I have tried to provide some glimpse of the way in which totalitarianism leads towards death without also seeking to dispel any misunderstanding which might allow of an acceptance of the conditions of inequality and oppression typical of those same regimes? Or again, how could I have embarked upon a critique of Marxism designed to reveal everything upon which the totalitarian fantasy has fed, without trying to reinstate, against the dominant ideology, the truth of the task of emancipation undertaken in his own time by Marx? In order to make readers alive to the dynamics of democracy, and to the experience which it establishes of an ultimate indeterminacy in the basis of social organization and of an interminable debate upon Law, I have always had to try to shake not only their prejudices but also their most intimate relationship to Knowledge, to try to
awaken in them some sense of the questioning which might resign them to relinquishing the image of "the good society," while at the same time freeing them from the illusion that whatever appears as the real, here and now, must be one with the rational. Whether this is a philosophical or a political way of proceeding, I cannot say. One thing is certain: the intention which gradually took form within me has imposed a way of writing which I never chose to adopt, which merges with my way of being and which is not commonly imputable to the register of philosophy.

What I called the adventure of thought, as it is lived and offered up in his writing, impresses itself upon the reader through means which while they may not be those of philosophy are no less efficacious, but differently so, as they awaken him in like manner to the question, what is it to think? Since I can conceive of no more originary question, I am in ever-increasing doubt whether to sustain this question must necessarily involve naming it. And even if it must be named, does not its greatest force lie in the life of thought, in the way in which thought is engendered?

Philosophy, non-philosophy... where is one to draw the line? I was certainly not the first to ask myself this question. But it seemed inadequate simply to answer that there may be more philosophy in a history book, in a political work, in a novel or in a poem than there may be in a treatise bearing that name. Such an answer allows that which it should illuminate to remain obscure—namely, what are we to understand by philosophy? For as long as philosophy was considered definable by the way in which it differed from theology in the treatment of ultimate questions, some criterion was perhaps available. To speak only of the modern period, it seemed possible, as Leo Strauss suggested, to make a belief in Revelation the criterion of religion, whereas an untrammelled research, based upon trust in Reason, into the foundations of knowledge and human behavior, would be that of philosophy. But the link between philosophy and theology has weakened to the point where it is permissible to doubt whether philosophy can any longer be conceived of as appropriation of the ultimate questions over which theology used to extend its jurisdiction. Nor is the relationship which has been established between philosophy and science of a kind to enlighten us much further. To say that philosophy researches the conditions of possibility for new ways of proceeding in science would be to reduce it to the limits of epistemology. To say that it seeks to formulate the questions generated by the ways of proceeding of these rising sciences does not necessarily mean that these questions have any ultimate value, that they are privileged, or more pertinent than the questions generated by the mutations affecting art or literature, or the conception of history or the sensitivity to history, or political thought, or, quite generally, the relationship of people to politics. It is clear, furthermore, that the fragmentation of philosophy into the philosophy of science, philosophy of politics, philosophy of art, etc., does no more than sanction the failure to think of philosophy as such.

What remains, then, of the demands
of philosophy if we cannot relate them to an object? What remains that, precisely, encourages us to assert that these demands may be manifest in writings which are not consciously philosophical?

I should not as yet know how to reply to such a question; but it cannot be empty when it leaves me so disarmed. What I find empty is, as I have said, the discourse upon the destruction of philosophy. Yet this discourse is not itself without motive. Its only fault is that it turns a questioning into an affirmation (that is, in this case, a negation). I should add that this questioning is all the more insistent inasmuch as it does not concern philosophy alone; indeed it made itself apparent even earlier in other fields, particularly in those of literature and art—in painting, in music. It is a platitude to point out that painters, for some time now, have been ever-increasingly faced with the question, what is it to paint?, or that the idea of some painterly essence has vanished for them together with the visual essence to which it corresponded. Writers similarly give way to the vertigo of the question, what is it to write? The essence of literature and its counterpart, the essence of language, have vanished for them; while earlier confidence as to the nature of the novel or of poetry has dissolved.

In an essay entitled "Indirect language and the voices of silence," (in fact a chapter taken by the author from an unfinished book, The Prose of the World, and modified by him), Merleau-Ponty had already drawn an illuminating analogy between the adventure of painting and literature and that of philosophy. He was particularly concerned to show that classical writers were haunted by the phantom of a pure language, but that we allow ourselves to become the dupes of their illusion when we forget that in their practice they were already devoted to a work of expression, a work which was creative, and whose success was in no way guaranteed by the nature of language. More generally, he remarked that, without being consciously aware of it, classical writers and painters were conducting research both into that which is sayable or seeable and into the nature of writing or painting as such; a research which later became ever more explicitly their aim. In the wake of these interpretations, I had myself wondered whether philosophy, over an even longer period, had not been haunted by the phantom of a pure thinking. And, following the same line of thought, I realized that in his practice the philosopher had always been devoted to a work of expression, to the production of a work, in which thought seeks itself through the medium of writing, at once disclosing and inventing itself; in this sense, thought had never been transparent to itself, the notion of such transparency being one which takes no account of the way in which thought actually proceeds. In the light of this realization, I concluded that this search, the question "What is thinking?", bound up as it was with the question of writing, was becoming more and more the special province of philosophy in our time.

But should I not draw two consequences from this line of reflection? Firstly, that the philosopher is led to embrace his writer's vocation instead of denying it by the recognition of the
bonds between philosophy and literature. Secondly, if the question which marks him out as a philosopher is indeed “What is thinking?”), then it cannot be circumscribed or defined in the traditional sense as a question of knowledge, one which puts a subject in sight of its object, a question inviting a return towards an origin in order to deploy and master the articulations of a field of consciousness. Rather, the question would be neither localizable nor determinable, a question accompanying every experience of the world, whether derived from the most sensitive and generalized relationships inscribed upon the organs of our body—which simultaneously open it to others and to things, and imprint them within it—or from relationships built up in us by the fact of our involvement in a culture and, beyond that, in the history of mankind. In this sense, what we called the demands of philosophy would spring or re-spring up everywhere, governed, for the writer-philosopher, simply by the call of the work within which the question remains in quest of itself, repeating itself from wherever its peculiar desire may have led it.

I have already quoted Merleau-Ponty’s formula, “Being is that which demands of us creation in order that we may experience it.” But should we preserve this term in the singular, Being? Can we still give the force of a name to what the word motions towards, if, as the same author once wrote—expressing a reservation about Heidegger—there can be none by an indirect ontology, to be found only in the deciphering of beings and the adventure of expression. And if to bring ourselves back to whatever makes us think and speak we must let ourselves be carried off by thought and speech, if it is the same movement which both uproots and enroots us, then should not whoever experiences the lure of philosophy lay claim to this wandering, should he not deliberately embrace this nomadic life, should he not wrap himself in the whirlwind which already constantly draws and blurs for each one of us, even though we may not know it, the lines between here and there, between within and without?

I was going to end here, when I remembered the reply with which I had evaded the question, “How did you become a philosopher?” I had immediately hastened to relate the circumstances of my meeting, towards the end of my secondary schooling, with a teacher who had seemed to me to be extraordinary and under whose influence my future direction was almost instantly steered. His name was Merleau-Ponty. I have never ceased to be guided by his inspiration, as must indeed be apparent from the handful of references I have made to him in these pages. I was, moreover, to devote to him a number of essays, which were collected into a book a few years ago. I could, certainly, have elaborated further to my interlocutor on the subject of this meeting. The questions with which Merleau-Ponty was dealing made me feel that they had existed within me before I discovered them. And he himself had a strange way of questioning: he seemed to make up his thoughts as he spoke, rather than merely acquainting us with what he already knew. It was an unusual and disturbing spectacle. In this teacher capable of extricating himself from the position of mastery, I found a master for the first time (although I was of too rebellious a temperament to realize it). It will be seen that had I done so, I would have been led to examine more closely the relationship between teaching and philosophy . . . But I found that in my reluctance to assume the name of philosopher I had made a yet more significant omission. My choice was not, in fact, simply the outcome of a meeting, however decisive. Well before entering the philosophy class in my last year at the lycée, I had been possessed by the desire to become a writer, a secret longing which dated from early adolescence. Like many other young people who have felt the same desire, I did not know what I wanted to write; my desire was without an object, waiting for its object. Philosophy did no more than to fix it by metamorphosis. Renouncing literature (although this was never a very settled decision), I became attracted by a writing which still bore the stamp of my original desire. This recollection brought me to the last question: has what I owe to my personal history led me to misjudge the “essence of philosophy,” or have I instead gained from it some ability to fathom the relationship of philosophy to writing? This, for the moment at any rate, is a question which I cannot answer.

As I remarked at the beginning, my reflections were to carry me a long way from my fragile point of departure. They finally carried me to where I could not but stand back before the point of view of the other. That they should now call upon a reader is perhaps thereby justified.

Translated by Loran Scott Fox
Philosophical Books vs. Philosophical Dialogue

Martha Nussbaum

According to the Phaedrus, Socrates did not write because he believed that the real value of philosophizing lay in the responsive interaction of teacher and pupil, as the teacher guides the pupil by questioning (sometimes gentle and sometimes harsh, depending on the pupil’s character and degree of resistance) to become more aware of his own beliefs and their relationship to one another. Books, says the Socrates character, cannot perform this activity, for they are not “alive” [275D]. They can, at best, remind you of what it is like. At worst, they lull the soul into forgetfulness both of the content and of the manner of real philosophizing, teaching it to be passively reliant on the written word [275A]. Worse still, in some readers, books can induce the false conceit of wisdom, since they may mistake information about many things for true understanding [275B]. Books, furthermore, lack the particularity of really good tennis. They say the same thing to every reader without any regard for the particular characteristics of each reader’s game or for the way that game will vary in response to a particular opponent. In one way, the philosophical book is even worse off than the tennis manual. For tennis manuals are neither coercive nor self-important. They do not tell you that you must play, only how you might if you want to; and they typically offer advice in a modest tone of voice. The books of Empedocles or a Parmenides, by contrast, tell you that you must believe this and not that, act this way and not that way; that this is the way of truth, that the way of loathsome, herdlike error. They shower abuse on the person who does not conform. Their tone is inflated and authoritarian. Even Homer and the lyric poets, though far less strident, do unequivocally praise these deeds and not those, this sort of person and not that. Real philosophy by contrast, as Socrates saw it, is each person’s committed search for wisdom, where what matters is not just the acceptance of certain conclusions, but also the following out of a certain path to them; not just correct content, but content achieved as the result of real understanding and self-understanding. Books are not this search and do not impart this self-understanding.

As I have said, this is all written down. What are we to make of this fact? Plato’s dialogues remind us again and again that Plato lived surrounded by people who had disdain for real philosophical activity, people who either totally ignored it or cheapened it by making it a kind of sophistical and competitive point-scoring. It is not surprising that in such circumstances, especially after the death of Socrates at the hands of those who feared and hated the challenge of real philosophy, Plato should have come to feel more keenly than his teacher the...
importance of having written reminders and paradigms of good philosophical teaching. A reminder of real philosophical searching, even it it is only that, can still be valuable. But by placing the Socratic criticisms of writing inside his own writing, Plato invites us to ask ourselves, as we read, to what extent his own literary innovations have managed to circumnavigate the criticisms.

To summarize the matter very briefly: I think that we can see, if we look at these dialogues as the startling stylistic innovations they were (the first dramatic works of philosophy and also the first prose works of theatre) that Plato has used the resources of theatrical writing to create real dialectical searching in a written text. He has produced a book that does not preach or claim to know, but that searches and criticizes. In its open-mindedness it sets up a similarly dialectical activity with the reader, who is invited to enter critically and actively into the give and take. This marks a great difference from many important works of early Greek philosophy, where it is usual for the speaker to claim to be an initiate, a recipient of wisdom from the gods, or even, himself a god on earth. Dialogues, then, unlike the books criticized by Socrates, might fairly claim that they awaken and enliven the soul.

A dramatic work, furthermore, can contribute to our understanding of an ethical issue by motivating an argument or an inquiry. By showing us how and why characters who are not professional philosophers enter into argument, by showing us what sorts of problems call forth philosophizing, and what contribution philosophy makes to their work on the problems, it can show us, better than any single-voiced work, why and when we ourselves should care about ethical reflection.

We can add that by connecting the different positions on an issue with concretely characterized persons, the dialogue, like a tragic drama, can make many subtle suggestions about the connections between belief and action, between an intellectual position and a way of life. This aspect of the dialogue form urges us as readers to assess our own individual relationship to the dialogue’s issues and arguments. In these ways, again, the dialogue seems to be both less “silent” and more responsive to individual differences than the books criticized by Socrates. They are books that each reader can read personally inside his or her pursuit of self-understanding, exploring the motivations and beliefs of the characters together with his or her own. There are conclusions here, and views of Plato; we are asked, however, not simply to memorize them, but to find them inside ourselves.
The Importance of Motivation, Precision and Presence in Teaching

Robert S. Brumbaugh

Teaching involves four points of technique. It must begin with motivation; it must be as clear and efficient as possible in its moment of skill and precision; it must organize its content in proper sequences for learning; and it must throughout give the student a feeling of being together with the teacher in a shared creative present time. The first of these points, the need for motivation and some ways to achieve it, is given a classical illustration by Plato in the *Meno*. If neither teaching by precept nor by example can make students better, must we conclude that virtue cannot be taught, or may there be some other way?

The second point—the need for skill in symbolic presentation—and the fourth—a kind of immediate transfer of attitude—are two themes of a discussion by St. Thomas Aquinas. In his questions concerning teaching, St. Thomas asks whether a superhuman being (for example, an angel) could teach us better than we can teach ourselves, and if so, how. The relevance of this question to current concern with new media and artificial intelligence is striking. St. Thomas suggests that an angel might be able to present material in symbolism more attention-getting and more easily understood than what human lecturers have devised. (This notion is later applied specifically by Whitehead in an observation on the importance of symbolism in mathematics.) Today this notion suggests new uses for small calculators, motion pictures, television, and foreign-language-translation software.

St. Thomas also suggests that the presence of a superior intelligence would strengthen our own intellectual light. I think this is right; and it has special relevance to the notion of time proper to process philosophy. My tables of the eleven ways in which teaching plans can be bad are interesting corollaries. They show the various cases in which the optimum romance-precision-mastery sequence is either incorrectly ordered or incomplete. When I first designed these,
I was surprised by the number of less than optimum patterns which exactly matched educational sequences that I had seen in practice—and indeed, some that I had designed myself.

Socrates and Plato worked successively to develop a particular insight into teaching. This is, that it must begin with motivation. Unless the student believes that he or she still has something to learn, wants to learn it, and wants to share that learning with the teacher, teaching will be ineffective. Rote memorization and operant conditioning, two methods of instruction popular at the time, are external and ineffective. They might lead to skill, but if so without insight or improvement in critical thinking or sound evaluation.

Socrates depended for his effectiveness on first-hand encounter, and did not write anything. After his execution, Plato faced the responsibility of carrying on his teacher’s mission. To do this for a wide audience in space and through time, individual conversation seemed fragile. And in any case teachers with the conversational magic of Socrates seemed unlikely to appear again for a long time. Plato therefore devised a literary form, the Socratic dialogue, which he hoped could combine the permanence and publicity of writing and the challenge of Socratic conversation. His dialogues focus on the need for philosophy, and show Socrates in action with a wide range of respondents of all ages and citizen classes.

The Socratic dialogue that is a classic study of motivation is the *Meno*. Here Plato puts Socrates in touch with a young, self-satisfied and sophisticated aristocrat from the north. Meno at the outset would like to hear Socrates’ opinion as to whether virtue can be taught, but he has no desire to share in an investigation of the question. He thinks he knows already; in fact, he has made public speeches on the subject. In the end, however he is caught up by an urge to share the investigation. So is the reader. Plato sets out to engage us in the question at hand, and eliminates all of the facile answers that we had accepted. When the discussion ends, such is the author’s artistry that we are left just where Meno is left—challenged and motivated, partly because we have not been lectured to didactically.

Recently, when I was answering questions after a lecture on ancient Greek philosophy to a group of high school students, it occurred to me that
an excellent piece of reading for secondary school philosophers would be Plato’s Meno, provided the dialogue were rescued from scholars and given what I take to be its intended moral and interpretation. The moral in fact is multiple. In the first place, the argument shows that values (or virtues) cannot be taught either by instruction or example. (In fact, it maintains, correctly, that nothing can be taught unless the student wants to learn it.) But in the second place, the dialogue shows that virtue can be taught by the shared inquiry of the Socratic method, if that sharing is real. For, as I will show, Meno becomes better through his talk with Socrates. The fact that (as Plato’s readers may know from history) Meno goes on to cowardice, treachery, and his own execution is not the result of an incorrigibly wicked nature, but the result of a bad education.

In connection with this second moral, it is worth pointing out that today we tend to reject theories of hereditary vice—though there are some defenders of the view that ignorance is hereditary—and find ourselves left with the awkward question of how we can account for the difference between good people and bad. With this in mind, I turn to the notion of the Socratic dialogue as a model for introductory philosophy, a model which combines discipline with engagement through its interaction of argument with dramatic form. This is a prologue to a new analysis of the Meno.

On the face of it, this dialogue offers a surprising proof by Socrates that values cannot be taught, from which it would follow that education and human excellence are irrelevant to each other. In that case, it would be a fraud for schools to claim support on the ground that they are making their students better. But I do not think this surface argument is the real, or at least not the final, point of the dialogue; and I offer a more constructive and optimistic reading.

In general, scholars dealing with Socratic dialogues show a remarkable talent for saying one thing and doing another. Everyone says that Plato intends to bring together in a new unity a dramatic form and a pattern of philosophical investigation. But having said that, almost everyone sets aside the “literary ornament” in order to concentrate on something called the “philosophical argument.” This amounts to imposing a radically non-Platonic conception of philosophy on Plato, and of misreading even the argument dimension, since the action offers relevant premises as well. There are exceptions to this schizoid approach, but not enough.

Aristotle, in his Poetics, gives a brief account of the experiments of tragic poets looking for the “proper form” of tragedy, until it finally was stabilized with Sophocles. The same sort of history of a search for the right literary form cannot be written for Greek philosophy. The philosophers before Plato were experimenting with forms of communication which would be suitable to express new ideas. The list of forms they tried runs from diagram through epigram, epic and lyric, dry almanac and live conversation. The experimenters include Heraclitus, with a cryptic Oracular style; Parmenides, with a logical proof set in the frame of a philosophic journey; Empedocles, with his cosmological poetry and sharp detailed imagery; Hippias the Sophist, claiming the reference work as his invention; finally, Socrates, with engaged shared inquiry as his chosen tool. It would require a great deal of time and aesthetic sensitivity to do justice to the directions and limits which each of these forms set for the development of philosophical ideas. For the present, I can jump to the end of the story, to the stabilization of the literary form of philosophy into two families. Platonist and Aristotelian.

The Platonic form of philosophic writing derives from the tradition of Greek drama and epic, conversation and debate. It is, in its initial form, an attempt to bring the reader into a shared inquiry by including him in a Socratic conversation which is carefully left incomplete. In the background here is the Socratic idea of philosophy as engaged adventure, with debate, search, interaction of characters, change of fortune.

The Aristotelian form of philosophic writing (and philosophic lecturing) derives rather from the tradition of science, medicine, and mathematics. Its expression is that of long, coherent treatises by an impersonal omniscient author; it aims at order, scope, and objectivity. The idiosyncracy of the character of the lecturer, the behavior of his particular audiences, the excitement of risk in shared inquiry, are not relevant in this form, and are eliminated so far as possible.

The second form can be conveniently labeled the “treatise” as distinguished from the “dialogue.” Now, the treatise has certain merits over the dramatic dialogue. It permits literal statements that are universal in that they hold for any audience or individual. It permits of an objective precision in testing the validity and coherence of philosophic propositions. But it does these things by assuming that it is humanly possible and philosophically desirable to ascend to those heights of pure mind, disengaged from the eccentricities, individualities, and adventures of the concrete world we live in. A sign of this may be that the ad hominem form of argument is a fallacy to the typical Aristotelian, while for the Platonist it is one of his most effective dialectical tools.

I must confess that I am a Platonist, and see no virtue in pretending that philosophic arguments can exist in a vacuum. Not even mathematics can quite do that, as Whitehead, one of the great modern mathematicians, indicated when he ended his lecture, “Immortality,” by saying of mathematics: “The exactness is a fake.” I will, if I must choose, take relevance and vividness at the price of thin exactness. Since my sympathies lie with the dialogue as proper philosophic form, and since it is a form often misunderstood, I offer two case studies to show the interaction of drama and discussion that typify this form. First I look at one early Socratic dialogue, the Lysis; then at the Meno.

The cast of Lysis consists of Socrates; two young boys (about eleven years old), and two older boys (about eighteen). The theme is friendship; What are friends?, How are friends made? Two parts of the author’s purpose are easily seen: Plato is defending Socrates against the charge of being a bad influence on the young; and he is trying to carry on the Socratic mission of inquiry. Of the four boys in the cast, each pair of the same age contrasts in temperament between one who is aggressive (Ctesippus, Menexenus) and one who is gentle (Hippothales, Lysis). Hippothales would very much like to be loved by Lysis, but Lysis dislikes him. Socrates,
demonstrating the way to talk to people in order to make them friendly, directs the talk to this very topic: the cause and definition of friendship. Several commonsense notions are tried out, such as the Sophist idea that friendship is only a kind of utilitarian pursuit of advantage. Readers of Dale Carnegie's directions for winning friends and influencing people will recognize this idea in a modern incarnation. But the young men are not satisfied with this notion. Socrates suggests that perhaps love and hate are cosmic forces, and that we like and dislike other persons by a kind of law of nature. That notion had already been suggested by some cosmologists: it is tempting, because if it were true, we might build a science of love. Recent popular technology experimenting with blind dating arranged by computer is a vague echo of this idea. And if our likes and dislikes are lawlike we can see the explanation of behavior leading off to social science more generally. This view is—rather too quickly—set aside; and it is not clear how far the rejection is a result of idealism, how far of existentialism. But the whole group of characters have by now become such close friends that the boys' tutors have to break up the party by force.

Clearly, Socrates has been a good educational influence here. Equally clearly, he has left his readers with a puzzle: as far as the argument goes, there is no way we can win friends, since we do not even know what it is we are trying to win. Yet, as far as the development of the drama goes, we see Socrates using shared inquiry as a technique for making participants friends. Very well, but the reader with a logical mind remains annoyed that the scientific and cosmological accounts of friendship as natural affinity are not explored. (They are transmuted into ethical affinities instead.) But such a reader should notice that the cast consists of characters who are like and unlike with respect to age, temperament, and wisdom; that in the beginning, the pattern of their attitudes rules out the possibility of any simple "like to like" or "opposites attract" natural law governing friendship; yet that, in the end, old and young, quiet and aggressive have all become friends through the catalytic effect of Socrates...

One dimension of my discussion of teaching is still lacking: the fact is that the presence and attitude of a teacher is a crucial aspect of learning and of teaching. The reason for this lies, at least in part, in the complex nature of time.

Several years ago, when I was lecturing to two hundred students in a course on the history of ancient philosophy, an arresting advertisement came in my mail. An educational film company had just put together a series on the history of philosophy by expert lecturers. For a modest rental fee I could replace my own inexpert efforts with polished professional performances. Not only that, but in the interests of dialogue each film ended with a brief filmed question and answer period. I was convinced, somehow, that my transformation from lecturer to overpaid projectionist would not be an educationally desirable thing. But I decided to take the question to my captive lecture audience. They all preferred me to the film, and told me why. "You are right here when you are lecturing, and it isn't already decided what's going to happen. You might back off of the platform, or lose a page of
notes, or even think of some spontaneous witty analogy. The film is edited, and it is over.'"

The truth that those remarks reflect is that communication in a shared present is radically different from fixed messages beamed into the present from a completed past. Periodic eccentricities and failures are one symptom of this difference. The lecturer concludes: "And thus, so far as the availability of Aristotle's Prime Mover for religious purposes is concerned—is concerned—dammit these notes are illegible. But He isn't."

No film or written text records the kind of jeopardy that present creative communication faces. And if periodic failures occur, so more frequently do successes.

The basis for this effect is the radical difference between the three aspects of time. But more precise analyses are controversial. Some phenomenologists treat teaching as a form of telepathy. (This is a possibility that Whitehead leaves open, pending empirical determination.) St. Thomas, as we have noted, treats this as a case of strengthened intellectual illumination. Plato's Socrates, in his method of inquiry, underscores the uncertainty and risk of investigation. (The Socratic dialogue is a unique exception to my remark above that no finished written text captures the quality of present communication.) In his earlier writing, Whitehead talks about the observer in nature and the other things and persons that share his or her time system, and introduces the term "cogredience." This is a concrete set of observations from which frames of reference for coordinate systems are built by extensive abstraction.

I do not know how to adjudicate these alternative suggestions. All I do contend is that there is a difference between shared present being with someone and past archives or future fantasies. This difference is recognized in almost any concrete discussion of education, though it tends to get lost in discussions of the more arcane and abstract reaches of educational theory and technology. Thus, while a superhuman teacher could use technology and new notation to replace routine student drudgery, there is no question that the plan will fail if the living teacher tries to abscond, leaving us with rooms full of handsome hardware.
Schoolteachers spend far too little time in thought, far too much of their own education in trying to know, and the most time of all in doing what little thought and some knowledge has prepared them for. In that respect, they differ little from other people. There is the difference, of course, that they profess to encourage, if not teach, thinking in their students. At least that is the highest claim I hear teachers make: that they are trying to teach students how to think.

"Thought" is respected in our society, but not revered. It should be held in awe, not necessarily because it leads to mastery over the physical world, but for the sheer mystery of it. For although we can be satisfied in a limited way with modern explanations of how thought works, we are, so to speak, always on the outside of it. How account for the leaps it takes? How account for the selectivity it exercises over the millions of impressions flooding in? How explain the effect thought has on the physical body? How master any portion of the complex phenomenon that we describe as learning? How, indeed, teach people to think?

Certainly one of the ideals of any education, perfect or not, is to get people to think. We should probably be more humble in the face of such an ideal than we are, less presumptuously confident that anyone can teach anyone else or even himself to think. The great energy our age has expended in investigating how we think, in pointing out the traps into which thinking can fall, in making us aware of what we use instead of thought, has moved us only a short way toward understanding the process. In schoolroom practices, we are not much further along than the ancients, and in some ways we have slipped back a step or two.

Principally we have retrogressed in making school much less a dialogue than it should be. Teachers, for the most part, love to talk. Given large numbers of pupils per class, most of whom have a built-in conditioning to be talked at, and aware that it is easier and safer to keep talking, the teacher always inclines to too much teaching and too little regard for learning. Teaching of this kind can stimulate thought, although such thought is likely to be a narrow attention to following another's order of presentation or a disconnected chasing after this arresting idea or another. Placed within an institutional context with a high degree of constraint—the fixed number of hours and days, the units to be covered, the accepted book list, the inner and outer pressures from principals and parents—the teacher and student are not likely to force each other into active thought. Operating under the principle that the teacher's function is to train pupils in useful skills and to convey to them quantities of information important to their development as citizens, the schools foster a disengagement from thought itself in favor of improving...
physical and mental competencies, the latter more in terms of an approved content to be mastered than of a mind to be either exercised or trained.

The Socratic method, dialectic, is one of the inheritances from the classical past that is essential to maintaining the dynamics of learning. Basically a method for arriving at a firm answer through a series of focusing questions, it rests on an even more basic assumption that thought must be active, must be exercised, in order to develop. It also implies that answers to questions are best arrived at through this strenuous kind of questioning. As a part of our cultural background, it embodies thought in the compelling figure of Socrates, who, even at the point of death, would not curb his power of thought, and who, like Jesus, placed the spiritual, his world of ideas, above the material.

The Socratic method is still basic to education, from the elementary school on. It is a demanding form of teaching—demanding of both teacher and student. The ability to ask questions is hard enough, but to control them and direct them toward a goal without arriving at the goal in advance or tipping off the student that that is what the teacher really is doing calls for the skill of an actor, the command of language of a rhetorician, and the mastery of logic of a philosopher. Done properly, it is also an expensive form of education. It requires the rare kind of teacher I have suggested, and at most only a handful of pupils can be taken through the very experience of thinking one's way to an answer. For these reasons and a third—that the Socratic personality is not a popular one in our society at large or even among those engaged in public school education—the Socratic method is much less a part of modern education than I think it should be.

The Socratic dialogue—and that education must be a dialogue—is worth emphasizing now because we have seldom been in such danger of losing the personal impact of teacher upon student. The effect of rising enrollments, in the elementary school through college, is always to increase the number of students per teacher. The effect of a wide range of technical aids to teaching, from television to teaching machines, is also to increase the number of students per teacher. Considering all these forces all moving in one direction and the present parlous state of educational research, which can provide experimental data to support the effectiveness of almost any teaching method, one fears that the Socratic method may be completely abandoned.

As I have argued in the previous chapter, education must be personal. There is no way of achieving this except with a living presence. The beneficial effect of having the best teachers in the country brought into the classroom by television is hardly more than what the student has already gained at home from this close but impersonal spectator's view of the great men and women of our time. A book has more intimacy. Television in the classroom is one more example of the school's taking on or using what the home can and usually does provide. What is necessary is not more of what is already available, but live teachers capable of questioning and by
so doing bringing into relation with thought some of the unavoidably educational experiences that the average child gets from his greatly enlarged exposure to the world by television, by travel, by the freedoms this century freely gives.

Nor is the kind of intellectual fare television offers—the panel discussion, for example, which is as constraining to educational TV as situation comedy is to commercial TV—any substitute for discussion in which the student is actually involved. The need for dialectic grows as the population becomes more and more exposed to new information, ideas, and experiences and rests content with that uninvolved exposure. American education seems at times to have committed itself to creating spectator intellectuals to match the spectator sports fans who have moved their Sunday devotions from the stadium to the television screen. For such spectators, the intellectual life is not something that a man participates in but rather something that can offer the educated man an hour's diversion when displayed within sufficiently simpleminded format by someone else.

Dialectic is important in that large range of subjects whose factual content is—even for secondary pupils—the stuff, not of proof or exact demonstration, but of informed opinion moving toward judgment. Literature, history, the social studies, the arts—the list could be extended to all those studies that ask more between teacher and student than the exchange of information. In the many studies which have a large verbal content, in which exposure to the larger context is important, and in which more than demonstration is involved, dialogue is almost the sole means of stimulating thought.

Teaching and learning in the sciences depend somewhat less upon personal interchange. The exactitude required is probably greater. The ability to follow a logical pattern and even the judgment that sets off in one direction rather than another are as much requisites of the sciences as of the verbal disciplines. Yet the student is in more need of clarification than confrontation. The challenge lies in subjecting the physical materials to inquiry and in arriving at quantitative answers that bear out or apply the truth of larger theories. The circular progress of scientific method—the close examination of particulars permitting a generalization, which generalization in turn can be applied to a particular lying outside those actually observed—is an exercise of great value, giving thought a pattern to follow at highly useful ends. The inductive and deductive logic learned and practiced in the sciences should carry over not only to other academic disciplines but to the rational conduct of life.

Scientific studies also develop, or aim to develop, the power of abstraction, which is necessary to all thought. To move from the manipulation of the physical objects of the world to the manipulation of signs and symbols to arrive at the same end is a great step forward in one's thinking. The realization that such thought is not confined to mathematics or physics or chemistry, but is as necessary to the composition of lyric poetry, is something that might well come in adolescence. The basic ability to work with abstractions is largely responsible for the excitement generated by the new math in the primary grades as in the secondary schools.

The minimum necessity, whether it be for fostering dialogue in the humanities or for disciplined guidance in the sciences, is for a sufficient number of able teachers with few enough pupils to give each pupil continuing opportunities to follow through actual thought processes. The content matters little, except that it must not be trivial and that it must either begin with or catch up the student's interest. But the process matters a great deal. The difficulty of achieving some form of dialectic training in the secondary schools is great; not
so much because of the diversified student body of the comprehensive high school as because of the failure to provide either the teachers or the conditions that might make live discourse between student and teacher possible.

Dialectic is no more a panacea for education’s ills that it is the only way of learning. Still, I think it comes closer than any other method to getting at the central fact of learning as learning takes place between one person and another. For it is very often the personal, involved confrontation of teacher and pupil that inclines one to learn. The curriculum can go unattended and the requirements go hang, and even though we are aware of only part of what is being learned and much less of how, if the teacher and pupil are there, locked in on each other’s discourse, both are learning a good deal of what can be learned through formal instruction. Metaphorically, one could extend such discourse to the books—not many in number—that have the ability to provoke a dialogue between writer and reader. One can converse with the past and with the greatness of the present. Though the language is figurative, the experience is actual.

Man cannot always be thinking, and who would want him to be? The time we have for education is not a matter of years but a matter of moments of intensity that press us into thought. We ought then to consider what might be in a curriculum that would provoke thought and be worth thinking about. What of philosophy, the discipline that not only defines itself as a love of wisdom but that is concerned with all aspects of thought? Could it be brought down from the heights, and could a place be made for it if it were? The absence of philosophy from the public school curriculum is odd, even if one is willing to grant that public school philosophy is unphilosophical. What philosophy once considered its major province, logic, has lost favor throughout education, except in the resurgence of symbolic logic in advanced studies. What formal logic remains has worked its way into English composition and is sometimes touched upon in speech and debate. Rhetoric has wholly passed over to speech or to English. Metaphysics and ethics were long ago given over to the church. There is little left—politics, physics, psychology, and natural philosophy having passed over into specialized disciplines—except epistemology, and that is too big a word for the secondary schools.

But the fact that philosophy has lost its inclusiveness, has seen its total subject matter taken over by one branch of study and another, does not explain its total absence from the public schools. Indeed, such a fragmentation underscores the need for some place for reflective thought in any period of education beyond the primary school. In secondary education, such a subject could and should be frankly and directly philosophical. It should confront questions of choice with which other learning is not greatly concerned and not get sidetracked into philosophy’s separate interests. Its aims should be that of exposure and
practice in ways of thinking, and its content should be the major questions about which men think.

Here one might find dialectic practiced as an oral confrontation between student and teacher, as it was when Socrates first perfected its use. Methods of thinking other than dialectic might be examined and practiced as well, from the collection and classification of facts to brainstorming. The very question of what method is most suitable to what kind of learning could be raised within the context of what man knows and how he knows it. All of this seems to me to be capable of capturing a secondary school pupil’s interest, for such a concern bears directly upon the student’s need to learn a great deal in the separate subject matters. Done imaginatively, demandingly, it could in this aspect alone be the most exciting course in a high school, both for the teacher and the taught.

By the mid-teens, the wonder of where one is going has probably been replaced by an anxiety about possible outcomes. What choices have men made, what alternatives are peculiar to this place and time, what has given value to man’s existence, how has he groped his way along and where has he arrived or where does he think he has arrived? These are the kinds of questions that would fill the course. Projected out into their own lives, such questions would to some degree match the students’ personal questions about their own desires and possibilities. Such a course would be full of questions with no pat answers. Content aside, the very indeterminate character of method and its aims would usefully oppose the acquisition of facts and skills with which schooling might be brought early to considering thoughtfully the uses of learning, might find their own insistently questioning about the worth of the course they are on—dominated by compulsory schooling to age sixteen—respected, considered, and if not answered at least not permitted to grow silently into a rejection of learning itself.

Such a course would not be easy to add. It could not be done cheaply, in great halls or on television. It would have to create its body of teachers, few of whom are now in existence. It would have to find its adaptation to track programs, or it just might be one of those rare courses that could span all tracks. Its aims would seem highflown, its worth would be hard to assess, but we should insist on its inclusion if we believe thought is anything the public schools should have something to do with.
Why Philosophers Should Involve Themselves with Teaching Reasoning in the Schools

Anita Silvers

Philosophy is not a subject usually taught in the pre-college curriculum. Philosophers' professional interests in what goes on in the schools typically is limited, except for those in the field of philosophy of education, to deploring the (absence of adequate) preparation our entering college students display. Most philosophers were benign but indifferent to the basic skills improvement movements of the late 1970s. But now that the insufficiencies of the basic skills approach stand starkly revealed, efforts to enhance the quality of education are presenting our discipline with what is at once an extraordinary opportunity and genuine threat.

Once basic skills improvement programs had been institutionalized long enough to be assessed, it became clear that mathematical skills and writing skills could be acquired without concomitant improvements in students' mastery of the matters in regard to which these skills bear instrumental value. For instance, comparative test scores indicate that American school children match others in calculating skills but fall far behind in solving the so-called word problems which require reasoning about how calculation applies. And, as most university faculty acknowledge, it is only marginally less painful to read a grammatically correct but vacuous, incoherent essay than it is to read one which adds grammatical error to these other flaws.

If communicating and calculating techniques do not constitute a sufficient condition for producing good students, is there some other kind of skill which will do the trick? The newly popular proposal which possesses internal plausibility is that students who think well are competent students, so that ensuring that students acquire thinking skills should guarantee educational excellence. Philosophers, scenting circularity, may react derisively to this new fashion of proposing that good reasoning or critical thinking be taught in the schools. In my view, such an activity is irresponsible and dangerous.

First, philosophers ought to applaud any educational movement which increases respect for reason. Second, philosophers who understand the limitations of reason as well as reason's virtues must provide just accounts of reason's benefits lest excessive claims made on behalf of the teaching of reasoning by
those seeking educational panaceas bring reasoning into disrepute by making unredeemable promises. Third, if philosophers do not involve themselves in the efforts to teach reasoning to pre-college students, there is no reason to believe these efforts will cease. Instead, they will be guided by unqualified persons who fail to distinguish between the thinking patterns people typically display and the standards of reasoning to which we ought to aspire.

In California, philosophers were invited to participate in the development of a statewide eighth grade social studies test which the Superintendent of Schools had decided would also test for thinking skills. Until the philosophers joined the team, the testmakers were having difficulty delineating the display of reasoning for which it was appropriate to test. Although the California test may not be perfect in the eyes of philosophers, the items I have seen are clear, relevant and properly drawn. I look forward to the day when eighth grade students who were prepared for this test grace our college classrooms.

Of course, philosophers may debate among themselves about the most propitious approaches to teaching and testing reasoning skills at the pre-college level. But no qualified philosopher would commit such atrocities as insisting that, because psychologists have discovered there are five kinds of arguments from analogy—arguments from similarity in size, in shape, in cause or effect, and so on, we must test students to ensure that they all assess arguments by analogy by determining whether they fall conspicuously into one or another of the five acceptable categories. This last proposal was made by a psychologist who purports to be qualified to guide critical thinking instruction in the schools. Imagine what college-level students taught to think this way at the pre-college level would be like!

Philosophers have the opportunity now to direct the growing interest in teaching reasoning in the schools. Accepting the opportunity requires courage, persistence and self-discipline. We will have to learn to work with those who have no philosophical training and to penetrate the sometimes baffling K-12 institutional structure. But, if my own experience in California is indicative, we can find admirable and intelligent allies in our school systems.

The reward is seductive: the prospect of students who enter college already able to distinguish reasons from conclusion, to construct simple but good arguments, and to detect and discard arguments that are bad. My own university, San Francisco State, requires all students to complete a course in critical thinking. I can testify to the benefits which accrue when students begin their study of philosophy already in possession of identifiable skills and experience in reasoning. Introducing students acquainted with argument patterns to the Platonic dialogues, for instance, is a much greater pleasure than teaching the dialogues to students who have never noticed or appreciated any of the practices or perspectives or presuppositions associated with good reasoning.

I believe that early education in reasoning will permit more students to enjoy the study of philosophy. Surely, those of our profession possess the conviction and the knowledge to convey the general desirability of teaching good reasoning to pre-college students. If we philosophers succeed in disseminating our appreciation of reasoning throughout the educational community, we are likely to reap the benefits of the educational community’s concomitantly increased ability to appreciate philosophy itself.
On comparisons

Hector wanted to breach the ranks of the warriors, pressing his attack where he saw the largest crowd and the best arms. But he was unable to disrupt the line . . . for they endured (ischon) like a tower (pyrgedon, i.e., arranged in a square) . . . just as a rock in the sea endures (menei) despite wind and waves.

The source of each of these comparisons is a figuratively used verb: 'to drive on,' 'to rush forth,' 'to roll against,' 'to refuse to be broken.' It would be a mistake to suppose that these similes answer only to the notorious tertium comparisonis. Their implications may extend far beyond the nucleus of the explicit comparison; as a matter of fact the art of the Homeric simile often consists in its wealth of correlations, in the beauty and the aptness of its less obvious and more remote implications. But this does not contradict the fundamental rule that the story—in this case a human action—requires the comparison to achieve full expression.

If the rock contributes to the understanding of a human attitude, i.e., if a dead object elucidates animate behavior, the reason is that the inanimate object is itself viewed anthropomorphically; the immobility of the boulder in the surf is interpreted as endurance, as a human being endures in the midst of a threatening situation. It appears, therefore, that one object is capable of casting fresh light upon another in the form of a simile, only because we read into the object the very qualities which it in turn illustrates. This peculiar situation, namely that human behavior is made clear only through reference to something else which is in turn explained by analogy with human behavior, pertains to all Homeric similes. More that that, it pertains to all genuine metaphors, and in fact to every single case of human comprehension. Thus it is not quite correct to say that the rock is viewed anthropomorphically, unless we add that our understanding of the rock is anthropomorphific for the same reason that we are able to look at ourselves petromorphically, and that the act of regarding the rock in human terms furnishes us with a means of apprehending and defining our own behavior. In other words, and this is all-important in any explanation of the simile, man must listen to an echo of himself before he may hear or know himself.

—Bruno Snell, in “From Myth to Logic,” The Discovery of the Mind.

Reason and Truth

How can one be sure that reason is the best guide to truth? Isn’t that just a dogma? We can be sure simply because anything that turns out to be a reliable guide to truth—for example, the instincts of an experienced auto mechanic—is what reason tells you to follow unless something better turns up. Reason operates on the principle of “If you can’t lick them, join them.” If you can’t find an explicit and virtually bulletproof argument that will settle an issue, fall back on whatever you have got that looks better than nothing; it’s still a reason. In short, of course, you have to use a little reason to decide whether you have got something else—like an intuition, a clue, or an expert—that is better than nothing. So, though you’re not always in the position of having an explicitly stateable reason or argument for your decision, action, or conclusion, you should always at least have an indirect argument for it, that is an argument (a reason) for heeding whatever you’re using instead of a direct argument. Why? Because you want and need the truth, whether it’s about diets, insurance policies, drugs, the use of violence, or long-distance cruising in sailboats, and that’s all that reason is—the best indicator of truth.

Suppose someone claims to have come up with a rival to reason, a new magical approach to knowledge. Suppose this person turns out to be able to predict earthquakes or diagnose illness or prescribe therapy better than all the experts and scientists we have at the time. What does reason tell you to do? It demands that you accept the new expert. How did you come to this decision? By comparing the track records of the old experts with the new prophet. Which was, of course, the reasonable thing to do. You didn’t abandon reason. You just used it to abandon some old prophets, some superceded indicators of the truth. Alternatives to reason are either mere hucksters, mere claimants to the throne, or there’s a case to be made for them; and of course, that case is an appeal to reason. Reason is always the ultimate court of appeal—which is not to say that explicit direct reasoning is always the best basis for judgment.

—Michael Scriven, in Reasoning.

Thales was once asked, “Why do you have no children of your own?”

“Because I love children,” he replied.

—Diogenes Laertius 1.26
On not bashing baby seals

If Narveson is right, none of the serious contenders among existent moral theories accommodate even a fairly weak set of beliefs about the scope of our duties to animals. Utilitarians may be able to derive a prima facie duty to avoid making animals suffer, but it is only prima facie, and usually easily balanced by some promised “higher” pleasure for us, the cost of which is animal suffering. Utilitarians can derive none but prudential reasons for not destroying whole species. I suppose the consistent utilitarian would keep in existence such animal species as serve our needs, or as we find cute, and would have no objection at all to the preferably painless destruction of the rest. Contractarians, as Rawls has pointed out, cannot see any duties as owed to animals since they are not and cannot be members of a moral community who formally enter into agreements, actual or hypothetical, with one another. They may be the beneficiaries of obligations accepted by members of a moral community, but if the reason for accepting such obligations is the perceived rational self-interest of the contractors, then only enough seals to stock the zoos and nature reserves will be the beneficiaries of our hypothetically contractually based obligations, and the rest will be fair game for the fur trade.

Is there then no moral theory on the horizon that might accommodate the intuitions of those who, like me, believe that it is primarily for the seal’s sake, not mine or yours, that one should desist from bashing baby seals, however much profit it might bring, for the cat’s sake, not mine or yours, that one should not slit it open while keeping it alive and unanesthetized, however much one might learn from the vivisection? I think there is at least one moral theory of respectable lineage and good independent credentials that can accommodate such fairly minimal intuitions about us and animals.

This is the theory Hume offers us. I do not consider Hume a forerunner of utilitarianism, and therefore what I shall go on to say in defense of Hume is not intended as a defense of any version of utilitarianism. I see Hume to be much closer to Aristotle than to Mill, to be offering us a theory about human virtues, not a theory about utility maximization and the duties that might involve... Hume’s version of human nature is a good basis from which to start, since it encourages us to respect, not to downgrade, the capacities we share with other animals, to recognize that what we respect in fellow humans has its basis in what we share with other animals. When we refrain from hurting an animal, it will not be because by hurting it we would “damage in ourselves that humanity which it is our duty to show towards mankind,” (Kant) it will rather be because important elements of the humanity we respect in our fellow humans are also really present in the animal, and so demand respect in their own right.

—Annette Baier, “Knowing our place in the animal world,” in Passages of the Mind.

Empowering children through “read-along”

If adult society as a whole fears losing the minds of the young, teachers in particular fear losing their own minds if they try to teach the way they know they should. They fear the loss of classroom control and of status if they allow youngsters to choose the content and form of what they read and write. Making students active and teachers reactive seems like a gratuitous relinquishing of power. But empowering others is the teacher’s job. How many teachers, though, have been trained to decide how to teach decision making, how to liberate instead of to infantilize? Even those who do try are often eventually stymied by requirements and edicts decided over their heads. You see, we have all been infantilized, too.

Two main alternative methods for teaching literacy and reading are the language-experience method, whereby learners dictate what they have to say while looking on, and the read-along or lap method, whereby children follow on the page as someone reads something to them that they want to hear and eventually to be able to read for themselves. Content is uncontrolled because the learner chooses what to say and what to hear. The aide merely acts as a temporary intermediary between learner and text until, through massive experience in simultaneously seeing and hearing the language, the learner takes over this role for himself or herself. In combination with plentiful small-group talk to develop the oral base, such methods foil completely the traditional classroom scenario that cases the teacher as the star of the show and makes the pupils an audience.

A Good Day (for philosophy) at Red Bank

Ruth Silver

The fourth grade was discussing, with great enthusiasm, the first section of Chapter 8 in *Pixie*: at the zoo (at last!) Brian talks—first to a giraffe, and then to Pixie. It is April, and these kids have been waiting for the zoo trip, and wondering about Brian, for over six months now. They have always been eager, interested, enthusiastic. Today they are just delighted as well. The teacher is an excellent discussion leader who can sit back and listen when leadership isn’t needed.

Discussion becomes general and moves rapidly when someone says that Brian would have to talk, to get good grades in school. Mr. Mulligan understands Brian’s problem, someone suggests. Anyway, we know Brian can write, says another child, reminding the group of Brian’s written note about the Amazon. Brian is retarded, one boy suddenly claims. There is considerable protest:

No he isn’t.
How do you know?
It doesn’t say that.
He can write.
He knows about maps.

There is reference to various incidents involving Brian, cited as evidence that he isn’t retarded. Alvin, who made the claim originally, says he is too, and “I’ll find it in the book myself.” He takes up the book and starts skimming. The others are talking now about whether or not Brian should really be in the “Retarded School” if he doesn’t talk. Alvin is trying to skim the book, but he is tempted by the discussion, and anyway, it’s a lot to skim. He gives that up, and then claims that it was in the book in his other school. (Alvin has transferred fairly recently, from another district where his class was reading *Pixie* also. There is some argument about whether that’s possible. Someone checks the back of the title page for evidence of multiple editions.)

At the end of all this, Alvin withdraws his claim: “I found I was wrong. I’m sorry.” Whereupon someone on the other side makes peace generally by agreeing to his previous claim, saying maybe there was another edition at his other school, to which there are some murmurs of assent.

The incident was fascinating to me—especially for the way in which both intellectual and affective aspects of the situation developed. The discussion process was admirable: someone made a claim, there was disagreement, and everyone went to work to examine the claim in appropriate ways: looking for direct statements in the book, reasoning about what kinds of evidence would be relevant to settling the question, and then citing examples of specific incidents that seemed to have bearing on the issue. The person who made the statement originally was willing to withdraw it when he found he was probably mistaken—and at that point the others (far from taking advantage of his admission of error) accepted the possibility of there being some merit in his position.

It should be remembered, too, that the whole issue came out of the children’s discussion: nothing in the manual suggests to teacher or children that there should be debate on the question of whether Brian may be retarded.

Something that happened a couple of minutes later struck me as another wonderful illustration of how the children were finding ways of dealing with disagreements with each other with intelligence and restraint—and as an illustration of appropriate intervention by the teacher, as well.

The same Alvin who had made the initial statement about Brian accused one of the others: You complain about Pixie talking over Brian, but you do it in the classroom. He didn’t just tell his classmate to shut up, but found a way to complain of her behavior by citing something she herself had just said.

At this point, the teacher entered the discussion—to say that Alvin seemed to be making an analogy—and then to lead the children to thinking of some other examples of analogies. She neither supported nor denied the accusation but defused a possible squabble by using what had been said to lead back to a *Pixie* topic.

And finally, to the astonishment and delight of teacher and trainer, one of the children just took over the class, quite casually. “Now, I have a question for everyone,” he said. “How is Pixie different in this section?” The kids immediately attended to his question, waved their hands for his attention, and he called on several of them for their comments.
Kio and Gus Teach Henrik to Read

Ingrid Nørholm

For the least three years I have been trying to find new methods that might be of assistance to the approximately 2 percent of those children who have not been able to learn reading by means of the special education instruction which the Danish “Folk School” is able to offer. My efforts to reinforce the education of my weaker students have not been in vain.

Psychologists are able to analyze and point out problems, but those of us who actually teach students know the problems as well as they do, even better. The instructions that may be given are of some help to some students, but we continually have individual pupils—not in every class perhaps, but in every single school—who are not helped. From 1962 until now, I have had three pupils whom the school has failed, in addition to a number who could obviously have benefited from their education more than they did. At the moment, I am working with a thirteen-year-old pupil whom nobody had been able to help. A year ago, efforts to teach Henrik to read were abandoned. He was identified as the most word-blind child ever encountered at our school.

During the 1983-84 school year, I was concerned with Philosophy for Children in my teaching of a third- and fourth-grade class. I had been using the “Kim and Marianne” system, which is a supplemental Danish system devised by Per Jespersen. In the lessons in which I made use of this system, my experience of the pupils of the class, of which Henrik was one, was quite new and different. The students were involved and engaged in considerable questioning. They showed greater maturity in various fields, maturity which I had not previously noticed in them. The result of this experience initiated my interest in philosophy. I discovered Matthew Lipman’s book, Philosophy in the Classroom. In spite of my unfamiliarity with the English language, I was most impressed to read, in that book, “If you can teach a child to think, you may be able to teach it to read.” I was fully aware that the author was right, but was there a method? By reading the manuals in the Philosophy in the Classroom curriculum, I discovered what I thought to be my own method.

I started translating Kio & Gus in the summer holiday of 1984. My idea was to develop my own proficiency first and then try the method on Henrik. I would teach him to read by “deep teaching”: through the teaching of abstractions. Henrik’s vocabulary was very poor and so I first had to provide him with a language. When I finally would have a language it would have to be usable for teaching him to read.

It was September 1, 1984 when I started teaching Henrik at my home, twice a week, from 4:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon. My aim was to try to replace the five years which he had lost. I wanted to teach him abstraction after abstraction, keeping and turning the whole thing around time after time, using words in the greatest possible number of situations and continuing to do so until he obtained a richer vocabulary. I read a few pages of Kio & Gus to him. We talked about the contents and then I took all the exercises and discussion plans from the Kio & Gus manual. During the first month he could only answer yes or no to most of the questions. This I let him do without adding my comments. It was up to Henrik to show me how I could help him and not the other way around. Such knowledge I
could achieve only by listening. During the first couple of months, I had to prepare at least fifty main questions for every double lesson. I made notes during and after each lesson—how it had gone, what Henrik was able to do, and what I had to pick up at a later time. After a couple of months I was able to get him to concentrate on the exercises for about seventy minutes. When he succeeded in doing so, he was able to read the corresponding pages in Kio & Gus. This experience was so great for both of us that we were sure that Matthew Lipman was right.

I contacted the school psychologist and tried to explain to him what I was doing. He tested Henrik after I had indicated to him my view that Henrik's world of abstraction was so very small that there had to be a method of "deep teaching" in order to get him to acquire such abstractions. But even if it was known that such a method was needed, it had not been known to exist. Philosophy for Children is exactly the method that was needed. It treats every single word in a philosophical way. The child's world of abstractions must be developed beyond that which is already known to the child. By using words in all sorts of possible connections, there will, of course, be some connections which the child already knows. From these known connections, the child will continue building on his own. In the course of four months, Henrik got so good at reasoning with regard to the questions I asked him that I needed to prepare only about ten questions for every double lesson. He stammered when we started during the first five school years.

From New Year's Day of 1985 until the summer holidays, we continued with two double lessons a week. By the time we reached the summer holidays, we had progressed through five chapters of Kio & Gus. It has turned out that Henrik is not word-blind at all. He has had a normal development this school year. He now has a word-attack technique which he can use on unknown words. He can hear sounds and use them. During the last six months we have been playing the recorder about ten minutes of each session. As a result of his playing, he performed at our spring concert. Suddenly he felt that he could do something there and show it to others. His joy was so great that he wept when he came home. "Ingrid, I was just so glåd," he said. Henrik is very small of stature but this year he has had to have new clothes three times.

This year's experience with Henrik has shown me that at least one child can be taught to think by means of the philosophical method that has been devised by Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp. It must be possible to help still more children. The work with Henrik will continue for another year and perhaps more, as I will not give him up until he can manage on his own.

In my sixth grade, we have been using Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery. It seems to be quite a good experience for the children. They are involved and have made greater progress than I have noted before in children of the same age. If we would like a world with endlessly thinking children and adults, we shall have to teach philosophically. Technology is rapidly marching ahead. There must be an alternative and this can only be philosophy.

[Editor's Note]: When Professor Nørholm related Henrik's experience to us last summer, she mentioned something that has not been included in her manuscript, but which seems to be a significant part of the record. It seems that when she first began discussing the instructional manual questions with Henrik, he suddenly stopped and exclaimed: "You see! You didn't know the answer to that one either!" The realization that the teacher was not necessarily an authority on the areas under discussion may well have contributed in this case to the liberating effect of philosophy.
Philosophy: A Key to the Deaf Mind

Maura J. Geisser

Imagine mankind living in an underground cave . . . Deep inside are human beings facing the inside wall of the cave, with their necks and legs chained so that they cannot move. They have never seen the light of day or the sun outside the cave. Behind the prisoners a fire burns . . . The prisoners, facing the inside wall, cannot see one another, or the wall behind them, all they can see are the shadows of things cast on the wall of the cave.

The prisoners live all their lives seeing only shadows of reality, and the voices they hear are only echoes from the wall. But the prisoners cling to the familiar shadows and to their passions and prejudices, and if they were freed and able to turn around and see the realities which produce the shadows, they would be blinded by the light of the fire. And they would become angry and would prefer to regain their shadow-world.

But if one of the prisoners were freed and turned around to see, in the light of the fire, the cave and his fellow prisoners and the roadway, and if he were then dragged up and out of the cave into the light of the sun, he would see the things of the world as they truly are, and finally he would see the sun itself. What would this person think now of the life in the cave and what people there know of reality and of morality? If he were to descend back into the cave would he not have great difficulty in accustoming himself to the darkness, so that he could not compete with those who had never left the cave?

—Plato, The Republic.

Is this fiction or reality? Plato's allegory of the cave is a litmus paper of western thought which could be an excellent analogy of the deaf or hearing impaired child who has been freed from ignorance and who has learned how to think well and reason logically and can think for him/herself making valid judgments and logical decisions.
For fifteen years the Rhode Island School for the Deaf has been involved in an innovative program of language development, based on the spiraling concepts of language involving enactive processes, iconic representations, and symbolic representations combined with the deep and surface structures of sentences, transformations and semantics in generative grammar. The concepts of the curriculum spiral through a variety of units as well as from year to year, thus making the concepts and language more meaningful to the students instead of just using a rigid slot filling approach which had been used in the past and which cannot deal with the innumerable complexities, ambiguities, subtleties and abstractness of the English language.

In 1896, the annual Report of the Rhode Island School for the Deaf states: "That the teacher will be able to contrive means that will make the children think of the right things to say and do." This seems very contrived and understated but it has taken almost one hundred years for us to look at and deal with the issue of thinking again. With the improvement in the development of teaching language skills based on the Rhode Island Language Curriculum and its mastery by hearing impaired children, it became more apparent that there was still a gap or deficiency in the deaf students' ability to think and reason through problems or situations logically, to make sound inferences or deductions based on information presented or to make predictions or valid judgments.

Logic, argumentation and language are interwoven:

"Because the rules of formal logic govern sentences they can be used to develop a kind of self-awareness. They can provide a means for grasping and examining one's thoughts in a structured, clear-headed way."

Lipman and Sharp

All children, hearing and deaf, need to pay attention to and assess things others say as well as their own statements much more carefully than they do. Their inattention, lack of comprehension, inability to critically look at the sources and evaluate them, as well as their inability to infer, inquire and categorize, has lead them to many misunderstandings or partial comprehension of things stated or read. Their own cognitions lack the clearness and structure to be produced in language.

For the hearing impaired or deaf child, these needs increase one hundredfold because their language impairment has a direct effect on their thinking skills and their comprehension of language. The reverse is also true. There is a grave need for the hearing impaired to be taught how to think philosophically at an early age. Bettelheim and Zelan in their 1982 studies On Learning to Read, have discovered that what happens to a child's reading during the first three grades is extremely critical to his ability to be a literate reader. Sharp and Lipman urge teachers to teach reasoning in order "to improve the children's reading and urge that reading can be seen as a means to helping children think."

Once the children get started in using these thought processes of formal logic, giving reasons, inquiry and rational behavior, they become better at constructive and applicable philosophical thinking. Whether or not the children have a good grasp of language structures, or are hearing or hearing impaired, they need to be exposed to rational thought, the process of inquiry, making assumptions and inferences, as well as wonder at the earliest age possible. Along with language, they need to develop openness and flexibility in their thinking, which will help them bridge the gaps between their language and experiences.

Deaf Education, over the years, approached language from a very concrete perspective and has ignored or simply not dealt with the abstract concepts and semantics of the English language or the student's ability to inquire. The result is that most of the time our students were limited not only in their language but in their ability to think and use thinking skills to improve their lives.

Five years ago after much discussion of this problem, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf introduced the program, Philosophy for Children. This program was developed at Montclair State College, N.J. by Matthew Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp. It addressed
many of the issues we were questioning. The Philosophy for Children program was designed for hearing students and attempts to establish several goals:

- that there would develop a community of inquiry;
- there would be improved reasoning ability, development of creativity and critical thinking, personal and interpersonal growth, development of ethical understanding, development of the ability to find meaning from the context of a situation or experience;
- to discover alternative ways of discussing a topic or alternative points of view;
- to develop objectivity, consistency, the possibility of giving reasons to support beliefs, to discover situations and construct meanings, part-whole and various other kinds of relationships or connections and generalizations.

The Philosophy for Children Program's main objective is to help children to think better and to think for themselves.

It is a student-centered, Socratic method, rather than a traditional teacher-centered one.

The IAPC (Institute for Advancement of Philosophy for Children) curriculum is designed to expand reasoning and thinking skills starting in early childhood with reasoning in language comprehension, followed by reasoning and thinking in ethics, literature, science and social studies. It is not a watered down college or high school philosophy course; nor isolated thinking skills; nor the history of philosophy. It does not use unrealistic or difficult or technical vocabulary. Rather the IAPC program does foster dialogue and inquiry among children. It helps children to see there are alternative ways of viewing things (more than one perspective) and helps them to discover and use rules of reasoning in their questioning of situations which are important to them in their real lives. If any students are taught reasoning skills only at an abstract level, it is not likely that they can transfer or apply these skills to themselves and their lives. This program is based on a series of characters in novels, so that the children identify with other youngsters and can observe and discover the formal and informal rules of thinking. The characters in all the novels struggle to clarify things which are enigmatic or ambiguous and try to figure out appropriate solutions. Formal logic is necessary but not enough. It has rules which don't tell us if the proposition is true or false and what reasons or proofs are necessary to affirm, support or destroy these assumptions (not fact-opinion). Students are encouraged to see the difference between explanations and reasons; what constitutes good or bad (or poor) reasons and excuses. Reasons to support assumptions or propositions must be believably and factually relevant.

The program consists of six novels. Beginning with 

Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, targeted for grades 5-6. "The stress is on the acquisition of formal and informal logic . . . it offers a model of dialogue—both of children with one another and of children with adults. The story is a teaching model, non-authoritarian, and anti-indoctrinating. It respects the value of inquiry and reasoning, encourages development of alternative modes of thought and imagination, and suggests how children are able to learn from one another." 

Lisa, grades 7 and 9, is a sequel to Harry. "the stress is on elementary philosophical specialization in the areas of ethical inquiry, language arts, and social studies. It focuses on ethical and social issues such as fairness, naturalness, lying and truth-telling, the nature of rules and standards . . . the rights of children, job and sex discrimination, and animal rights. Lisa is concerned with the interrelationship of logic and morality, . . . helps to establish good reasons in justifying their beliefs."

Mark is targeted for grades 8-10. "Mark is accused of vandalism. In an attempt to ascertain who is guilty, Mark's classmates find themselves impelled to inquire into a number of general social issues such as the function of law, the nature of bureaucracy, the role of crime in modern society, the freedom of the individual, and alternative conceptions of justice."

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ders such underlying issues as experience and meaning, criteria for the assessment of writing, relationship between thinking and writing, the nature of definition and the distinction between craft and art."  

We learn almost everything better if we have been exposed to it and experienced it or have done it ourselves and not just been told about it by someone else. First-hand experience is what will be remembered long after the situation has disappeared. The more we think, the better we think, the better our skills are. If hearing impaired or deaf students don’t think for themselves or make their own logical decisions, which have consequences and underlying reasons for their choices, then their ability to think and make decisions is impaired and perhaps never stimulated to grow and expand. Someone can tell you how to do something, but unless you do it yourself, it does not have the same level of understanding and meaning. Like giving directions; it is easier to take a person to a place than to explain how to get there.  

Philosophy for Children provides students with not only situations the characters must work through, but the concepts they must deal with to seek solutions and relate these to their own behaviors and thoughts. Take for example, one time when a deaf student asked me where a fellow student was. When I replied, “Absent,” the class made several assumptions as to why the student was absent, i.e., bunked school, was sick, went to the doctor’s. The following day, I was greeted by the same student who proceeded to inform me that, “Your assumption yesterday was wrong because you jumped to a conclusion and didn’t have enough information. My friend was sick and did not bunk.” Here is an example of a student using concepts learned or developed by using IAPC. She had identified the thinking skills of ambiguous or vague terminology in the English language. It is not enough to assume that children at younger ages are not aware of their hearing losses and what caused their own hearing loss, never mind their own capabilities and abilities to think and reason, certainly not the ambiguities and abstractness in their own lives. I was amazed at the number of embarrassing or sticky situations which arose throughout the year because of the ambiguous or vague terminology in the English language which the hearing impaired student either glossed over or had difficulty with.  

If the students are not prepared for this they can develop great personal and interpersonal mistrust. Many deaf children at younger ages are not aware of their hearing losses and what caused their own hearing loss, never mind their own capabilities and abilities to think and reason, certainly not the ambiguities and abstractness in their own lives. I was amazed at the number of embarrassing or sticky situations which arose throughout the year because of the ambiguous or vague terminology in the English language which the hearing impaired student either glossed over or had difficulty with.  

One day a twelve-year-old hearing impaired boy was reading aloud a page from *Kio and Gus*. The boy gasped and covered his mouth. Obviously something was wrong. In the passage Kio and Gus are discussing where honey comes from. Kio said it’s from the bees but Gus disagrees and says it comes from honeysuckle and shows him how to bite the ends of the flower and suck the sweet stuff out of them. That’s why they call it honeysuckle. Gus gives this as her definition. The boy raised his hand and asked me, “Do you realize that the Philosophy for Children Program has dirty words which are bad?” When I replied, “No, that’s not possible,” the boy continued to say, “You better be careful! If the principal sees the dirty words, you will get into trouble, be fired, and there will be no more philosophy. We like philosophy, it’s fun.” Logical? A deduction? Correct, but not really, since it was based on an invalid assumption: that this was a dirty word. The boy jumped to a conclusion without enough information, just his past experience. The class discussion lead the class to the idea that some words have more than one meaning, are ambiguous, and are used differently in different contexts. I took the word “suck” and build a paradigm using both formal and slang meanings, having the students give their meanings and examples. Then I showed that the words “suck” and “sucker” can function differently in different senses—as a noun, verb or adjective. It’s still probably a good thing the Commissioner of Education didn’t show up for that class! This child saw something which he felt was wrong, he was able to step back, assess the situation and proceed to criticize it. In September, he would never have thought this through nor been able to give reasons to support himself.  

It is not enough to assume that children develop logical or rational thinking from math. The transfer from math to linguistic reasoning is difficult to prove and most often takes years of being exposed to before it is acquired and more time before it is generalized and transferred. Therefore what has been taught through exposure and direct or indirect teaching methods may not appear right away so as to be tested or evaluated but will show up in the future. We cannot assume the children will acquire logical reasoning on their own and transfer it on their own, all the time, for all concepts.  

For example, in *Kio and Gus*, the twelve-year-olds heard how a sparrow was stunned and dizzy when it flew into a window. On a field trip to a whaling museum, the students excitedly called me over to a huge trash barrel and re-
minded me about what happened in the story *Kio and Gus*. Then the "slowest" student said, "Poor bird here is dead, not dizzy—but maybe just sleeping?" The students had worked hard on concepts such as categorization, what happens if, perspectives, alternative ways, the world of animals, identity, figuring out things, making assumptions, inferences, predictions, similarities and differences. Here they were using the mental acts of thinking, remembering, perceiving and wonder through a better awareness of their environment. After one year some transference had happened but it had taken the entire year to reach that point.

Students have a right to education which is exciting, just as the prisoners in the cave have a right to see the light of the sun. Education should be like an adventure with alternative mysteries and possibilities where they will discover rules and concepts which are not only meaningful to them but will aid them as they learn. Education should emphasize meanings and relationships which are interrelated and not isolated facts. Learning should not be rote; routine, only memorization: it should have the element of chance, surprise, risk of success and failure, possibilities—not just right and wrong answers, because things in our life are not simple or neat. They are messy, unclear and filled with complexities, ambiguities and contradictions. The deaf child should be aware of this and not accept everything at face value.

This can be very threatening and intimidating to the teachers and parents about things like family relationships, rules, how words function in sentences, stories, mysteries and what causes things. But, by the third grade for hearing students and even younger for hearing impaired children, they have lost these abilities. If meaning grows, then there is education going on. If this meaning spirals and can be related and transferred, the education is better. Lipman and Sharp say: "Children must acquire meanings. They cannot be handed out to children or dispensed."

Children must be able to take advantage of clues and make sense of things for themselves. The program in developing thinking skills should not just solve problems now and help students find the answers but should give them a process (the tools) by which they can deal with any kind of situation presented to them. They should: think through it reasonably, look at all aspects, draw inferences, make and support judgments based on the assumptions made and information given.

This is why it is better not to teach the history of philosophy or straight philosophical theories, because it would have little or no meaning for the child and would be forgotten or dismissed as an unimportant fact. This program takes the philosophic concepts and deep metaphysical, ethical and epistemological issues discussed by the philosophers over the centuries and puts these very important concepts in such a context so that children can be exposed to, experience, think about, draw inferences based on these issues from content. Leibniz's theory of identity, Descartes' mind-body problem are seen and discussed on the level of: Who am I? What makes me me? If parts of me change, am I still me? What is the mind? Where is it? What does it do? Is it the same as the brain? Do all animals and people have minds? Can you use a Venn diagram to describe this picture? What makes you think? Where do your thoughts come from? Discussion of rights, rules, and morality comes through on all levels of the program as well as problems for which there are no solutions. This encourages children to be openminded and to look at different sources and evaluate which is better, more truthful, more valid, more appropriate to the situation. Is it right to kill animals? What rights do we have as
individuals? Are there exceptions to the rules? All, deep philosophical concepts, on a level which children can and do discuss, do enjoy and are relevant. All of this material is conceptually abstract but is presented through the text and deals with concrete situations. Emphasis is on class discussion and the exchange and building of ideas.

Deaf children don’t want to talk or express their ideas with people other than counselors many times, because they are afraid people will be angry, or disagree or make fun of their ideas, or opinions or beliefs. Frequently, they have never really thought about these issues and if they have, they have inadequate language and vocabulary to express themselves in the manner they want to—so as not to be misunderstood. But they do like to read about situations that happened to the characters in the novels of the program which relate to their own similar experiences. Pixie’s sibling rivalry and fights with Miranda can be easily identified with and discussed relevant to themselves and their families. Through reading, our curriculum works on the skill of inferring, finding the main idea, what is stated, what is implied.

"The integration of thinking skills into every aspect of the curriculum would sharpen children’s capacity to make connections and draw distinctions to define and to classify, to assess factual information objectively and critically, to deal reflectively with the relationship between facts and values and differentiate their beliefs and what is true from their understanding of what is logically possible. These specific skills help children listen better, study better, learn better, and express themselves better."

Lipman and Sharp

This is very difficult for deaf students not only in reading but in conversation as well. How often do deaf students misunderstand what is said, or not understand the implications of what is said or expected! The ability to infer is so critical, yet it is one area where the deaf students are deficient and the concepts are very difficult to master.

The more deaf students can infer, the more meaning and understanding they can develop from what they hear, see, or read, the more openminded and less prejudicial, and less ready they will be to build stereotypes. Developing thinking should be a means—not an end in itself.

We must continually look at our aims and curriculum and ask, “What do we want deaf children to know and be able to do, now and in the future?” Reading and writing can be a means to help children think as well as the reverse.

In our field of Deaf Education, so often our focus changes from one issue to another issue, which then become ends in themselves and the process by which we attain it is forgotten or sidetracked.

Development of a classroom community is important so children can learn to trust each other and develop a sense of security that others will not laugh at their ideas. A child asking, “How can blind people write if they can’t see?” A fellow student’s retort was, “Of course they can write! They’re not stupid. They have hands and can write. Just can’t see!” The students covered their own eyes, pretended to be blind and tried to write. The first student agreed it was possible for the blind to write, but now, he wanted to know, “How do you teach them to write? How do they know the right bumps? (Braille)” The classroom becomes a sounding board for issues in and out of the school. After several days of discussion on moral and legal rights, a student came to class asking, “Excuse me, Mrs. Geisser, before class starts . . . Do you think it was right of the mother to kill the child? I heard that . . .”

Students always want to know the teacher’s opinion and beliefs, but one must be careful to encourage them to think their ideas through because they otherwise think your opinion must be the right one and will adopt it. Teachers are in a very sensitive, precarious position. Teachers can not and should not impose their own opinions and morality. Objectivity is a must! In the beginning, children in class tend to be very ego-centric and want only to talk themselves, ignoring what everyone else has to say even if they are saying essentially the same thing. Students beginning the program have stood up and been ready to physically fight over opinions and issues; laugh at something said; they have not talked in sequence and are not able to infer anything.

If students continue this way, ignoring the dialogue or conversation of others, they are not fully participating in a community of inquiry. A difference in the level of participation in a community of inquiry can be seen in the level of imitation. From, “My idea is the same as his,” to a deeper, meaningful dialogue, where students build on what others have said, i.e., “I don’t agree with this part of your idea because . . .”

Deaf or hearing impaired children need to speculate imaginatively. Is it possible? What if you were a monster? What if the world was different? What if things were all red? What if there was no sun? What would happen? What are the possibilities? Their deficiency in this makes it difficult for them to express their imaginations, at times, depending on their level of complexity of language, they are unable to utilize parts of their imaginations. For example—if then—once they understand the causal component, it is a lot of fun to imagine or creatively think about something.

The concepts of beauty, justice, goodness, truth and justice, freedom, personal identity are important to everyday human life and their implications for us and applications can be extremely controversial. Do people have the right to hold hostages? Do people have the right to kill animals and/or humans? Do people have the right to invade other people’s privacy through violence? Children must differentiate between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, truth and falsity, comparisons of things. They must develop these concepts and the ability to compare them in order to make social, ethical, aesthetic and critical judgments in their lives.

Too often the deaf see things only as they are or seem to be and find it difficult to go beyond and to think and give possible or impossible assumptions.

In the Philosophy Program at the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, we have come across an interesting and serious problem which has been encountered with hearing students and adults. Students reading either Pixie, Harry, or Kio and Gus have read a particular section or chapter in the book, pointed out interesting ideas and are either discussing the ideas or specific points that are in that section. A student will make a statement; then when asked to explain or expand his/her remarks and give reasons for it, he or she will state a contradictory remark. They do
not see that the two statements are contradictory or opposite, but insist on pursuing the idea that the second statement supports or explains the first—no matter how diametrically opposed the two are. Even when their attention is drawn to this and each statement carefully examined, the students either continued to see them as the same or will say, “Oh, I agree with the second statement now.”

But they are unable to give any reasons for changing their mind, consequently they say, “Oh! Forget it!” and most of the time, we teachers of the deaf do forget or skip it. Yet we know they haven’t discerned the difference between their two statements. They have to listen to what they say as well as to what others say. So as previously mentioned, this problem is not unique to the deaf, (contradicting oneself), but it seems to show up to a more severe degree.

Teachers and educators must get students to see clearly that these statements are opposed and are in conflict with one another and not in support of each other.

Many students say that they have their own beliefs and no one is going to change them because that is what they believe. How many of us are patient and encourage the students to listen to each other and think about what’s being said instead of saying, “Well, so it’s your own opinion. Good for you!”? This doesn’t stimulate any more thinking or allow the student to express and explain their ideas. Often times, teachers are in a hurry to have the student answer and move on to other ideas, but sometimes it takes longer for the student to think it through and respond. Often times in the philosophy class, the situation we saw was one where the student had an idea and knew what he or she wanted to say, but their ability to use complex language structures diminished because they were trying to put their thoughts into verbal or sign language. The system broke down. After awhile of thinking, discussing interesting ideas and forming the community of inquiry, the level of complexity in language structures rose.

The Philosophy Program was first instituted five years ago at the R.I. School for the Deaf, with Seniors in High School, as an experiment. The students’ language levels were increasing, but their ability to think logically, critically and creatively left many large gaps, showing up in their comprehension and writing. The program seemed to work resulting in an increased questioning and flexibility. Every year we have dropped the program down a level and it has been more and more successful. From teaching Pixie to Seniors, we dropped it back to Sophomores, to the Junior High. Then we were able to add Harry and teach the formal and informal logic to Freshmen. This past year, the Junior High School was taught Pixie and the Juniors were taught Harry. This fall, we will expand the program and teach Kio and Gas to nine-year-olds, first-level Middle School, and Pixie to the sixth-graders. We found that the younger students were more open and flexible and better disposed to think about all the issues and concepts we have already discussed. They are not as defensive of their beliefs nor had formed as many stereotypes nor were they as inflexible as the older students, who do not trust or look at other points of view as objectively.

Many older students say that they can’t think. “It is too tough to give reasons,” or, “Why do we have to give reasons? Why is it hard? We never had to do this before!”

All these students have never really had to pay attention closely to another person’s ideas, remember them correctly, think about these ideas and either disagree or agree, supporting their statements with reasons or evidence or build upon what others said or even to wait their turn. How often do deaf or hearing impaired classes carry on spontaneous discussions that are building and about a particular point?

The older students find it difficult to “really have to think,” and not just give any answer. They are in many ways like those in Plato’s Cave who are content with the shadows on the wall of the cave and are not ready for the light of the fire, and certainly not ready for the reality of the sun. In contrast, my class of 12- and 13-year-old students, whose language abilities were not very good, would literally fight for their beliefs and opinions, especially if you disagreed with them! Last fall they managed to have some great discussions about haunted houses. Do ghosts really exist or is it okay to kill people or animals?—Never right or always right? Never wrong, always wrong? Sometimes wrong, sometimes right?

One student said it was always wrong to kill animals, but it’s okay to eat meat! They discussed whether or not ghosts and spirits were similar or different. When asked how they knew there was a difference and how they knew spirits were real, they told me, they knew because of “The Book!” (the Bible). These youngsters discussed communication between animals and humans and tried to deduce what kind of a handicap the girl in the story had and compare and contrast it with their own handicap. This level of discussion and ability to think without constraints is much less painful when begun with younger students, and more on target with the natural development of the language and reading skills.

Significant increases have been documented in the reading level and test scores of hearing students who were taught Philosophy for Children consistently. This is a benefit we anticipate for our deaf students.

Ideally, all teachers of the deaf should teach philosophically. It is very important for the teacher to be a mentor, to
stress the person to person relationship, not just the information. Teachers have to learn to look at sources and facts, question absolutes, restructure their own experiences and questions. Finding meaning must be a joint, cooperative adventure both giving to the situation and gaining from it.

Many ramifications of the program have been noticed. An English teacher in the High School told the principal that here students were asking more questions, defending themselves and giving reasons to support their opinions and statements. This was a far cry from when the Philosophy for Children Program was first taught in 1981-82 to a group of Seniors. All of the Seniors had Senior English, half of the group also had Philosophy, the other half was mainstreamed. One day, the brightest girl in the class made a very interesting and accurate statement regarding a piece of literature. When another student asked her, "Why? How did she know that?" the girl became very embarrassed and said she didn't know. She was unable to give any possible assumption or theories as to why she had made the statement. She told the students to stop picking on her. Today those students still don't know how she came up with her incredibly intuitive and appropriate statement. But it really meant nothing to her, or perhaps, she really didn't understand what she said, meaningfully enough to explain it. She was more concerned with whether she was right or wrong, then hearing the other students' ideas or criticisms of hers. So many deaf students are only concerned with the right or wrong answers, fact or opinion. She did not trust. Though there was a community, the sharing and building of ideas came to a stalemate. Learning stopped.

The Geometry teacher stated that the students who had taken Philosophy were able to try varying approaches to solve problems and were open to different possibilities of how to solve the same problem. Their thinking was becoming more flexible.

Besides the fact that the students have been driving their parents crazy asking more questions, and the parents not always understanding them or their questions, we have seen an increase in flexibility in their thinking; and ability to think of more possibilities, of not saying, "I am right or wrong," or "what is the correct answer." We have seen students not say, "I don't know, I can't think," as much, but be willing to attempt to give some kind of reason, even to say that they have an idea, know what they want to say, but don't know how to say it or put it to be understood. More students are listening better and attempting to agree or disagree. Students are now challenging each other's ideas, looking for paradoxes, or consistency in discussions, while at the same time beginning to be sensitive to the other person, their world of experience, and where their concepts and ideas come from.

It is not easy, but it is interesting and definitely worthwhile. It takes a lot of time to get students to become willing to trust others in their class and to learn to listen attentively to what they're saying, not to physically stand up and be ready to fight about their opinion, but rather, to say they agree or disagree and try to discuss the issue. Richard Paul states that critical thinking intends to achieve: "An understanding of the relationship of language to logic, leading to the ability to analyze, criticize, and advocate ideas to reason inductively and deductively and to reach factual or judgmental conclusions based on sound inferences drawn from unambiguous statements of knowledge or belief." It means letting the student become the center of the class, not the teacher. Student and teacher must be constantly open to, and aware of the various relationships which exist. The student and teacher need to discover new possibilities, to speculate and inquire, making decisions and judgments on content after they think the issues or concepts through, trying to have them make sense. This is an essential step to having the hearing impaired think freely, rationally and autonomously. Like the prisoner dragged from the cave, we and our hearing impaired students must escape the ignorance, two-dimensional answers, misinterpretations, contradictions, inflexibility, ambiguity and abstractness of their thinking and world. It is a slow learning process, our students are still misunderstood, sometimes irrational, and many times unaware that they are. The level of dialogue with the hearing impaired students is not at the optimum level which they are capable of nor at the level of their hearing counterparts, but it is a step in the right direction.

Many hearing impaired students have been dragged into the sunlight of reason and philosophical inquiry. Do they see their world in a different light? Do they see the possibilities available to them? What of life in the Platonic cave? Would they ever go back? They couldn't.

Socrates said: "The unexamined life is not worth living."

Our students are becoming capable of examining and of finding meaning in their lives. Is the Philosophy for Children Program working? Yes!! Older graduates come back angry, because they never received this course which the younger students talk about and enjoy so much. The young man who asked his parents so many questions several years ago, is now a junior in college. He came to school to ask me which of two courses he should take first, Introduction to Philosophy or Moral and Ethical Theories. Philosophy was the key to opening his mind, hopefully it will open many more!

REFERENCES

5. Ibid., pg. 19.
6. Ibid., pp. 51-53.
7. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
10. Ibid., p. 15.
Since Philosophy for Children was introduced into the Lynbrook Public Schools in 1981, substantial gains in reasoning skills have been made by the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students involved in the program. From 1981-1983 these gains were measured using Questioning Task 4, a 55-item criterion-referenced reasoning test designed specifically for the program by Dr. Virginia Shipman of the Educational Testing Service at Princeton, New Jersey.

Because of the success of the program during the 1981-82 and 1982-83 school years, Philosophy for Children was expanded to include a pilot group of third-grade students. A decision concerning the inclusion of all third-grade students was to be based on the outcome of an experimental implementation of the Pixie program in two of the district's eight third-grades. To measure the impact of the Philosophy for Children program on the creative development of third- and fourth-grade students in Lynbrook, Dr. Shipman designed and evaluated a nine-month experiment which included all 200 of Lynbrook's fourth-grade students and 36 third-grade students.
In order to measure the possible changes in the creativity and flexibility of the children in the experimental group, it was necessary to use an instrument other than the Q-4 test, which was designed to measure reasoning abilities in older children. Since creativity is a very broad label that can refer to a wide variety of different activities, it is important to define the specific type of creative thinking which is to be measured by the experiment. For this reason, Dr. Shipman designed an experiment which would measure ideational fluency and flexibility. These two types of creative thinking, as defined by Wallach and Kogan (1965), are closest to the types of creative thinking which are fostered by Philosophy for Children.

Ideational fluency is the ability to generate a number of appropriate associations to a particular stimulus in a given amount of time; ideational flexibility is the number of conceptual domains represented in the responses. To measure ideational fluency and flexibility, Dr. Shipman selected two instruments which have been widely used by the Educational Testing Service to assess creative development. Both measures, "What Can You Use It For?" and "What Could It Be?" have been found to be reliable measures for children of these age levels who are involved in Philosophy for Children programs.

The "What Could It Be?" task consists of four ambiguous black line drawings enclosed in a 1" x 2" rectangle. Students are instructed to list as many different things as they think the drawing can be; four minutes are provided to respond to each item. Similarly, on the "What Can You Use It For?" task, students are requested to record in four minute periods as many different uses as they can imagine for four familiar objects (a shoe, knife, button, and a coat-hanger).

In early October and again in early June, the tests were group administered during the regular class period. All 200 fourth-grade students were included in the sample, while the third-grade sample consisted of 32 students who were involved in the program and 36 randomly-selected third-grade students who did not participate in the program. For the third-grade sample, Dr. Shipman tested the hypothesis that the average difference in scores between pre- and post-test would be significantly greater for the program group.

All tests were hand-scored twice by Dr. Shipman, who evaluated the results based on two scores for each individual child. After calculating the total number of discrete responses a child has listed for each item, Dr. Shipman obtained a score for the Number of Appropriate Responses and a score for the Number of Non-Overlapping Categories. The Appropriateness of specific responses was determined by consultation with the tasks developed, repetitions, vague and/or irrelevant comments, and global
terms covering other responses (e.g., to hang clothes and to hang shirts) are not included. The second score, the Number of Non-Overlapping Categories, is a measure of the number of different conceptual domains a child references in his or her responses (e.g., body parts, plants, items of clothing). For the analysis of program effects, only students with data for both pre- and post-tests were included.

When scores of the third-grade experimental group were compared with those of the non-program third-graders, the differences were much more dramatic than originally anticipated. The students who had not participated in the Philosophy for Children program actually received lower scores on the post-test than they had on the pre-test, while those who were involved in the program made significant gains.

On the first test, "What Can You Use It For?", program students gave significantly more appropriate responses and were far superior in the variety of categories they listed. (See figure 1).

![Figure 1](image1)

Similarly, the results of the "What Could It Be?" test showed much greater improvements by program students in the number of appropriate responses as well as categories. (See figure 2).

![Figure 2](image2)

More striking though, is the fact that while those who were not involved in the program actually decreased their scores on the "Uses" test by over one point, the program children increased their scores by 6.78 (appropriate responses) and 6.13 (categories). In addition, the students who participated in the Philosophy for Children program increased their scores on the "Patterns" test by 5.44 responses and 4.3 categories, while the non-program students decreased by .1 responses and 1.67 categories.

Although only 20 percent of the non-program students increased their scores on "Uses" and only 25 percent increased on "Patterns," 94 percent of the program students improved on both tests.

Like the third-grade students, fourth-grade students who were involved in the program made significant improvements on both tests. Since there could not be a control group within the district (because every fourth-grade student participates in the Philosophy program) we could not make a statistical comparison of "program" and "non-program" students on this grade level. However, the overwhelming improvements made by the their-grade students who were involved in the experiment are evidence that the program does significantly enhance the cognitive performance of
students. Similar outstanding gains made by the fourth-grade support this conclusion, since previous research suggests that we cannot necessarily attribute such gains to age. Thus, in the present study, we have found that Philosophy for Children contributed to the significant increase in the cognitive performance of Lynbrook's third- and fourth-grade students.

GRADE 4

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES

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VARIETY OF CATEGORIES

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'WHAT CAN YOU USE IT FOR?'

NOTES
CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION,
John E. McPeck (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981, 179 pp.)

Critical thinking is now part of the mainstream of educational theory and practice. Special issues of national publications, conferences and state-wide efforts testify to the appeal of the movement to add higher-level cognitive skills to the curriculum at all educational levels. Five years ago the thinking skills movement was of limited scope; its agenda has now become a national priority. Although there has been much debate within the movement and among its followers over how thinking skills are to be taught, there has been little discussion of the desirability and the availability of such an approach in general. The rapid acceptance of the critical thinking movement’s educational goals has been prompted in part by pessimistic evaluations of the result of the last decade’s involvement in basic skills and in part by a resuscitation of such perennials in American education as progressivism and the call for an informed citizenry. At the level of the educational practitioner, thinking skills addresses the concern for a forward-looking pedagogy: education for the twenty-first century, or at least, meeting the thrust of a technologically driven economy and the challenge of America’s most recent competitors in the international marketplace.

But whatever the forces that prompt the concern, the engine that drives the movement is the availability of a variety of approaches to cognitive skills education developed over the last ten or fifteen years, ready to be put in place in the schools. What is noteworthy about these approaches is their diversity. They range from the perceptual-based methods of cognitive psychologists like Guilford and Bloom; from the creativity drill of thorough-going pragmatists like de Bono to the principled humanism of Philosophy for Children. Given this fundamental lack of agreement among theorists and practitioners, the relative absence of significant debate about the desirability and availability of thinking skills education in general is surprising. The lack of a real challenge within the educational community to the agenda of the critical thinking movement is most surprising given the lack of a clear theoretic paradigm for thinking skills education and given the conservatism of the educational establishment, the increasing realization that cognitive skills are diverse and topic-relative and the pointed attack on the plausibility of critical thinking skills education mounted by John E. McPeck.

In retrospect, McPeck’s critique of thinking skills as inappropriate for education reform was a non-starter—a voice crying in the wilderness. Not only was his message unwelcome, in light of the rapid growth of the thinking skills movement and the concomitant growth industry of academics playing the role of mentor for curriculum reevaluation in the 1980’s, but his critique suffered from many of the ills that the critical thinking movement had remedies for. Critics of his book quickly pointed out the flaws in the work, citing fallacies like non-sequitur, misrepresentation, hasty generalization and strawman. In addition his main thrust: that thinking is topic-specific and that no general area consistent with the educational goals of the thinking skills movement exists, was blunted by the counter claim that much of life’s problems were topic-heterogeneous. Decisions in political life, in practical life and in the application of the special disciplines seem to require an approach that transcends any particular educational milieu and thus requires skills that reflect the multi-dimensional nature of contemporary concerns. But much of the baby was lost with the bath water. For McPeck’s basic posture, albeit overstated and perhaps carelessly constructed, includes a realization of importance for educators.

McPeck’s basic argument is simple enough and reflects a perspectivet that has been recently maintained by philosophers like Toulmin, educational psychologists like Gardner and students of human nature like Gould. Thinking, on this view, is a family of procedures, not one, and the criteria by which thinking is evaluated are not to be found by ignoring the diversity, and then subjecting the refined thinking competence to a univocal measure. Rather, for thinking to be evaluated, instances must be closely examined in the context of their use and judged according to the standards internal to those very contexts. It is only as situated within some discipline or other that we can determine what thinking comes to in specific cases. This posture is crucial for the idea of critical thinking as McPeck sees it. Seeing critical thinking as “reflective skepticism,” he identifies the two most essen-
tial aspects of this perspective in a fashion that bodes ill for the critical thinking movement as, according to him, it is normally construed. The first of his claims is that reflective skepticism (critical thinking) is not merely descriptive of an attitude or even a process, but rather is normative, an evaluation of the outcome of the process of reflection.

Critical thinking, to use the familiar distinction, is not merely an activity; the phrase marks an achievement as well. This focus on the normative component of being a critical thinker, as opposed to, say, being a thoughtless skeptic, leads McPeck to his second and most characteristic claim. Since the norms for reflective skepticism express the standards in the field within which skepticism is employed, critical thinking must, of necessity, be field-relative. Critical thinking, as opposed to general skepticism, requires that claims be subjected to norms and these norms, epistemological for the most part, vary from endeavor to endeavor. Whence critical thinking and a fortiori, education for critical thinking can only occur internal to specific subject areas.

Using this basic insight as a platform, McPeck then goes on to attack many of the major approaches to critical thinking. These include the informal logic movement, the cognitive training approach of Edward de Bono and approaches that reflect the commitment to thinking as an aspect of reading skills development. As part of this latter attack he questions the adequacy of the measures of critical thinking, many of which seem indistinguishable from the measurement of higher level reading skills. His positive approach is then developed, based on this central claim. McPeck calls for education to move "forward to basics," that is, that the fields deemed most basic to the education of individuals be identified and that curriculum design and pedagogy in these central areas reflect the primacy of epistemology over logic.

This requires us to change "our conception of what it would mean to teach a subject . . . to include its epistemology as a fundamental component." (p. 157)

In such an educational design students "would learn not only what is thought to be the case in a given field (that is, the 'facts'), but also why it is so regarded." (loc. cit.) Such a program would require that "curriculum specialists from specific fields join forces with epistemologists who have an interest in those fields in order to develop epistemologically-oriented curricula for specific subjects and also to develop appropriate training methods for teachers." (p. 158)

An immediate consequence of this approach is that critical thinking "can only be taught as part of a specific subject and never in isolation." (loc. cit.) In a subject-specific context the standard apparatus of, for example, informal logic courses "would be developed in a more meaningful way as a by-product of the epistemological approach to subjects." (p. 159)

In what seems almost an afterthought, McPeck draws a further conclusion from his analysis. "One cannot think critically about X until one knows something about X. Experience has taught us, moreover, that elementary schools are fully occupied with their efforts to impart the three R's, together with the most elementary information about the world around them . . . The elementary schools are, in short, fully and properly engaged in attempting to provide students with the prerequisites of critical thinking." (p. 160) He then recommends against "trying to introduce critical thinking into elementary school curricula" despite evidence that critical thinking, in particular Philosophy for Children, is both possible and effective with elementary school children. (pp. 159ff) McPeck reminds us that "Children, after all, are capable of many things that better judgment often suggests postponing." (p. 159)

The relationship between McPeck's views and Philosophy for Children has been disregarded by the various discussions of McPeck's position. This is unfortunate since, by exploring Philosophy for Children as a method for cognitive development in young children, aspects of more general interest become apparent. McPeck disclaims any interest in what he calls the "dispositional aspects of critical thinking . . . how best to inculcate the disposition or propensity to use one's critical skills . . ." (p. 162). But an exploration of the conditions that induce and support the practice of critical thinking is not separate from critical thinking, but rather is central to it. McPeck attempts to distinguish the critical thinking skills from the disposition to employ them, but as Lipman makes clear throughout his work, the foundation of critical thinking is coextensive with those practices that initiate the child into critical thinking and support her endeavors. Lipman places as central to critical thinking the child's need to comprehend her environment and to see the significance of her experiences and of the practices in which she is engaged. Central to this search for significance within an educational setting is the development of a community committed to critical inquiry, the guidance of a supportive and open-minded teacher who serves as a model of critical inquiry and curriculum instruments that facilitate and structure the process of inquiring.

Dale Cannon and I, in our taxonomy of reasoning skills, follow Lipman by identifying the interpersonal dimension as essential to reasoning. Within this dimension are a number of abilities that are clearly not separable from critical thinking but are indeed central to it. These include: "responding thoughtfully to reason with reason . . . being willing to engage with others in rational discussion . . . critically reflecting on one's own opinions and reasons . . . demanding strong and relevant arguments before changing one's mind . . . speaking clearly, listening carefully, being
willing to clarify and analyze ... integrating different points of view ... being patient ...” (Thinking, 6:1, p. 31)

We summarize this dimension as: “the willingness to offer and respond to reasons, the impartial search for truth, a respect for the opinions of others and a commitment to making common sense.” (op. cit., p. 29) It is our contention that this dimension supports the other aspects of reasoning skills as the ground for their performance and that further such reasoning ought to include a philosophical dimension as well. That is, we maintain that philosophical issues are central to critical inquiry and are the best available forum within which such inquiry can take place.

This position, that the enterprise of developing interpersonal reasoning skills is crucial to critical thinking, implies the need for such skills development in whatever context critical thinking is to take place. The centrality of the interpersonal dimension in the process of engendering and supporting critical thought requires that such skills and attitudes be presupposed if the application of critical thought skills within the special disciplines and in the sophisticated ways that McPeck’s “forward to basics” envisions, is to take place. For if such skills are not part of the repertoire of the student, critical thinking is impossible and the incorporation of epistemological elements into the curriculum will only add a didactic, albeit epistemological, dimension to the subject areas content. For it is not epistemological principles that make for critical thinking, but rather the concern for epistemological issues. Such issues, at the higher levels of a discipline, are imbued with the special criteria growing out of the history and practice of that special discipline. But the application of these criteria in a thoughtful way requires a concern for reflection that can most happily be developed prior to the engagement with sophisticated issues within the special area studies. The essence of critical thought is an attitude that demands an objective exploration in the name of truth, and such an attitude can be readily formed by exploring issues of central concern that grow out of common human experience, for it is in this common human experience that we most often encounter those most crucial multidimensional issues that confront individuals in their active role as decision makers and as moral agents.

The Philosophy for Children program offers a grounding for critical thinking by introducing the child to the exploration of major concerns in her life as a student, friend and family member. She is presented with the image of thoughtful children and asked to join them in thoughtfulness. Her awareness of central issues growing out of her experience and a context within which these issues can be joined, is facilitated through the carefully structured universe of the philosophical children’s novel and the support of a well-trained teacher. The child is afforded an environment in which reasonableness is cherished and reinforced, and where philosophical and epistemological concerns are central. And all of this in conjunction with a plausible developmental sequence of the most basic tools common throughout critical thought (formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis and evaluative reasoning.)

It seems clear to me that McPeck’s position has a basic insight that should not be disregarded. Critical thinking, especially in the sense relevant to advanced study in the university, is not identical with a list of specifiable skills, for it requires the application of these skills to subject areas in ways that reflect the uniqueness of the epistemological issue within the area to be reflected upon. The reinterpretation of critical thinking skills within the epistemic framework of a discipline is crucial to sensible criticism within that discipline, and so no abstract budget of skills or drills in their application to trivial areas of ordinary life can be adequate to the application of critical thinking to the discipline under consideration. But McPeck’s failure to see criticism as a practice that requires support blinds him to the necessity for the sort of experience that will sensitizes the student to critical concern, especially in light of the disregard for the development of such skills, seemingly endemic to all levels of education. The issue for the thoughtful educator, impressed by the agenda of thinking skills education is: how can the critical perspective be introduced into the curriculum. “Forward to basics” is an interesting and important proposal that must be evaluated in light of college educators’ willingness to infuse philosophical perspectives into the major areas of undergraduate education.

Philosophy for Children, however, speaks to other concerns. It is a program of proved effectiveness that was initiated as a response to the impoverishment of the cognitive environment in pre-college education. Its goal is to sensitize both teachers and pupils, to, among other things, the richness of the epistemological dimension by offering a meaningful and well-constructed curriculum based on the philosophical issues inherent in children’s daily experience. Informal logic courses and applied philosophy in its many guises attempt to do the same for the education of undergraduates. Whether these approaches will be seen as temporary expedients—at some future time when teachers at all levels, having learned the lessons of Philosophy for Children and the informal logicians, internalize critical thinking concerns throughout the curriculum—of course, remains to be seen.

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George Bernard Shaw, as might be expected, saw problems with the Golden Rule. In his inimitable way, Shaw suggested, with not just a little glee, "Do not do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same."

One would not expect a book about moral education written by two psychologists to invoke Shaw's name and refer to his principle. Indeed, post-Kohlberg, it is hard even to think of a work in the converging fields of developmental psychology and moral training that would admit that things might be as complex (and as humorous) as Shaw suggests they are. This is why, given the oversimplification to which parents and educators have been subjected, that a book like *Bringing Up A Moral Child*, by Michael Schulman and Eva Mekler, is so refreshing and so important. It is a very practical how-to book that does not ignore the fact that the field (moral education) and the subject (children) are exceedingly complex.

*Bringing Up A Moral Child* is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the development of conscience in the child and suggests how that development might be encouraged and enhanced. In this part, the authors, in showing how their theories differ from other leading developmental approaches to moral education, contribute to the growth of criticism of the theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg.

Where the first part of the book deals with those characteristics that are somehow "right-making" i.e., that contribute to moral behavior and lead a child to be kind, just and responsible, the second part concentrates on characteristics such as jealousy, greed, and anger that work against the development of moral behavior. In this section, the authors make some very practical suggestions for dealing with these tendencies and channeling them into constructive paths.

The third part of *Bringing Up A Moral Child* takes the reader on a tour of the different "ages of childhood and covers...a number of common moral issues and dilemmas that children typically face at different ages." Here, the concerned parent and educator will find some helpful advice on dealing with sex, religion, drugs, and so on. The advice, however, is merely helpful unless it is seen as, in some sense, flowing from the more theoretical opening parts of the book. Seen that way, *Bringing Up A Moral Child* becomes a how-to-book that provides its own justification. Stated another way, *Bringing Up A Moral Child* is a book that, because of its emphasis on practice, is forced to deal with problems of theory and with problems of justification.

Schulman and Mekler, in the first
children. There is a long, and one would argue, ignoble tradition running from St. Paul through Hobbes to Freud (and more recently Kohlberg) that views the child in her pre-civilized or pre-developed state as either amoral or positively immoral. In its most blatant form, the argument goes that left unchecked, man's selfish nature would lead to the war of "each against every." Thus the task of the moral educator becomes that of putting a leash on and domesticating a vicious animal. In a less blatant form, the argument suggests that children must be led from a stage where they are concerned (only) with their own selfish desires to a stage where they can respond to the desires of others.

Schulman and Mekler reject the argument in any of its forms. Pointing to a large body of evidence (pp. 52-53), the authors suggest that the ability to empathize and to act altruistically based on that empathy is "... surprisingly common in children and appears to be an in-born capacity to recognize and (feel) other people's emotions." (p.9). Just as the suggestion was made previously that in terms of cognition, it is a mistake to view the child as cognitively distinct from the adult, the suggestion is made that it is a similar mistake to view the child as morally distinct from the adult. Rather, one of the prime tasks of the moral educator is to nurture wherever and whenever they are found, feelings of empathy and acts of altruism.

The final element, the last "stone," in learning to be a moral person, i.e., in concerning oneself with the well-being of others and in considering the rights of others "without favoritism or prejudice," (p. 6), comes when the individual begins reflecting on his/her internalized standards and begins the process of choosing which, if any, the individual will choose as his/her own. At this point, the child goes beyond a reflective acceptance—remember that parents should be explaining and justifying as the internalization procedure takes place—of parental principals to a formulation of his/her own principals (p. 82). If the parents have taken seriously their roles as explainers and justifiers, if they have talked with their children over an extended period of time about why they (the parents) hold the principles that they do, then the development of personal standards should exist on what Dewey would call a "continuum" with the internalization process. Simply, if things go as they should, conversation should develop from a set of justifications for parental principles to a set of principles that the child chooses for himself/herself and, by extension, for all reasonable persons.

The child one meets in Bringing Up A Moral Child is markedly different from the Piagetian or Kohlbergian child. Schulman and Mekler present us with a child who is significantly like the adult. That child is capable of reasoning well and responding to others with empathy and fellow feeling. The child, however, is not presented as a noble young savage. Rather, Schulman and Mekler refrain from romanticizing the young and suggest that children (like adults) have various tendencies which, if left unchecked, would make the world as "poor, solitary, nasty, brutal and short" as Hobbes' state of nature. The second part of Bringing Up A Moral Child deals with controlling those tendencies.

At times during that second part, Schulman and Mekler fall back on a "patness" that may be endemic to psychologists. A little girl with near-homicidal tendencies toward her twin sisters becomes a loving protector in two days (p. 126). A fourteen-year-old "Mr. Tough Guy" has his sarcastic tone eradicated by a favorite aunt "... appealing to his vanity and sense of humor" (p. 127). But that kind of smugness is atypical. For the most part, the authors are aware of the fact, which they so forcefully underscore in the first part of the book, that children and adults are complex creatures and that moral development is not something that occurs over night or with the wave of a hand. Schulman and Mekler recommend a mixture of discussion, firm rules, parental example and so on as elements in changing behavior. Not the least important elements are patience and persistence.

"The only way to succeed in influencing a bright and determined teenager is by communicating clearly and calmly that you will outlast him; that you are not interested in power over him for its own sake and are not out to harm him; that you are in fact, quite willing to tailor your program to suit his needs so long as he provides clear evidence that he has made progress toward the goals you have set; and that you believe that turning him into a caring person is the most important thing you can do for him and for the society in which you all live. He must see how important this is to you—that you will spend entire nights up with him if necessary, that you will take off from work to meet with teachers, that you will do whatever has to be done."

(pp.130-131).

The third part of the book deals with very practical problems of raising a moral child during a time when the schools and the church no longer fulfill the function of moral education that they once did. On the whole, it is a well-balanced extension of parts 1 and parts 2. Still, there are times when the authors seem a bit precipitous in their judgments. For example, the authors reject the Catholic Church's position on birth control and masturbation on the grounds that that position does not increase the "visible well-being of human populations" (p. 304). Even if the authors are right in their claim, they might be wrong to dismiss such a position in a single paragraph.

In another example, after spending nearly three hundred pages in showing that ethics should not be viewed as a matter of convention, Schulman and Mekler say, "neatness and cleanliness are conventional issues, not moral ones. They are matters of aesthetics, without any objectivity correct standard." (p. 276). One wonders why the authors did not at least suggest that aesthetic issues might in some ways be similar to ethical ones.

But problems such as those mentioned above are few in number and relatively trivial in importance. On the whole, Bringing Up A Moral Child is a significant and important work. It gives a good deal of theoretical support to a method of child-rearing that is valuable for the theoretician and the practitioner, in large part because it is knowledgeable about and respectful of the complexity that is the child.

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