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Burglar Bill lives alone with a house full of stolen property. Every night after supper he goes off to work, stealing things. Every dawn he comes home with his sack full of stolen goods and sits down to his breakfast of stolen toast and marmalade, and stolen coffee. Then he goes upstairs to go to sleep in his stolen bed.

One night, as he makes his usual round of break-ins, Burglar Bill sees a big brown box on the front step of a house he is about to burgle. Since his sack is already full of stolen things and it is almost dawn, he puts the box under one arm, swings his sack of stolen goods over his shoulder, and goes home for breakfast.

After Burglar Bill has had his stolen breakfast, something in the brown box begins to make a loud noise. Burglar Bill opens the box and discovers a baby inside. Thinking that he has picked up an abandoned child, Burglar Bill immediately begins tending to the needs of his new baby. Surprisingly, Burglar Bill shows himself to be a devoted and caring father.

All goes well until, having come home early one night to put his child to bed, Bill hears someone trying to burgle his own house. Putting on the light, he exposes the thief, who turns out to be a woman Bill recognizes from the *Police Gazette* as Burglar Betty. Bill introduces himself to Betty and the two burglars sit down to a snack of cocoa and ginger cookies.

Betty spots the baby clothing around Bill's house and soon Bill tells her about finding the abandoned baby. As it turns out, it was Betty herself who had left the baby on the doorstep of a house she was in the process of burgling. Soon Betty is happily reunited with her baby and she and Bill are making plans to get married. Before they get married, however, they return all their stolen goods, one item at a time, and then they resolve to live an honest life together.

* * *

Some of my favorite children's stories are written in a style I call "philosophical whimsy." Arnold Lobel is a master of this style. When, for example, he has Frog and Toad run from their terrifying experiences into Toad's house, he has Toad say, as he jumps into his bed and pulls the covers over his head, "Frog, I'm glad to have a brave friend like you." Frog returns the compliment as he jumps into the closet and shuts the door. Toad stays under the covers and Frog stays in the closet for a long time, "just feeling very brave together."

Lobel's whimsical characterization of that last scene in the story, "Dragons and Giants," heightens our interest in the question that runs through the whole story: "What is bravery?" It focuses special attention on the issue of whether one needs to be frightened to be brave and, at the same time, whether expressions of fear, such as hiding under the covers or in the closet cancel the claim to bravery. As we readers laugh at the thought of Frog and Toad in those circumstances "just feeling very brave together," we are moved to think about the complex role fear plays in being brave.

Whimsy is also important to the story of Burglar Bill. But this time the whimsy is not directed at the understanding of a difficult concept, such as bravery. This time the whimsy is aimed at encouraging us to think about the life of a full-time thief as if it were an almost boringly normal sort of middle-class life.

Of course it is the baby in the story who leads Burglar Bill and Burglar Betty back to a really normal life. So here is a story about the redemptive possibilities of family life and traditional values. But the story is also an exercise in empathy and moral imagination. So long as Burglar Bill can avoid all thought of what it must be like to be burgled, he can pursue his antisocial occupation with surprising equanimity. But when Burglar Betty tries to burgle him, he sees his profession in a different light. Moreover, once the possibilities of living a life in a family setting of love and care present themselves, he is moved to return the goods he has stolen and steal no more.

The whimsical "normalization" of the life of a burglar invites us to see thieves as wayward human beings, rather than as monsters or madmen. What they do is certainly wrong, but not beyond the possibilities of redemption and reform. This message may strike some readers as sentimental. On the other hand, the demonization of criminality so common in our society keeps us from recognizing the humanity we share with thieves and helps us to ignore or disguise some of the darker motivations we might otherwise find within ourselves as well.
Immanuel Kant’s announcement of the program of his lectures for the winter semester 1765-1766

There is always a certain difficulty involved in the instruction of young people, and it is this: the knowledge one imparts to them is such that one finds oneself constrained to outstrip their years. Without waiting for their understanding to mature, one is obliged to impart knowledge to them, which, in the natural order of things, can only be understood by minds which are more practiced and experienced. It is this which is the source of the endless prejudices of the schools—prejudices which are more intractable and frequently more absurd than ordinary prejudices. And it is this, too, which is the source of that precocious prating of young thinkers, which is blinder than any other self-conceit and more incurable than ignorance. This difficulty, however, is one which cannot be entirely avoided, and the reason is this. In an epoch which is characterized by an elaborately complex social organization, a knowledge of higher things is regarded as a means to advancement and comes to be thought of as a necessity of life. Such knowledge ought by nature, however, really be regarded merely as one of life’s adornments—one of life’s inessential beauties, so to speak. Nonetheless, even in this branch of instruction, it is possible to make public education more adapted to nature, even though it will not be possible to bring it into perfect harmony with it. The natural progress of human knowledge is as follows: first of all, the understanding develops by using experience to arrive at intuitive judgments, and by their means to attain to concepts. After that, the employing reason, these concepts come to be known in relation to their grounds and consequences. Finally, by means of science, these concepts come to be known as parts of a well-ordered whole. This being the case, teaching must follow exactly the same path. The teacher is, therefore, expected to develop in his pupil firstly the man of understanding, then the man of reason, and finally the man of learning. Such a procedure has this advantage: even if, as usually happens, the pupil should never reach the final phase, he will still have benefited from his instruction. He will have grown more experienced and become more clever, if not for school then at least for life.

If this method is reversed, then the pupil picks up a kind of reason, even before his understanding has developed. His science is a borrowed science which he wears, not as something which has, so to speak, grown within him, but as something which has been hung upon him. Intellectual aptitude is as unfruitful as it ever was. But at the same time it has been corrupted to a much greater degree by the delusion of wisdom. It is for this reason that one not infrequently comes across men of learning (strictly speaking, people who have pursued courses of study) who display little understanding. It is for this reason, too, that the academies send more people out into the world with their heads full of inanities than any other public institution.

The rule for proceeding is, therefore, as follows. Firstly, the understanding must be brought to maturity and its growth expedited by exercising it in empirical judgments and focusing its attention on what it can learn by comparing the impressions which are furnished by the senses. It ought not to venture any bold ascent from these judgments and concepts to higher and more remote judgments and concepts. It ought rather to make its way towards them by means of the natural and well-trodden pathway of the lower concepts, for this path will gradually take it further than any bold ascents ever could. But all this should be done, not in accordance with that capacity for understanding which the teacher perceives, or thinks he perceives in himself, and which he mistakenly presumes in
his pupils, but rather in accordance
with that capacity for understanding
which must of necessity be generated
in that faculty by the practice which
has just been described. In short, it is
not thoughts but thinking which the un-
derstanding ought to learn. It ought to
be led, if you wish, but not carried, so
that in the future it will be capable of
walking on its own, and doing so with-
out stumbling.

The peculiar nature of philosophy
itself demands such a method of teach-
ing. But since philosophy is strictly
speaking an occupation only for those
who have attained the age of maturity,
it is no wonder that difficulties arise
when the attempt is made to adapt it
to the less practiced capacity of youth.
The youth who has completed his
school instruction has been accus-
tomed to learn. He now thinks that he
is going to learn philosophy. But that is
impossible, for he ought now to learn to
philosophize. Let me explain myself
more distinctly. All the sciences which
can be learned in the strict sense of the
term can be reduced to two kinds: the his-
torical and the mathematical. To the
first there belong, in addition to his-
tory proper, natural history, philology,
positive law, etc. In everything histori-
cal, it is one's own experience or the
testimony of other people which con-
stitute what is actually given and which
is therefore available for use, and
which may, so to speak, simply be as-
similated. In everything mathematical,
on the other hand, these things are
constituted by the self-evidence of the
concepts and the infallibility of the
demonstration. It is thus possible in
each of knowledge of learning. That
is to say, it is possible to impress either
on the memory or on the understand-
ing that which can be presented to us
as an already complete discipline. In
order, therefore, to be able to learn
philosophy as well there must already
be a philosophy which actually exists in
the first place. It must be possible to
produce a book and say: "Look, here is
wisdom, here is knowledge on which
you can rely. If you learn to under-
stand and grasp it, if you take it as
your foundation and build on it from
now on, you will be philosophers."

Until I am shown such a book of
philosophy, a book to which I can ap-
pel, say, as I can appeal to Polybius in
order to elucidate some circumstance
of history, or to Euclid in order to ex-
plain a proposition of mathematics—
until I am shown such a book, I shall
allow myself to make the following re-
mark. One would be betraying the
trust placed in one by the public if,
instead of extending the capacity for
understanding of the young people
entrusted to one's care and educating
them to the point where they will be
able in the future to acquire a more
mature insight of their own—one would
be betraying the trust placed in one by
the public, if, instead of that, one were
to deceive them with a philosophy
which was alleged to be already com-
plete and to have been excogitated by
others for their benefit. Such a claim
would create the illusion of science.
That illusion is only accepted as legal
tender in certain places and among
 certain people. Everywhere else, how-
ever, it is rejected as counterfeit cur-
rency. The method of instruction, pe-
culiar to philosophy, is zetetic, as some
of the philosophers of antiquity ex-
pressed it. In other words, the method
of philosophy is the method of inquiry.

It is only when reason has already
grown more practiced and only in
certain areas, that this method be-
comes dogmatic, that is to say, decisive.
The philosophical writer, for example,
upon whom one bases one's instruc-
tion, is not to be regarded as the
paradigm of judgment. He ought
rather to be taken as the occasion for
forming one's own judgment about
him, and even, indeed, for passing
judgment against him. What the pupil
is really looking for is proficiency in
the method of reflecting and drawing
inferences for himself. And it is that
proficiency alone which can be of use
to him. As for the positive knowledge
which he may also perhaps come to
acquire at the same time—that must be
regarded as an incidental conse-
quence. To reap a superabundant har-
vest of such knowledge, he needs only
to plant within himself the fruitful
roots of this method.

If one compares the above method
with the procedure which is commonly
adopted and which differs so much
from it, one will understand a number
of things which would otherwise strike
one as surprising. For example: why is
there no other kind of specialized
knowledge which exemplifies so many
masters as does philosophy? Many of
those who have learned history, juris-
prudence, mathematics and so forth,
nonetheless modestly disclaim that
they have learned enough to be able
to teach the subject themselves. But why,
on the other hand, is it rare to find
someone who does not in all serious-
ness imagine that, in addition to his
usual occupation, he is perfectly able
to lecture on, say, logic, and moral
philosophy, and other subjects of the
kind, should he wish to dabble in such
trivial matters? The reason for this
divergence is the fact that, whereas in
the former science there is a common
standard, in the latter science each
person has his own standard. It will
likewise be clearly seen that it is con-
trary to the nature of philosophy to be
practiced as a means to earning one's
daily bread—the essential nature of
philosophy is such that it cannot con-
sistently accommodate itself to the
craze of demand or adapt itself to the
law of fashion—and that it is only
pressing need, which still exercises its
power over philosophy, which can con-
strain it to assume a form which wins it
public applause.
INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: TWO APPROACHES

N.S. Iulina

In the last two decades very important discussions in educational thinking around the world have focused on the state of education at the crossroads of the 20th and 21st centuries and on the need to ensure that young people live in harmony with each other, the social surroundings, nature and technology. Many countries, in the 1980's, embraced "Education in the 21st Century" programs. In the beginning of the 1980's, a project for educational reform was published and discussed in our country but nothing came of it. Discussions on educational strategies focused on the universally acknowledged "rifts" between the traditional "long lasting" educational system designed for a relatively stable situation and the quickly changing and more complicated social structure into which the new generation is entering, between education directed toward the acquisition of as much knowledge as possible and the snowballing effect of increasing information; between aiming at a narrow specialization and a need for an integrated systems approach; between a cultural and regional approach to education and the need in the modern world for one standard of education.

According to UNESCO, the "Roman Club," of cultural and educational organizations, solutions for global problems lie directly in the elimination of rifts and with the task of providing a contemporary education to mankind. A number of different ideas emerged as a result of these discussions. It was generally recognized that the goal of education should not just be limited to the acquisition of information but should teach necessary skills for independent, critical thinking, to enable the intellect to become flexible in adapting to new forms of knowledge and to provide social and moral maturity. Such an approach is characteristic for generating "innovative," "developed," "critical" and "practical" ideas.

It is not our intention to examine the levers which can help to change education from its well worn routine towards realizing this goal. We would like to limit our study to only one trend in educational thinking: In a number of countries a reevaluation on the value of philosophy is taking place and the practice of using the potential of philosophy in education is becoming more widespread.

Philosophy has many advantages in comparison to other subjects. Its ever problematic nature, sensitivity to paradox and antinomy, criticism, allowance of polyvariant conclusions, reflective use of logic, sound argument and the universal nature of philosophical categories of education are valuable qualities for generating flexible, pliable, non-dogmatic thinking. A curious parallel can be made here: At the crossroads of the 20th and 21st centuries, philosophy is praised for the precise characteristics for which it was often criticized by scholars who prided themselves in the "exactness" of their science.

The idea of introducing philosophy in education is not being disputed. The debates center on the conception and methods of this education. In 1991-92, I had the opportunity to attend the International Congress of the Association of Professors of Philosophy, in which an important role was played by the theoretical and methodological problems of philosophical education. Two approaches to philosophical education were presented at the Congress - more precisely, two approaches on how to introduce non-philosophers (school children and university students) to philosophy.

The first approach, which we will conditionally call the cultural informational approach, has been used for a long time in lyceums and gymnasiums in Europe and is based on the teaching of historical and philosophical culture and classical texts. The curriculums are based on the selection of certain concepts for which corresponding excerpts from classical philosophy are selected. Instruction usually begins in the upper grades and lasts one to two years.
The second approach, which we will call the actively problematic one, draws participants into problem solving and philosophizing, i.e. it acquaints them with philosophy not from outside but from within, using ordinary, everyday language from the start. To better illustrate these two approaches, Paul Caldwell from the Manchester Polytechnic Institute, used the metaphor "teaching to tango." In order to learn how to tango you can, for example go to a lecture on the history of dance or famous dancers. It is doubtful, that one can expect to learn to dance in this way. You may, however, do something else: while dancing with the student, the teacher can demonstrate how to dance the tango, teaches the rules, correct movements and thus help the student learn the essence of the dance while simultaneously creating a new step. Similarly, the history of philosophy will not teach a person to philosophize when the person has not yet learned to solve even the simplest problems.

Both these approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. The first approach places the participant within the flow of cultural and philosophical history, teaches respect of intellectual heroes, and enables, through the juxtaposition of various concepts, non-dogmatic historical thinking. But this approach has its minuses: The history of philosophy represents a powerful authority which inhibits initiative in the neophyte. The language of philosophers of the last century demands interpretation and translation, anthologies are inevitably ethnocentric, and the choice of readings is arbitrary, etc.

When compared with the first approach, the second stands at a disadvantage in the teaching of cultural self identity and historical reflection. But it has other advantages: Philosophical thinking of the past is not presented as museum exhibits but as universally significant problems which have a relationship to life experience and which enable the neophyte to see how philosophy "works" and how it can be more easily understood. There is a compromise approach which attempts to combine the advantages of the two approaches while neutralizing their disadvantages. We will not dwell on these since our main task is to state our position.

An opinion exists that the two approaches reflect stylistic and typological differences that originated in the 20th century between the "continental" and the English speaking philosophies. The cultural information approach typical for "continental" philosophy evolves from an educational system where "discourse with culture," knowledge of intellectual traditions and their heroes and relationships to philosophical theories as unique cultural compositions were always significant components in European cultural self identity. The actively problematic approach is more typical to the philosophy in English-speaking countries and its active and pragmatic principle is aimed at the modern (modern problems and methods of solution, evaluating the philosophers of the past on their ideas that work today, etc.)

It's true that this opinion is only a partial one. In reality, both approaches have ancient roots and both belong to the European cultural tradition. It makes sense to make a small historical diversion here.

Greek thinkers were quite aware of the relationship between how philosophy has to be taught and the understanding of philosophy. Socrates, who used dialogue (speaking) in education and originated from a problematic understanding of philosophy, considered that truth can be achieved through joint argument. In modern terms his philosophy could be called "critical" and the method of teaching "non-authoritarian."

As a result, the Socratic method of dialogue though never disputed, was not widely practiced. Instead the history of philosophy took the path towards creating a monologues, system based, didactic and, by its very essence, authoritarian philosophy. This philosophy dictated a corresponding form of education. Thus, philosophical education couldn't be anything else but an almost exact "study" of the texts of great wise men. The three subjects used for transmitting philosophical knowledge—wise man, teacher and public—were separated from each other and formed a hierarchical structure. A better example of this type of authoritarian and hierarchical relationship between the "classics" and those that studied them is the didacticism of the Marxist Leninist philosophy in USSR. As long as Marxist philosophy was presented in a quasi-religious manner as "the pinnacle of human thought," it could be studied, learned, memorized but never turned into an object for a "Socratic dialogue" which assumes a joint, free search for truth with the teacher, the authority of strong argument and a right to have an opinion.

At the crossroads of the 19th and 20th centuries, especially in the first decade of the 20th Century, Europe and America witnessed a process which could be defined as a "crisis of classical elite education." John Dewey, in his book, Democracy and Education, published in 1915, suggests that the success of education for future generations of democratic societies depends on the extent to which the schools can mold reflective skill and independent and critical thinking. Innovators in philosophy who rebelled against enforcing "great systems" have increasingly been focusing their attention around problems. The shift to problems became apparent when the history of philosophical thought began to be stated not in the form of history of systems and theories but in the form of history of problems. V. Windelband, as is well known, who wrote a history of the philosophical system, spoke about the sensibility of this approach and later this idea was propagated by N. Gartman. The shift to new historiography also occurred in English-speaking countries. Around 1910-11, J. Moore conducted a course of study called "Some Principal Problems of Philosophy," and B. Russell published his book Problems of Philosophy in 1912.

In the beginning of the 1920's, the German educator Leonard Nelson organized a school for children and adults where teaching (of children and adults) was based on the method of the
"Socratic dialogue," and where students were not taught philosophy but how to philosophize. In 1933, the school was closed by the Nazis because of its democratic educational principles, and its documents summarizing the experiment were destroyed during the war.1

In the later post-war period, the idea of introducing philosophy as a legitimate subject into the school curriculum began to be widely discussed and while some educators put this idea into practice, it was sporadic and experimental.

The situation abruptly changed when Prof. Matthew Lipman and his colleagues from the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (Montclair, USA),2 created the "Philosophy for Children" course. We will stop here to provide a more detailed account of this occurrence since it was the first time in the history of the philosophy of education (both in schools and in higher education) that a complete and well-defined concept was developed which had already been approved in several diverse regions of the world and had already demonstrated its practical effectiveness.

In 1974, Prof Lipman wrote a philosophically saturated novel for 10-12 year old children, Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, which was accompanied by an extensive teacher's manual. The success of this material motivated Lipman and his colleagues to create a course on philosophy directed at teaching children at school. At the present time, a whole series of supporting materials have been produced as well as children's texts and teachers' manuals (total volume - 4,000 pp.). A great deal of scholarly work has been published3 and a specialized journal, Thinking, that examines international experiences in teaching philosophy to children4 is being issued. These achievements were summarized at the International Council for "Philosophical Inquiry with Children." (Madrid).5

While relying on contemporary educational scholarship ("developing education"), children's psychology and cognitive sciences, Lipman and his colleagues propose an original and effective method of transmitting philosophical knowledge to children.

The course is built on the natural inquiry of children on the meaning of their surroundings (why, questions), the age variability of such questioning and the stimulation of curiosity in older children when such curiosity usually diminishes. It doesn't stress the learning of specific philosophical information, such as the history of philosophy, but on philosophizing, on solving problems that concern children in their everyday lives and that are personally important to them. The main objective is to teach the child to recognize the philosophical aspects of life, to reason correctly and logically and to instill rational, critical thinking skills. The course is systematic nature and aims at a sequential development of reasoning skills. Beginning at ages 6-7 till the end of school, children learn philosophically sound reasoning in thinking, language, nature, logic, ethics, literature, art and social sciences. The course has a spiral structure: The same problem appears in progressively more complicated contexts while advancing from grade to grade. The originators of the course deliberately rejected the idea of creating a philosophy text (a textbook always represents authoritarian power for the child). Instead, they prepared seven philosophically saturated narratives for children in which child protagonists discuss philosophical problems with their friends and adults in a comprehensible language.6 By personifying philosophical problems the children are able to understand their essence through a playful method. The classroom is transformed into an informal "community of inquiry" conducting a "Socratic dialogue," the goal of which is a communal search for truth (accordingly, the traditional roles of the teacher as "judge" and "expert" change to the roles of stimulator, organizer and co-participant of this search). The structure of the lesson which is based on the principle of a "Socratic dialogue," stimulates the development of discussion skills by searching for stronger argument and learning ethics and discussion etiquette. The originators of this course believe that the organization of classroom work based on the "Socratic Dialogue" principle, more precisely on the polylog, is an optimal form for the individualization of personality within a group and for shaping moral and legal consciousness in children. All of these are considered to be most important qualities for members of a democratic society.

The educational effectiveness of the "Philosophy for Children" course was established worldwide. The program is successfully practiced in more than 5,000 schools in the USA and is used as a model in "Educational Programs in the year 2000" projects. It was the focus of attention in many international congresses and conferences, translated into 15 languages, and presently introduced in 25 countries where successful centers of philosophy for children have introduced philosophy into school curriculums. Similar centers now exist in all the former Socialist states. In giving the educational content of the course high marks, the Commission on Education of the European Parliament has recommended it for school curriculums in European countries.

The acceptance of this course in America, Europe, Asia, Africa, countries of diverse cultures and systems of education, can be attributed to its great effectiveness for education in schools. Children who have completed the philosophy classes improved 36% more in mathematical reasoning than those children who have not completed the course, while their success grows by 66%. It is significant that the philosophy introduced in the course is not locked into any kind of doctrine or "ism," and is based on common cultural values - rationalism, humanism and democracy. And, finally, it is open for adaptation in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

It is reasonable to speak about the particular urgency of incorporating the "Philosophy for Children" into school curriculums in Russia. The urgency does not only lie in this course's potential for developing the child's intellect but also in the shaping of rational
and critical thinking, resistant to mythology, dogma and obscurantism. The movement toward building a democratic society in our country faces significant problems, many of which occur as a result of a long term domination of mythological and dogmatic ideology in generations of people resulting in the suppression of the ability for rational and critical thinking. Insufficient resistance to the rubbish (both local and foreign), that fills our spiritual market today attests to the fact that during the time of "pere­stroika," there was no significant liberat­ing of the mind.

There is a danger that the new generation will be influenced by new myths. This danger can be decreased through an education which will enable free individuals to develop necessary skills for independent logical and correct reasoning and to accept social and moral responsibility.

Our premise for the urgency in incor­porating "Philosophy for Children" into the educational system of our country is not just based on our own estimation of the conceptual and practical nature of this course. Between 1991 and 1993, The Institute of Philosophy from the Russian Academy of Sciences approved the theoretical and educational content of the course and developed a concept for adapting it to the sociocultural particularities of Russia and the semantics of the Russian language. An ongoing active seminar was held and conceptions of the course were discussed at the Department of Philosophy, Moscow State University while divisions from the Academy of Philosophical Sciences prepared articles for scientific journals. A number of specialists were trained in the USA and participated in international seminars. Work has begun on retraining school teachers for an exper­imental introduction of teaching the Course in our schools. The Institute of Philosophy created a self-supporting center "Philosophy for Children" which has, as its main objective, the translation and publication of special educational materials for teaching philosophy in schools, training of specialists in philosophy and the retraining of teachers, and conducting experimental testing of philosophical lessons in schools.

—Translated by Marina Cunningham

NOTES
1. In 1981, in Germany, a student of Nelson Gustav Hekman published a book Gesprach (Schroedel) in which he attempted to establish some conceptual and didactic principles of his teacher.
2. The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children. Montclair, USA.
7. There is data showing that our children rank 53rd in the world in the development of intellect. Psychologists note that low self esteem and uncertainty are typical characteristics in our children.
UNIVERSITIES ARE EXPERIENCING difficulties with the learning and motivations of students. This has resulted in high failure rates in some faculties and institutions, and concern amongst lecturers about the standard of knowledge being reproduced in students. Students seem unwilling to think things through, question or understand adequately. Many lecturers have experienced students asking “just tell me what to write” or “tell me what to say and I’ll say it.” Students seem to expect to be able to learn most of what they need by rote or to lack the skills or the motivation to learn in other ways.

There could be many reasons for this, such as the fear amongst students that they will not have a chance of getting a job or a good job so that they just want to get a qualification without too much fuss and get out and get a job. The problem with this is that things just don’t work like that. Understanding cannot be adequately achieved without some questioning, thinking things through, looking into them more deeply. It may also be that school has not given them sufficient opportunity to know how to question, inquire and think through ideas.

Thinking well, the substance of understanding, has traditionally been associated with the discipline of logic, but logic, particularly formal logic, often appears too removed from everyday matters to be of much use. It seems too cumbersome to apply to arguments and understanding in any workable way. Logic might be a very useful tool to have but few are going to have the time or the inclination to pick through a piece of text and determine its logical structure in terms of syllogisms and the varieties of falsification and so on. These are not the sorts of things that would really help students’ understanding in a way that appeals to them.

Many aspects of argument are implicit in scientific method; however, what students do not appear to know, is how to examine and think through the method of scientific inquiry from a meta level of questioning. They do not appear to have the level of self-consciousness, the understanding of their own reasoning processes, required to bring about understanding and questioning on this level. This is the level at which understanding of scientific method and the use of logic and flexibility in applying these is possible. While I can only speculate as to the causes of the problem of student malaise I am able to suggest ways in which it can be approached, based on the method of philosophical inquiry from Philosophy for Children.

The method of philosophical inquiry is at once more flexible and more approachable to most students than logic as such, and covers a greater range of thinking, negotiation and communications skills. It involves students in externalizing their thoughts, benefiting from the thoughts of other students and examining both, in a way that accesses and exposes faulty reasoning as well as a whole pattern of thinking that students may have become limited by. It is perhaps important to emphasize here that philosophical inquiry refers to a method rather than content. Using philosophical inquiry in this sense does not involve teaching the history of philosophy or ideas as such, but engaging with the significant ideas within and relevant to a discipline, in an inquiring and open way.

Using philosophical inquiry requires particular attention to teaching method in order to create an appropriate, safe environment in which students feel free to explore ideas, question and think through ideas. Traditional styles of teaching at universities do not necessarily offer these opportunities. They often employ textual material that is closed and authoritative in a definitive way. Students are faced with a whole discipline of established knowledge, full of apparently obvious self-explanation into which they are unable to situate themselves. They can only attempt to accept it. At the same time, simple acceptance fails to produce adequate understanding.

University teaching is intended above all to inform. It draws on a vast store of research and development of a knowledge base. Science now appears...
so definitive in its authority that students find little to question from their perspective. And yet what we want most, in line with the goal of higher education, is to produce autonomous, thinking students. How can knowledge be presented in such a way as to bring about a greater level of inquiry in the minds of most students? How can we bring them to understanding rather than just merely an ability to repeat what they have been told?

**INDIVIDUAL AWARENESS**

At the end of his extensive study of Australian tertiary students, John Biggs asks, "How do students come to know about their own learning processes? How can they use that knowledge so that they may learn more effectively. Those are the questions with which future researchers should be concerned...so that...both classroom and lecturer will become more enriching environments for students."

Effective learning strategies are strongly linked to good reasoning and both require an awareness of self and how one functions as an individual in relation to the context of learning. We each have different emphases and styles - some are more interested in the workings of things than of ideas while others are entranced by ideas and not at all interested in pulling things apart. There are many ways in which approaches to learning can be stylized and there are many different approaches. The point is, however, that it is important for students to know as much as they can about how they learn. It is also important that educators present learnings in as many different ways as possible so that they are able to cater to more of the differences in student approaches to learning.

**ENTERING INTO A DISCOURSE**

Besides self-awareness in this sense there is also the individual need to be positioned, to have a role, a place in the broader context. Students' failure to understand and even to repeat what they have been given to learn is above all a failure to find meaning and to know their own relation to what they are learning. In order to become professionals, students have to enter into a discourse which precedes them and goes beyond them. The discourse includes not only the theoretical body of the discipline but also the practices and means of communication within that discipline.

Many disciplines require symbolic/mathematical means of communication but these must be translatable into a less formal discourse which requires a good understanding of the meaning of the symbolic communication. Any symbolic communication is a representation, a coded classification system which presupposes an understanding on the part of the sender and the receiver. The sender condenses the communication into coded form and the receiver decodes, translating it into the larger framework of meaning which it presupposes.

The discourse includes the coded communication system but also the broader meanings embedded within it. Students appear to be caught up in attempting to come to terms with the coded symbolic language without broadening their understanding in relation to the discourse as a whole within which the coded symbolic form has meaning. While students cannot learn everything contained within the broader discourse they need to know how to explore it, come to terms with different aspects of it, to know what to treat historically, what to treat as "rule of thumb," working knowledge that has been thoroughly researched and that which is based on successful practice and so on. They need access to the big picture as well as an idea of how the details—specific formulas, methods and so on—fit into it.

They require a flexible means of negotiating their way around a discourse and an awareness of its different aspects. In order to do this they need skills such as working from the specific problem in coded form to the set of relations that problem is concerned with, the broader context of meaning within which to seek to address a variety of needs and contextual limitations and they need a method whereby this can be achieved.

**THE CONTEXT OF TOOLS OF THINKING AND LEARNING**

Some of the tools of thinking that will help students in this process are identifying assumptions, establishing criteria, recognizing concepts, definitions and their parameters, determining how and when to alter those parameters and most important, an understanding of how they are defining concepts, seeing criteria and what assumptions they are applying to new knowledge. Many university students are unable to say what a concept is, let alone how to identify and assess the importance of a concept and its role in a particular context of knowledge. This sort of understanding is more reliant on meta-knowing, knowing on the level of self-consciousness by teasing out the underlying framework of how knowledge is put together similar to the way in which grammar is used to understand how language functions. We do not appreciate how important such meta-level comprehension is to understanding in the hard sciences.

Our attempts to understand involve bringing what we already know and applying it to new knowledge. What we know comes from a variety of sources - hearsay and opinion from people we know, the media, and at times from teachers, as well as mathematical and scientific knowledge which we have in a rudimentary form from schooling. Students in tertiary education need to know how to tell the difference between belief and what is known with more certainty and how to see and place more certain knowledge within a realistic picture or framework.

Knowledge is often changing and at the same time scientific knowledge is regarded on an intellectual level as absolute truth. The line between belief and absolute truth then appears as an extreme and obvious one but is rarely so straightforward. While students may know intellectually that beliefs are different from truths they are often unable to distinguish when they are applying a belief from when they are applying an established "truth" and to see the fine line between the two.

Students need experience in dealing with these distinctions without be-
ing forced to have their deepest beliefs criticized. They need to see for themselves what is effective and what is not in certain sorts of contexts and this comes from being given the opportunity, being placed in a context where ideas can be discussed, challenged and thought through without the student themselves being threatened or attacked for the beliefs they hold.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH DIALOGUE

Students need access to those who know more than they do, the opportunity to discuss ideas with others who they know are knowledgeable, however, they need also to try out ideas that those more knowledgeable have already established the irrelevance of and surpassed. It may seem that this would require allowing students to make all sorts of mistakes and waste time reinventing the wheel but this is not the case. There is a simple way in which this can be made available to students in any discipline.

Discussion classes where students feel safe to raise apparently "stupid" ideas in a way that lecturers could facilitate the process of dealing with these sorts of questions, inquiries and ideas would be extremely beneficial and actually save time for students and lecturers. Rather than taking the approach of merely setting students straight, correcting them and explaining to them, an emphasis on the exploration of ideas would benefit higher education greatly. These sorts of processes tend to be available to Arts students to a far greater extent than they are to science, commerce, engineering, architecture and students in other hard disciplines. But they are no less important in these disciplines and these are the disciplines experiencing the biggest problems with students.

John Biggs' study revealed that there is a greater evidence of deeper learning processes in students in Arts than in the sciences. This would appear to be connected to the greater opportunities in Arts subjects for students to think more deeply and discuss ideas with others. Discussion, especially well-facilitated discussion, allows an idea, topic or issue to be looked at from a number of different angles, situated in relation to and distinguished from other relevant issues or ideas allowing understanding in much greater depth. While Arts tutorials could also be improved, the importance of holding tutorials which allow and facilitate thinking is paramount in the sciences.

THE VALUE OF QUESTIONING

Questioning has a number of significant roles to play. Firstly, it engages us with that which we are questioning, bringing us into relation to it. As soon we start to raise a question about something we have begun to take ourselves deeper into it. We are no longer simply functioning on the level of implicit thinking where we read something and then think "okay, got that," when all we often have is a vague glug. It is when we try to repeat what we have read and to make sense of it by looking at it from different angles that we really make use of the time we spent reading. To make sense of something we often ask questions.

Secondly, questioning helps to give direction to our thinking. We are looking for something in particular once we have asked a question, we have broken down the task of understanding into manageable units and we make our thinking capacities work for us by giving them something specific to look for. In this way we can usefully employ our highly refined perceptual and recognition skills to time-saving advantage.

Thirdly, questioning allows the gaps in knowledge to appear. We can then see what we know and what we don't know, what we had assumed and is holding us up. This is the individual dimension of knowledge gaps but there is also benefit in students seeing that a discourse does not have all the answers. A discourse, which is a knowledge base or body of knowledge built up over many years, decades, even centuries, is never closed. It never possesses all the final answers and ultimate truth and it should be seen in terms of its limits, the questions it does not answer or answer adequately should also be open for discussion.

Seeing a discourse in this way also helps students to find a relation to it and experience its efficacy as well as attempt to understand its "truths." Science requires adventurous thinking as well as knowledge of how things have been understood and done up until now.

UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTION AND MEMORY

Most of us go around with the idea that what we perceive is what is there. The value of having an awareness of the editing process involved in perception cannot be under-estimated. It is by now well known that perceptions do not present the truth or all that can be said about a situation. My perceptions are different from yours depending on what is important to me and to you. While we share aspects of a situation this may not be apparent unless the differences are recognized and drawn out; otherwise we end up with two apparently opposed interpretations.

Knowledge of perception as an editing process rather than accurate representation is often intellectually accepted but how to deal with the implications of what it actually means for our relations with others and our understanding requires more than this. An adequate understanding of the implications of this involves confronting different perceptions and seeing how to relate them in a context where differences can be brought out and played with.

Teaching about perception is also relevant I believe, for today's students so that they have an understanding on a number of levels—intellectual, research and interpersonal levels. This will also draw out the significance of how we conceptualize in ordering perception and making sense of things which provide the framework for our fabric of understanding. A further benefit of considering perception is that perception issues often relate to and bring out the character and adequacy of memory strategies. We all know the importance of memory in
learning and it seems trite to even mention memory strategies in the context of reasoning but what makes us remember things, and how we individually structure our memory bank is relevant in that it also affects what we notice and how we structure our thinking.

One of the most important factors influencing memory is meaning. When an idea means something to us we are more likely to remember it. And if we have considered it from a variety of angles then we have a better sense of what that idea is about and the brain has more things to connect it to. Connection is fundamental to the way in which the brain orders information thus influencing the efficiency of memory and understanding.

The points I have outlined here are intended to assert the relevance of philosophical inquiry as a teaching method in today's universities. I believe such an approach to learning could be valuably combined with other innovations in teaching which can actually increase not only the efficiency of learning but also the speed at which students can acquire new knowledge. As education costs increase solutions need to be found which can produce better understanding as well as a smaller time frame within which it can be generated.

The biggest cost to education is the waste involved in students not knowing and using their own learning capacities so that they rely less on the word of their lecturers and disciplines. A greater level of confidence in the students' abilities will go a long way.³

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**NOTES**

1. John Biggs carried out a study of Australian Universities for the Australian Council of Educational Research based on a framework he developed which looks at students' learning and motivation in terms of deep and surface structure. He found that science students in particular, tend to rely more on surface than deep approaches and that there is a need for the development of metacognitive skills which would "deepen their approaches to learning, which in turn would increase the structural complexity of their learning, and the amount of satisfaction derived from it." Research Monograph Student Approaches to Learning and Studying ACER, Melbourne, 1987 (page 127).

2. Biggs, ibid., p. 129.

3. I am continuing to test the value of the Study Process Questionnaire as an indication of students' level of learning as well as using it as a tool for formally assessing the value of philosophical inquiry in deepening students' learning, in my teaching at the Centre for Liberal and General Studies at the University of New South Wales.
THE RECENT VOLUME on fuzzy logic by Baart Kosko (1944, pp. 69-78) features a chapter entitled "Aristotle vs. the Buddha." There "Aristotle" essentially stands for "either/or," and "the Buddha" for "both-and." Although I do not concentrate on fuzzy logic, that chapter title could be my subtitle. Whereas I fully recognize the necessity and usefulness of classical logic in cases where it is called for, it can be mentally stifling – even crippling – beyond its legitimate domain of application. Indeed, one might even question whether Aristotle himself has always obeyed his own teaching about bivalent truth values. For instance, when in the Nicomachean Ethics he advocates the golden mean, like valor rather than cravenness or foolhardiness (McNeill & Freiberger, 1993, p. 56), how does that fit his tertium non datur, the stipulation of the excluded middle?

My theme is somewhat broader though than pure logic. It centers on the question "In which cases is (postformal) relational and contextual reasoning (RCR) more appropriate than Piagetian formal operations (which are based on classical logic):" Thence I discuss in turn the logic of Piagetian formal operations, RCR, and its appropriate use.

Piagetian Formal Operations
Most persons who have a little knowledge of classical logic will at least be aware that according to that logic an entity cannot at the same time be A and B (non-contradiction), and that indeed it has to be either A or B (excluded middle). However, classical logic involves further assumptions, even if they are not stated so often (e.g., Harris, 1987; Kainz, 1988). We will briefly recall them by way of discussing the Piagetian task: "Which variables codetermine the frequency of a pendulum, (a) the weight, (b) the amplitude, or (c) the length of the suspension?"

The independent variables (a), (b), and (c) are separable, that is intrinsically independent from each other. In other words, the weight stays the same whatever the amplitude, etc. These variables are well-defined and time-independent (at least in the short run). Furthermore, the relationships are time-reversible. The pendulum can be stopped at any time, and the measurement started afresh without endangering consistency of the results. In addition, the relationships between the variables commute, i.e. the result is independent from the order of the measurements. Finally, the result can be stated in binary form: A given variable codetermines the frequency [c] or not [a, b]. Therefore, the answer can be found by means of the 16 binary formal operations, which are at the base of Piagetian formal operations. Hence these operations are sufficient in this case, and RCR is not called for to solve this particular task.

RCR at Work
As to the differences of RCR (which is also called complementarity reasoning) with respect to Piagetian operations, let us proceed inductively: We first look at a task in the form of an interview and analyze a particular RCR response, then discuss the components of RCR, deal with its development (more responses), and finally take note of some applications.

Here then is an RCR task about a report on a Three Mile Island/Chernobyl-type accident in a nuclear power station:

The TV news reported on an accident in a nuclear power station. The main cooling pump had stopped working, and the back-up pump had not started. The emergency shutdown unfortunately did not work either. As if this were enough, the operating crew had become aware of the danger rather late, and in addition had underestimated it. All of a sudden the
温度升高。一根蒸汽管破裂并泄漏了放射性蒸汽。

**What thoughts of yours are triggered by this news?**

Here is a first response:

In this accident technical and human failure are interconnected. One has to look at the whole thing as a system, the plant and the operating crew. And one has to study the mutual interaction, the type of effects they have on each other. One really wants to train crew members with the help of a sophisticated simulator so that they become aware of the many ways in which something can go wrong, they experience their individual and collective reactions, and learn how to assess such situations as well as how to deal with them successfully. In such simulations the psychological stress must of course also be generated, not just the sequence of technical events. It is precisely such a chain reaction of technical and human malfunctioning which is so hard to foresee. By the way, I would hire only such persons who are aware of the dangers involved and are ready to face them.

Note the vast difference of this response with a casual everyday answer like “It was a technical failure” or “It was a human error.” What are commonalities and differences with respect to Piagetian operations? As regards commonalities, one observes in particular the systematic approach, the formulation of hypotheses, the search for effective “variables,” and the tendency to generalize. With respect to differences the underlying logic is clearly recognized as being not the same: The sequence of events is not reversible, the different interventions of the crew and the respective state of the power plant do not commute, and the psychological state of the crew members is considered not to be separable from the way the accident situation evolves. This indicates thinking in terms of different logics (metalogical reasoning).

**Components of RCR**

From our studies (Oser & Reich, 1987, Reich, 1990, 1991, 1993, in preparation) we posit that RCR contains elements of five other thought forms (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1 RCR contains elements from five other forms of thought](image)

In addition to Piagetian operations (except the necessary use of classical logic), the complete forms (that is not just the elements) are “thinking in terms of different logics” (metalogical reasoning), “cognitively complex thinking,” “analogical thinking,” and “dialectical thinking.”

Having already indicated above certain elements of Piagetian operations and of a different logic, we need to deal with the last three thought forms. I do this by using each time an example from our empirical research (loc. cit.).

Cognitively complex thinking is called for in certain cases, in particular when classical logic leads one astray. Example: A woman has an alcoholic for husband. After his second attempt at detoxication, she announces: “If you come home drunk once more, I will leave you!” He comes home drunk. What will she do? A nine-year-old answered: “She will leave him” (as “dictated” by classical logic). However, a social worker first looked into the woman’s biography and present circumstances, was interested to know whether this was a first-time menace and what its purpose was, etc. Then she ventured a guess as to the likelihood of the woman leaving her husband.

Cognitively complex thinking involves differentiation (bringing out differences of fact, of possible interpretations, and valuing) and integration (attempts at linking various elements in order to arrive at an overall assessment). The usual seven-grade scale for assessing degrees of cognitively complex thinking (Baker-Brown et al., 1992) can be described briefly as follows: Grade 1, no differentiation nor integration (only one point of view, no other comes into the field of vision); grade 2, beginning of differentiation; grade 3, clear differentiation (at least two approaches to dealing with the information received; “either/or” is in view); grade 4, beginning of integration (both-and becomes a [weak] possibility); grade 5, explicit integration; grade 6, systematic approach including an evaluation of the different possibilities and a comparison of their likelihood to be most promising; (7) elaboration of a framework that can ‘house’ the various considerations of the lower grades.

In the response to the task of analyzing the accident reproduced above, one recognizes elements of grade 7.

One can realize the importance of the cognitive complexity of reasoning (and thence of RCR) from a study by Peter Suedfeld and Philip Tetlock (1977). They graded diplomatic communications during the following crises: Agadir (July 1 - Nov. 4, 1911), outbreak of W.W.I, Berlin Blockade (June 22 - Sept. 18, 1948), outbreak of Korea War (June 25 - July 4, 1950), and the Cuban Missile Crises of 1962.

The results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In view of the striking differences, an argument can be made to encourage cognitive complexity and thence RCR if one wants a more peaceful world. The counter argument one sometimes hears (but about which I have reservations) is that in times of adversity persons thinking in an undifferentiated way are better fighters – maybe that the behavior of the “kamikaze fighters” in Cechenia, in the Palestinian Territories, etc. explains how one can get to such a view.

**Analogue thinking** helps to connect the unknown and the known. For in-
stance, after a first presentation of a flower stem, a teacher may ask her biology class to compare that stem to a drinking "straw." The students may say, "They are the same in that they are both straight, hollow, transport fluids etc., but they are different in that the stem is natural and holds itself up whereas the straw is man-made and needs holding."

It this searching for commonalities and differences (cf. Medin et al., 1990), which is an important and integral part of RCR - but not analogical thinking itself.

**Dialectical thinking** is called for when a situation needs to change in order to come to a solution. For instance, in an industrial strike, both sides will have to move for getting to a positive issue. Piagetian operations again are not applicable because neither reversibility, nor commutativity are likely.

Michael Basseches (1989) posits that dialectical thinking is made up of 24 schemata. Of these the following seven can be recognized in the response above to the accident description (in order of acquisition, see below): location of an element or phenomenon within the whole(s) of which it is part (9 - this is Basseches' identification number), description of a whole (system) in structural, functional, or equilibrational terms (10); assertion of the existence of relations, the limits of separation and the value of relatedness (12); description of a two-way reciprocal relationship (14); assertion of internal relations (15); assumption of contextual relativism (11); multiplication of perspectives as a concreteness preserving approach to inclusiveness (24).

**Ontogenetic Development of RCR**

So far we have discussed a mature level of RCR. However, human beings are not born with such a competence, but have to develop it (like Piagetian operations and dialectical thinking, Basseches 1989). From previous studies five levels of RCR can be discerned (e.g., Oser & Reich, 1987). We discuss them, level by level, in terms of responses to the Nuclear power station task (Reich, in press; in preparation).

The age of the particular respondents serves only as a weak indicator and should not be overrated - age is not a direct measure of cognitive performance. We attempt to understand how the elements of the five thought forms (Fig. 1) come in successively:

**Level I:** "That technology was not reliable. The operating crew is not to blame - they have done their duty, day in, day out" (respondent aged 11 years).

(Structurally, a response like "It's all the fault of the operating crew" would be equivalent.) If we analyze this response in terms of elements of the five thought forms of Fig. 1, there is not too much we can say. There is no indication of Piagetian operations, nor of other logics, cognitive complexity (clearly grade 1), or comparisons. (This indicates, by the way, that the respondent performs somewhat below the average of his/her age level.)

Granting the benefit of doubt, one may discern a beginning of Basseches' schema no. 9.

**Level II:** "It is true that a technical breakdown has occurred for starters. But it appears that the operating crew has not been up to it either" (bright 8-year-old).

Here we witness a beginning of differentiation and of Piagetian concrete operations (working with two variables). Also, there is an onset of a comparison of the respective weights in the damage assessment. Schema no. 9 is better developed, and schema no. 10 points its head.

**Level III:** "In the beginning a malfunctioning occurred. But then, such systems can't work without human control. The operating crew has simply not noticed that the instruments indicated a problem. Or perhaps they have seen it but not taken the right countermeasures. The people were excited. The accident involves both a technical and a human deficiency" (14-year-old).

The insights of levels I and II are extended and deepened. An element of integration (confirmed grade 4) appears, "The people were excited [on account of the accident]." Likewise, Basseches' module no. 12 comes into view. This indicates the transition toward Piagetian formal operations (dealing with systems). One also may note that the limits of classical logic have been surpassed: The events in the station and the psychological state of the crew are not separable, and the latter is not reversible, at least not instantaneously.

**Level IV:** "Such accidents are very rare. So one can understand that it may have taken time before the crew realized that something was amiss. But then they may well have done the wrong thing. And the situation got worse. Maybe they quarreled about the right action to take. Maybe they even panicked when the steam came out. And they never called in a specialist who might have been able to get the situation under control. Such crews need training with a simulator under as realistic conditions as possible." (25 years)

Now one is immediately struck by the use of Piagetian formal operations: Hypotheses are formed and argued about in an abstract way. The integration is stronger. There appear three new modules, nos. 14, 15, and (in a rudimentary way) no. 11. The latter finds its expression in the statement "Such accidents are very rare."

The entire development from level I to level V can also be understood in the light of historical developments in science (e.g., from Euclid, to Descartes, to Poncelet and Chasles, and on to Felix Klein), or the ontogenetic development in other areas (Piaget & García, 1983/1989, in particular pp. 105-129).

**Application of RCR**

Complementarity always involves two or more descriptions, explanations, "theories," acts, etc. As a concept complementarity unfortunately comes in various "shapes and sizes." They may be classed as "strong," "weak," and "nominal" complementarity (Reich, 1994). In all cases at least two classically "incompatible" aspects need to be considered in order adequately to describe, understand or deal with the situation in question, for instance the wave-like and the particle-like behavior of light, emotional acts and
their moral justification by the person concerned, or day-dreaming and reflecting as productions of the brain. In these cases of strong complementarity the complementary aspects come into view successively. In contradistinction, in the case of weak complementarity, the complementary aspects are perceived simultaneously (at least in principle). Instances are: explanations of physical events in terms of particles and fields; explanations of psychophysiological occurrences (such as fright, pain) in terms of the results of introspection, physiological measurements (pulse frequency, skin resistance, etc.), and observation of behavior; moral demands explained as resulting from absolute principles and an individual's capabilities, etc. (Reich, in press).

In both strong and weak complementarity these complementary aspects are linked intrinsically. For example, in soccer, a free kick - according to the rules a penalty - is nonetheless not given if it would actually disadvantage the beneficiary team; the decision is thus intrinsically linked to the dynamics of the game at that precise moment.

The linking is usually absent in cases of nominal complementarity such as in the statement “The occupations and interests of the partners are complementary to each other.”

Anyone who wants to pursue our theme further may turn to the literature. I have dealt with steps toward a recognition of complementarity when dealing with a new situation or problem (Reich, 1990), have discussed the pedagogy of RCR (Reich, in press), and indicated first results in the classroom (Reich, in preparation).

Whereas building up and keeping current an appropriate data base is important, it needs to proceed hand in hand with improving one's mental power as indicated above, the outcome of problem analysis and the solution often depending on an optimum “marriage” between the two (Reich, Oser, & Valentin, 1994).

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Thinking about Dialogue

Eduardo Rubio Ramirez

"Voy con las riendas tensas y refrenando el vuelo porque no es lo que importa llegar solo ni pronto, sino llegar con todos y a tiempo."

(Leon Felipe)

In the past the Mexicans lived among very interesting and equally worrisome political, economic and social situations. For a long time, poverty, injustice and corruption have colored the reality of our homeland. For a long time death, caused by things that could very well have been avoided, has walked in our vicinity. And for a long time, many homes of our country have been invaded by pain and helplessness.

An armed movement, internationally known as the Zapatista movement, emerged at the beginning of this year, probably as a consequence of a long history of injustice. Since then there have been "comes and goes" between the "guerilla" and the government. The newspapers and all the media, in general, have been using the word "dialogue" innumerable times. The Zapatistas and the government say that they want to dialogue before fighting, but in reality each of them pretend totally different things, and it seems that they understand in many different ways what dialogue is. In the moment that I'm writing this paper, the relationship between the Zapatistas and the government is very fragile and tense. Dialogue is about to break definitely and this would give rise to a situation in which arms "talk" and not reason and understanding. 1

Situations like these, that are raised in a country that is far away from being truly democratic, question the possibility and real gains of dialogue. This socio-political reality makes us believe that most of the time talking about dialogue is very romantic, idealistic, fanciful.

On the other hand, education should be a very sound grounding for the construction of societies; the course that societies take depends a lot on the educative means. Those who are in the field of education deeply believe that we have an important social function. Some of us believe that education is worthless if it doesn't try to give the necessary tools to the student, so that he or she can reflect on his/her experience and give it sense and meaning. Many of the ones who believe this, also defend the idea that within education there should be a space for dialogue, which is not only a method for obtaining critical and open thinking, but it is also a way of life. It implies, because of its nature, a series of attitudes that contribute to the construction of more democratic societies.

This is our conviction. Nevertheless there are many reasons that make us doubt very seriously about our activity. The socio-political situation is very often in charge of contradicting our "quijotescs" ideas when we defend dialogue and we can only think that we are fighting against windmills. It all seems to indicate that those who defend a dialogical education are entering into a state of madness which prevents us from hearing the advice of our escort who in vain tries to remind us that we are neither knights, nor is Dulcinea waiting for us with her arms opened.

This is the reason why I want to consider carefully the assumptions, characteristics, and gains of the philosophical dialogue. If we think, within the whole community of Philosophy for Children, that dialogue is a central aspect of our docent practice, so we have to get off the horse in order to observe it face to face and become aware that it is only a thin hack. Once we know that our horse is an old, thin one and it is not worthy of a knight, we will be able to get on it more conscious of our ride and more sure of our pretensions.
Therefore I want to make some questions that in the long run will be deepened in this paper. With this, I pretend to do the first step: get off the horse.

As if we were now creating an agenda, I want to make some questions that we cannot avoid if we want to see more critically our dialogical conviction: What are the conditions that make dialogue possible? What are the conditions that make dialogue possible? What are the characteristics of dialogue? What are the limits of dialogue? What are the gains of dialogue? What is the role of dialogue in education? What is the role of dialogue in a community of philosophical inquiry?

We can organize these questions in three main topics. The first of them will tend to analyze the anthropological conditions that make dialogue possible. With respect to this I will make a phenomenological approach to human experience, because it is my conviction that if we let our vital experience speak to us, undoubtedly, we will be able to discover the ground upon which the dialogical building is erected.

The second topic will deal with the characteristics of dialogical process. The analysis of the dialogue’s characteristics will be able to guide us in the search of some answers concerning the gains and possibility of dialogue.

In the third topic, it is necessary to situate dialogue within the educative activity, more precisely, in a community of philosophical inquiry.

Maybe this paper is very pretentious, but it is my conviction that at least it is allowing Sancho to talk, even though at the end we decide to take the sword and fight against those giants that other people say are only windmills.

I. The Anthropological Conditions That Make Dialogue Possible

We should begin making a very important distinction between “living” and “inhabit.” The human being is among the group of living beings, and as a part of it, it shares many characteristics with the other beings of Nature. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between human beings and the other living beings.

We know that Aristotle gave to wondering the status of being the generator of the philosophical thought. We can say that wonder emerges from our sensation of being thrown out in the world, of being lost, of being “out of home.” We are thrown out in the world, we are here, and we know that we are here. This being aware of our being here is nothing more than our consciousness. We are conscious as we are in-the-world and we know that we are in it. Our consciousness is nothing more or less than our existence.

Nevertheless we should be very careful not to believe that we are adopting a Cartesian position. My consciousness is nothing without my body; in other words, my consciousness is my body and my body is my consciousness. I’m corporeal consciousness, I’m consciousness bogged in the world. I’m self-conscious, but I’m self-conscious mediated by what is strange for me, mediated by other (things) and, as we shall see later, mediated by others. I know myself in my knowing—of the other and of the others. Gadamer, basing himself on Hegel and York, refers to the structure of the living, in correlation with the self-consciousness as: “His being consists in that it knows to become everything in object of its knowledge and in spite of all, it knows itself in all that it knows. Thus, it is as knowledge, a distinguishing from itself, and as self-consciousness is, at the same time, a going beyond it achieving its unity with itself.”

A characteristic of the human, as consciousness, is transcedence and curiously it is in transcendence that it conquers itself in its identity. To be consciousness is nothing else than our being directed towards a world. This “direction towards” is the “home” of wonder. We wonder at the “not-me,” at the other, about what is surrounding us and, at the same time, we wonder about our existence: “Why am I here?” Our being consciousness generates in us anguish, moves us towards doubt, pushes us to ask, asks us to give meaning to our world and, in giving meaning to our world, we give meaning to ourselves, we give meaning to our existence. We distinguish from the other and in our distinguishing we should say of what our distinction consists.

We are consciousness and in being so we are something “more” than nature. We are freedom because we are action, action upon our world, action upon us. But this action is never the same as the “being” (conditioned) of the animal; our action is conscious, therefore, decided. The human being is that kind of being that is in a constant dialectic between his “being in” and his being. Between his situation and his action upon his world, between the necessary and freedom.

Thus, we are time. Animals, different from the human being, are bound to their environment. They don’t transcend because they are not conscious of themselves. The human being is conscious of himself; he knows about his existence; he knows himself as a creative subject, and as such he assumes himself as an historical subject, as the owner of his history. Our being is a tense between a past, a present and a future; our existence is an experiential becoming. I’m a project because I assume my past (in which I include the “non-personal,” that is to say, that what I have not chosen, namely my parents, my society, my culture, etc. All this is, nevertheless, part of my history, a constitutive part of my being) and I plan a future. That means that I choose, I construct, I create, I recreate. I’m a project because I’m self-conscious; I’m historic because I’m a project. With respect to this, Gadamer states the following:

All vital experience implies previous and posterior horizons and it finally melts with the continuum of the present vital experiences of before and after, in the unity of the experiential flow. It is also true what Gadamer states about every living being, when he says that as such, every living being is praxis (energeia); this is the activity of human beings. The human being, only the human being, is “conscious praxis.” It is a praxis that implies free election.

This is why human praxis is intrinsically related to reflection. Action and
The word is not only to the world. The world is nothing without the word. It is not "pronounces" it, as Paulo Freire says. He gives sense and meaning to the world. The world is nothing without the human being. This human and humanizing praxis is language, is word. The word is not only to "name" the objects, as nominalists pretend. The word gives being, gives life, gives meaning. The word says world. Without word nothing is the world, nothing is reality. Paulo Freire states: "There is no true word that is not sound union between action and reflection, therefore that it is not praxis. Thus, to say the true word is to transform the world." Human beings construct themselves in the word, in their work, in reflection, in action. This must not be the privilege of some people; it is a right of all as human beings.

Consciousness and world are "linked" in language. Rationality emerges in language, the being is "unveiled" through language. The word is nothing else than the logos through which being is revealed. We are the home of the being. We are beings that inhabit the world and in this sense we transcend nature, we make it ours, we impress word upon it. Our inhabiting is a continuous comprehending the world, but our comprehension is never total, it is always finite. Our comprehension of the world that we inhabit is interpretation. The interpretation is dynamic, it is always going on, it never concludes because we are finite and because our comprehension is always limited.

The necessity of interpretation sets a series of questions, because there is a need of a self-comprehension. Richard Rorty mentions that "Is the cat in the living room?" as it is to ask, "What is the good?" In a sense, Sharp and Splitter mention the same. At first sight we see that the first question is very practical and has only one answer. The second question is intended to seek a comprehension of the world and a self-comprehension of our being. Furthermore, if we amplify the first question and we ask, "What does being in some place mean?" evidently we are making a complex question which is intended towards a comprehension of our world.

It is this kind of question that we can call philosophical questions and fundamentally human questions. These questions make clear that we inhabit the world and they provoke the necessity of dialogue. I will explain this with more detail.

Our consciousness of the world implies a self-consciousness as consciousness-of-the-world. I am aware of my existence when I am aware of the other (things), that is, the other to which I question is the other which I interpret, is the other in which I impress word. I am aware not only of the other, but when I question the world, I meet "other" that questions, too, that impresses word and that responds. Buber says, in his book, I and Thou, about the human being as that being of encounter. The self says "I" in relationship with the other(ess), in encountering the "not-me." The self needs the "not-me" for being aware of him. This "not-me" can be an "it," that is to say, the group of objects, of things, of beings that do not question, that do not respond. This "not-me" can also be a "you," that is to say, another consciousness that questions, that inquires, that seeks, that responds. This is the fullest type of encounter, as Buber would say.

I meet the you, by means of the world; I meet the world by means of the you. The word (λόγος) that I impress upon the world is a word through (διά) the you, is a word that we impress in community. This is why the language is communitarian, social, historic. This is why the world is not an objective world; it is not a made and discovered world. The world is an inter-subjective world, a world of encounters, a constructed world. The interpretation of the world is not only one, it is many interpretations, because there are many consciousnesses. Therefore dialogue (διά-λόγος) is necessary, because the world does not "belong" to only one person, it "belongs" to everyone.

Dialogue is dynamic, is a continuous asking and answering. It is a non-stop searching for comprehension (searching for self-comprehension). Dialogue is the ongoing of rationality. It is the appearing of the truth. Truth emerges within the game of language in the coming and going, in the asking and responding, that is to say, in dialogue. Questions set on the "engine" of dialogue, and furthermore they maintain the dynamics of dialogue. If dialogue is essentially dynamic, it should have indispensably in its bosom, a constant "game" of asking and responding, inquiring and searching, doubting, always doubting, never resigning. Dialogue is possible due to doubt, due to disagreement, but also due to the disposition of the parts in conflict to understand each other to listen to each other, to question each other. Dialogue is born in the disposition of constantly questioning the world, of questioning the other and the others. Dialogue comes to be in our being self-consciousness, in our meeting with other consciousnesses. Dialogue emerges in our existence, which is a problematic existence and it is so because we know that we exist and we feel lost. We want to make this place (in which we feel lost) our home, we want to inhabit it, we want to give it meaning.

Since we have made the distinction between "living" and "inhabit," I want to consider a statement of Rorty’s: Nature is all that is of so routine and familiar and docile that allows us to be implicitly confident of our own language. spirit is all that is so strange and uncontrolled that makes us to begin to question if our "language" is "adequate" for it.

I don't agree with this statement for as I have insisted, nature is also problematic to us, as mysterious, as being that "place" that is mysterious for us and we should make it our home. But it is problematic to us because we are spirit, and this is why I wanted to refer...
to Rorty, and being spirit means strangeness, pain, uncertainty. Being spirit is nothing else but a dynamism that questions because it anguishes. It is a dynamism that anguishes because it knows of its existence. We are spirit, we are becoming constantly, we are searching of self-comprehension generation. As such, we are thinking.

II. Characteristics of dialogical process

We have mentioned that dialogue is generated by the questions and the questions emerge because of the need of comprehension. From now on, it is clear that I will be referring to these kinds of questions that we have named philosophical or fundamentally human. We will be referring to the kind of questions that Sharp and Splitter name "inquiry questions" or "InQs."

Questions are generated in an existential tension between what we are and what we want to discover of ourselves and of our world. This tension turns on that which many people have called critical spirit. Questions exist due to the interest in the comprehension of the world and, thus, on the comprehension of what others say about the world. As Gadamer would say, the comprehension is something more than the application of a capacity, it is also the searching for a deep and profound self-comprehension.

This tension generated by the searching of self-comprehension generates questions and these are generated because we are consciousness and as such, we are thinking. So dialogue is nothing more than thinking. Nevertheless, it is important to make a distinction between mono-logical and multi-logical thinking. With respect to this, what Sharp and Splitter say to us based on Richard Paul is very useful:

Monological thinking—which is more characteristic of school work than real-life thinking—is the kind of thinking which occurs within one point of view or frame of reference. Typically, such thinking converges on a single solution to a given problem, via a clearly prescribed pathway or logic.

The monological thinking is the thinking generated by questions like, "Is the cat in the living room?" This kind of thinking does not generate dialogue. At the most, it generates an interchange of information. Dialogue is more than an interchange of information. It implies "examining the assumptions, perspectives and conceptual frameworks which lie beneath the surface of a problem or question, and on which there may be real disagreement."

Without a questioning that leads to a search for an answer, there is no possible dialogue; but it should be a kind of questioning that as it is stated allows one to discover many ways of responding to it, many ways of interpreting it. Therefore, the questioning that generates dialogue is a continuous questioning. Thus, dialogue is not some "thing" static, it is dynamic, constant. Dialogue is an infinite process that makes evident our finiteness.

If we should understand critique as a continuous analysis of our convictions and of the statements that society tells us, then dialogue and furthermore philosophical dialogue has a germ of critiqueness. So understood, dialogue constitutes itself as a critical tension. This is a tension that guides us from what is a factum towards searching beyond what is "given" (namely the factum), never resigned with it, always going beyond, always transcending.

Critical thinking...is a thinking that perceives reality as a process, is a thinking that apprehends it in its constant becoming and not as something static.

When the subjects apprehend reality in its constant dynamism they can commit themselves as subjects that create the world, that make history. A thinking that is understood this way understands action as something not different from thought. A critical thinking without dialogue is condemned to death because it is not capable of recognizing that the action upon the becoming reality is a communal action, because the world belongs to everyone, because we all have the right to create, to build the world. The critical thinking does not submit itself to a normalized present, it permanently compromises with the transformation of reality, with its humanization.

With respect to this, Rorty defends an edifying philosophy in opposition to those philosophies that pretend to sustain an absolute truth, which, by the way, is the same of their way of seeing the world. The edifying philosophy is essentially dialogic, critical, reactive, intersubjective. It is a kind of philosophy that incorporates within it the deliberation, the communal inquiry. I cannot disagree with Rorty, if we want to understand philosophy mainly as a critical activity. Here is Rorty's opinion: "The edifying philosophy is not only abnormal, but reactive, because it only has sense as a protest against the intentions of cutting the conversation, proposing universal commensurations by means of hyponostatization of a privileged group of description."

Dialogue requires an openness, that is, a disposition of putting the opinion of the other in a kind of relationship with the whole of our own opinions; this is what Gadamer calls "fusion of horizons." This implies a disposition of allowing ourselves to hear the other, not with neutrality, but with a variegated incorporation of our previous opinions and "pre-judgments." As Gadamer says, what it is important to do is to be in charge of our own anticipations so the text or the discourse of the other can present it its difference and its "objective truth," so it can confront our own previous opinions.

The critical tension moves us to self-correction constantly, so it makes necessary a negativity that is, to risk our point of view in the interest of the truth, in the interest for the searching for meaning. Thus dialogue implies an attitude of personal risk, an attitude of putting ourselves in perspective. Definitely, dialogue implies an attitude of openness, a disposition to listen to the other.

A disposition to listening to the other implies a disposition to silence. Every dialogue, as a process, involves an important dose of silence, although it seems to be paradoxical at first sight. In the same way that you can't hear the sense of a melody or comprehend its meaning if it doesn't contain a dose of silence in its bosom, the same happens with dialogue. Dialogue loses its...
meaning if it doesn't incorporate silence in the whole of its process. Participation in dialogue involves knowing when, and how, to listen as well to speak. We learn to listen to others when we take the time to construct for ourselves the meaning of what they are trying to communicate. And we learn to listen to ourselves when we take the time to reflect on the meaning of our own words.¹⁸

Within silence, as a part of the dialectic in which dialogue is founded, we are able to translate the discourse of the others and incorporate it into our own "horizon." Silence also gives us the possibility of reflecting upon our own convictions and making them clear to the community with whom we are speaking. The ability of finding the meaning in what it is presented to us is implied in the required negativity in dialectic. To achieve this silence is necessary.

To talk endlessly just to fill a void is to refuse to let the world of the other person impact upon our way of looking at things, and, thereby, to rule out any reconstruction of our own views.¹⁹

By means of the dialogue we inquire, by means of the dialogue we search for the meaning of our existence. This dialogue has within its provisional "solutions." It carries solutions always opened to new questions; solutions always opened to critique; always questionable solutions. "This suggests a certain creative tension which emerges in the dialogue of the inquiring community."²⁰

Every inquiry dialogue implies a creative tension. In it there is not only critical thinking going on. Creative thinking is also performed. It is a kind of thinking that searches for alternatives; it is capable to go beyond the immediate reality. All critical thinking needs a creative impulse if it doesn't want to condemn itself to be false, sterile, illusory.

Creativity requires constant dynamism and movement. Because of the characteristics of the dialogue, it is dynamic, always vital, always fresh. True dialogue, if it is possible, is liberating. It liberates us because it emerges from a tension that questions our points of view. It liberates us because it is dynamic. It doesn't allow us to be closed to our own opinions; it opens our minds to see other perspectives. It liberates us from pre-judgment. Dialogue guides us on an always dynamic, active and never dogmatic way. Dialogue is progressive because it is self-corrective and inter-reflective.

In the essential dialectic of the human being between his situation and his action, between what it is necessary in him and his freedom, dialogue as a way of critical thinking, as a thinking that it is action, an action that it is communal. It is a process that is not only desirable, but indispensable in the construction of liberating thinking. It is necessary in the construction of thinking that humanizes the world. It is necessary in the construction of thinking that reflects upon the concrete experience of human beings and recreates this experience, giving it sense and meaning; criticizing and creating.

Human beings gain meaning as such by means of the encountering dialogue. This encounter should be a humanizing one. This encounter should make possible the pronunciation upon the world. This pronunciation should be unified; it should not be a pronunciation of some people upon other people, it should be a pronunciation of all, as human beings, upon the world. The subject is a creative subject as he is a subject-with-the-others. The subject impresses his word upon the world when it impresses it in community.

All seems to indicate that dialogue is only a regulative ideal, by means of which we who believe in solidarity and in a shared world can criticize continuously. Reality has been in charge to show us that in society there is a very strong power game going on, and that there are a series of created interests that make the true dialogical encounter impossible. Nonetheless there is not a better way for rationality to emerge than that of encounter among those who have the capacity for being reasonable—that is, the human beings—namely dialogue. But nowadays we are very far away from reaching this ideal. Therefore, we, who are in the field of education, have a duty to analyze the limits that the power games and interests, which also are a human reality, put upon the dialogical possibility. Only if we do this will we be able to practice a critical dialogue, being aware of its limits. In doing so we will never fall into an illusion that we are performing something that is impossible to do.

In a context of exploitation and domination those who are powerful suppress the right of dialogue of the oppressed. They suppress the right of the oppressed to assume themselves as creative subjects and owners of their history. Oppression rises not only in political, social or economical fields, it also rises "culturally." In a cultural oppression there are some who feel as if they were the owners of the truth, they feel as if they were the possessors of knowledge and they don't allow the others to dialogue. The oppressors, in a wider sense of the word, feel that they are born to know. "When they recognize themselves in such ways," Paulo Freire says, "they have their contraries on the others. The others become strange for them. Their word becomes the 'true word'; the word that they impose or try to impose upon the others. The latter are always the oppressed, those to whom saying their own word has been prohibited."²¹

This is why the education should empower people, by making them aware of their creative power upon reality. Education should promote a critical "space" where the students can reflect upon their experience in order to transform it and to own their world. So they can assume themselves as historical subjects and not only as objects of alienated and alienating decisions:

I cannot inquire the thinking of other referred to the world if I do not think. But I cannot truly think if the others do not think either. Even I cannot think instead of the others, neither for the others, nor without the others. The inquiry of the people's thinking cannot be done without the people, but with them as a subject of their own thinking. And if their thinking is magical and naive, it will be by thinking about their thinking in the action that they will overcome themselves. And the overcoming is not
gained by consuming ideas, but in the action of producing them and trans­forming them in the action and communication.22

With respect to this it is very inter­esting the distinction that Paulo Freire makes between an anti-dialogical practice, and that practice based on the idea that dialogue is a means of liberation. We know that Freire refers principally to a political and social oppres­sion to which people are sub­mitted, more specifically, Latin American people. Nevertheless, analogically we can refer to the educational field, which incidentally, is not outside of Freire’s discourse.

This Brazilian pedagogue talks about four important characteristics of those who choose the way of anti-dialogue. First is conquest, by means of which the oppressor objectifies the oppressed. The oppressor impresses his own objectives upon the oppressed, and offers them different myths, in order that they don’t become aware of their situation of being conquered. The oppressor uses whatever means necessary to achieve the conquest. Second is division of the masses, because the oppressor knows that the union of the people can be the end of his oppressive and dominating practices. Third is manipulation, by means of which the oppressor achieves the decision of the oppressed that what the oppressor determines is good for them. “When the dominant elites insist on manipulation, they inculcate progressively in individuals the bourgeois appetite for personal success.”23 By means of manipulation, the oppressor induces a lifestyle in the oppressed which is seemingly good for them, but which actually achieves their complacency in the oppressed situation, and fosters in them division and individualism. Such manipulation constitutes a cultural invasion by means of which there is an imposition of one ideology—namely the ideology of the oppres­sors—upon another ideology; that is to say, a brutal indoctrination. In brief, anti-dialogue conceives as a threat that a people think by themselves. Anti-dialogue conceives as a threat that a people achieve its auton­omy and decides by itself its own di­rection.

Alternatively, there is the way of dialogue, in which collaboration is fos­tered. There is no vertical relationship in dialogue of some over others, in which some conceive themselves to be subjects and conceive the others to be things: to be manipulable, observable, and controllable objects. On the contrary, dialogue allows the inter-subjective encounter in which there is a horizontal relationship. In dialogue I discover myself in you, and discover you as another “me” that discovers itself in me.

This encounter of active subjects allows their union. This union is not only something affective, even though such is not excluded, but implies a free and chosen adherence to the other. There is a free adherence to the cause that unites them, because they know what they want, because they have become aware of themselves and of their surroundings in their encounter. With respect to this, Paulo Freire states the following:

If, in order to maintain the division of the oppressed, and ideology of oppress­sion is indispensable, then, in order to achieve their union, a way of cultural action is necessary. Through this action they can know the why and the how of their adherence to the kind of reality that gives them a false knowledge of themselves and of reality. Hence, it is necessary to de-ideologize.24 This necessitates an organization among the participants of dialogue, in which they establish common goals, works, and objectives. When those who dialogue acquire a consciousness of, and commitment to themselves as creative subjects, as an active community, and as historical persons. For this organization a cultural synthesis is necessary. This means a reconstruction or a re-signification of their experience, of which an inquiry makes possible the organization of a program­matic content which is the point of de­parture of a process of action. Within the cultural synthesis, all have a word. Not only is the vision of the different members of the dialogue not negated, but each is seen as an enrichment of the shared vision of the world. This strengthens a more reasoned, well­reflected and widely-communicated action:

Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences that exist between one vision and another. On the contrary, it is sus­tained by them. What it in fact denies is the invasion of one vision by the other. What it affirms is the contribution of each to the other.25

Transferring this analysis to the field of education, we can see that there are many signs of indoctrination that are seen in the curricula. The curricula foster little or no critical and creative spirits. They foster little or no appropriation of the students’ own existence, and decisions. These curricula don’t help students to view themselves as inter-consciousnesses, rather than as isolated consciousnesses. They don’t help students to see the world as the world as the home of all, that should be constructed by all.

Freire reminds us that love towards the world and towards others, humility of recognizing ourselves in our finite­ness, of recognizing that there is no absolute wisdom, neither absolute igno­rance, faith in human beings and in their creative power, hope in a shared unified world, in which all take part, and the exercise of critical thinking, are all necessary conditions of every true dialogue. Is it possible to foster these characteristics within a philosophical community of inquiry?

III. Dialogue within a Community of Inquiry

Dewey sees education as an inter­change of experiences, as a recon­struction of experience that takes place within a universe of discourse—that is to say, within a dialogue. For Freire, education should be conducted in a horizontal I-you relationship, and not in a vertical one, in which the student is seen as an empty receptacle of information, rather than a subject active in acquiring his own knowledge. The student should incorporate into his everyday experience, his knowledge, as a product of a reflection and recon­struction of the same experience.

For acquiring this, it is very impor­tant to create a place where students have the opportunity to share their
judgments by means of the dialogical approach. The philosophical dialogue that goes beyond possible; in a dialogue, each participant criticizes and evaluates their ideas. In itself, a dialogue is a disequilibrium going on which allows a reaction of means, end, and the consideration of consequences. Inquiry implies considerable ethical and political dimensions. Nevertheless, it also makes evident that a true dialogue, at least in a global level, is practically impossible, yet not totally unachievable.

Paulo Freire refers to dialogue as "this encounter of human beings mediated by the world in order to pronounce it, not being only the mere relationship I-you."  

There is an unequal situation in the pronouncement of the world. We see in reality that there are few people who decide the direction of all of society, and they have the political, economical and social power. With all these, they have the power of pronunciation upon the world.

Freire states that "this is the reason why dialogue is impossible among those who want to pronounce the world and those who don't want to pronounce it...between those who deny the others the rights of saying word and those to whom this right has been denied."

Thus, the process within a community of inquiry is, in a first step, very difficult to achieve as true dialogue. At least the community of inquiry should make its participants conscious of this inequality of powers in society. It should make its participants conscious of the near impossibility of making that kind of dialogue.
an authentic dialogue. In doing so, it makes important steps in the recognition of the other as other, even in its difference.

For Bobbio, dialogue is very related to the defense of a critical spirit, and with a critique of abuses of power and of dogmatic attitudes. He states that dialogue should be based upon "that rational attitude that has as its base, the reciprocal comprehension founded upon the desire of understanding and of being understood." This statement can be applied to the community of philosophical inquiry. Bobbio states also that "the best means that human beings can use for liberating themselves and liberating others of myths is breaking 'silence' in order to establish the confidence in the 'colloquial'. It is necessary to know the history of their ideas, and of the ideas of others." Of course, I do not agree with Bobbio when he limits this right to the cultivated man, for as I have mentioned several times, this right belongs to all human beings.

The philosophical community of inquiry should be a way to try to create in reality an ideal. It should be a way of giving place to a utopia of a shared humanity; of a humanity in which all of us have a place as free and creative subjects; and as subjects who pronounce the world; as subjects that impress word, that is to say that we transform the world—in brief, as subjects of praxis.

Disagreement is desirable as a first step in the searching for a consensus giving value to the different opinions. But disagreement is not sufficient. An ethico-political disposition of democracy, of unified collaboration in the search for meaning, is necessary. It is necessary to foster this disposition in a philosophical community of inquiry, making the participants in the community aware of the ethico-political duty of this practice, which should be more than a mere methodology.

NOTES

(*) Rough translation of Leon Felipe's poem: "I go loose-reined and refraining the flight because it is not important to arrive quickly and alone, but to arrive with all and on time."

1. I'm referring to Mexico because it's my most near experience, but the same happens in many places on our planet, such as the former Yugoslavia—in which, by the way, the language going on is that of the arms.

2. GADAMER, Hans-Georg Verdad Y Método: Ed. Sigüenza: Salamanca, 1988, p. 317 (From now on, I will refer to it as VYM)—The notes that I take from the books I read in Spanish are translated by me.

3. I agree with Paulo Freire when he states that: "Animals don't 'admire' the world. They are immersed in it. On the contrary, human beings, as beings of doing, 'emerge' from the world and by making it an object they can know it, transform it with their work." FREIRE, Paulo, Pedagogia del oprimido: Ed. siglo XXI: Mexico, 1970, p. 157.

The doing of human being is not only action; if it were so, it would be activism. It is also reflection, praxis, transformation of the world. At least this is his right.

(By the way, I insist to make clear that I do not pretend to be sexist but there are times in which although I prefer to say "human being" instead of "men," I use the word "he" not in order to be sexist but in order to make it less difficult understanding the translation of this paper).

The Lebenswelt that Husserl refers to is a non-objective world, it is a phenomenological world, the previous field of all experience, an historical world.

5. VYM, p. 308.


8. SHARP, Ann M. & SPLITTER, Laurance J., The Classroom Community of Inquiry. (To be published by the Australian Council for Educational Research). In Chapter 2 they make an interesting distinction between ordinary questions (OrQs), rhetorical questions (RhQs), and inquiry questions (InQs).

9. cf. KENNEDY, David "Hans-Georg Gadam­mer's dialectic of dialogue and the episteme­logy of the community of inquiry" Analytic Teaching, vo. 11 #1; Texas Wesleyan University, Fort Worth (Nov. 1990); pp. 43-50.


11. It is very interesting what Gadamer says in this respect: "Without an internal tension between our expectations of meaning and the so dispersed conceptions, and without a critical interest on the dominant opinions, there would not be any question." GADA­MER, Hans-Georg La razón en la época de la ciencia; Ed. Alfa: Barcelona, 1981; p. 76 (from now on I will refer to it as REC).

12. SHARP & SPLITTER, op. cit. p. 60.

13. op. cit. ibid.

14. FREIRE, op. cit., p. 106


16. I am language and this implies a cultural, historical, ideological "inherited" background. These conform my history, my horizon of signification. I incorporate a series of pre-judgments in my history. These pre-judgments are my own "anticipations."

17. cf. VYM, pp. 336 and on.

18. SHARP & SPLITTER, op. cit., p. 68.

19. op. cit., ibid.

20. SHARP & SPLITTER, op. cit., p. 49.


22. ibid., p. 130.

23. ibid., p. 191.

24. ibid., p. 224.

25. ibid., p. 237.

26. For the development of this idea and others that will come forward, I am hasing, among other sources, on part IV Chapter 14 of Matthew Lipman's book Thinking in Educa­tion: Cambridge University Press: N.Y., 1991.

27. LIPMAN, op. cit., p. 232.

28. op. cit., ibid.

29. As Sharp and Splitter state: "We would rather say that dialogue represents the thinking of the community as a whole"; op. cit., p. 58.

30. REC, p. 70.


32. op. cit., p. 195.


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35. The ideas of Bobbio's that I will share in the paper, are taken from an article that arrived at my hands some days ago. I think they are relevant for this essay. The article is one of BACA OLAMENDI, Laura "Norberto Bob­bio: La virtud del diálogo democrático"; a for­rnado Semanal: #282: México, 6 Nov. 1994; p. 311. I also want to make explicit that when I quote some "textual words" of Bobbio, they are taken from this article, In that case, I will cite the source that the author of the article cites.

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The Origin, Nature and Aim of Philosophy in Relation to Philosophy for Children

Walter O. Kohan

A SUSPICION permeates those who work in Philosophy for Children, especially those of us who work in peripheral and subjected countries. In one way or another, we have been feeling some kind of dissatisfaction in our pedagogical practice, whether we have worked at an elementary school, at a high school or at a university. Initially, we saw in this program a possibility of change, a window open towards an education conceived as a practice of freedom, to remember Paulo Freire's words. We considered this program as a possibility to challenge our tricky educational systems which combine the transmission of a technocratic knowledge that addresses only means and not ends, with the deepening of a gap between the part of the society that takes possession of the symbolic goods necessary to maintain and increase diverse forms of exploitation and the part of society that has no such opportunity, that has, instead, impoverished education that impoverishes, the kind we have in our countries.

We want to transform the education that oppresses into an education that liberates: the education that legitimates social injustice into an education that puts in question the foundations of the system that nourishes it, and that it nourishes. We want an education that questions the status quo and that is not committed to any particular answer to that questioning. The commitment of a liberating education should be a commitment to such questioning itself, whatever will be the result of that putting into question. And that result should be chosen in the most free way possible, by those to whom the education is dedicated and not by those who direct it. This should be the philosophical commitment of education and the intimate link between these disciplines: the liberating search that is the foundation of all philosophy well conceived, and of all pedagogy.

The present condition of our educational systems doesn't constitute either a bizarre contingency or a casual result. Rather, it's the result of strategies that were well thought out and planned in certain central countries, and were put in practice by the locals and well-paid sepoys and traitors in our peripheral countries. Let's take an example: the "recommendations" or "advice" of the World Bank towards the privatization of the public educational system and of the public Institutes of Inquiry and Research in Argentina, that the obedient government of Carlos Menem is "pleased" to develop against the will of large political and social sectors of the educational community. And the country calls itself a democratic one... Those of us who work in that educational system feel the opprobrium of a regressive system that deepens injustices and legitimizes them. As we don't want merely to stand in the situation, we try to think of and to practice genuine transformative alternatives. That's why we embraced the Philosophy for Children program: because of its transformative proposal for educational and philosophical activity, because of its push towards creative and critical thinking, because of its presumption of turning classrooms into real communities of inquiry, because it is the flag of a traditionally oppressed minority (the children), because of its redefining of the relationship of student and teacher, because of its affirmation of values like open debate and pluralism, and in summary, because it appeared to be a revolutionary program.

Nevertheless, there are some suspicious elements regarding the actual
transformative possibilities of the Philosophy for Children program. Let's take, as an example, the affirmation of democracy as an unrenounceable and sacred value—"a religious ideal" in John Dewey's terms, countersigned by Ann M. Sharp. Democracy seems to be an unrenounceable value to Philosophy for Children, both on the inside and on the outside. On the outside the democratic system of the United States of America has been an historical and political condition permitting the possibility of Philosophy for Children. On the inside, because it's something that the program has not been able to put into real question. As philosophers, we can make at least two relevant remarks: a) the sacralization of democracy (or any other ideal) constitutes an implicit rejection of the philosophical movement towards questioning, whatever the ideal affirmed may be. b) The close relationship of the program with the actual democracy of the United States—explicit in Mark and less stressed but equally perceptible in the whole program and whose history, on the inside and on the outside, has managed to make itself undeserving of any sacralization—discredits the program and limits its revolutionary potential. Consider, as illustrative historical examples, that nearly all the novels of the Philosophy for Children curricula were written in an epoch when the democracy of the United States supported, in Latin America, dictatorial and fascist governments, systematic violators of human rights, with the clear intention of protecting its own economic interests, which the incipient democracies had ventured to question. The role of the CIA in the bloody coup d'état in Chile in 1973 is just one good example in this regard. And neither in the novels nor in the manuals—not even in Mark, whose thematic spine is social and political philosophy—does a single problematization of this aspect occur, in spite of its relevance to democracy in terms of respect towards freedom and the rights of citizens idealized in the same programs.

Someone could argue that nothing prevents children who work with the program in Latin America from formulating this kind of questioning of the social and political structures of their societies. And, in fact, it's true that lots of them put in practice this questioning, at least in Argentina. But the question should not be "How much questioning in fact is made by the children who work with the program?"; but "How much does this program stimulate this kind of questioning?" In other words, why don't characters who are thought of as paradigms of inquirers in the political and social spheres, bring their questioning towards the foundations of the democratic system, towards its implications inside and outside the society of the USA and present it, on the contrary, as an indubitable principle from which we can question everything except the principle itself? If the novels are proposed as models of philosophical discussion and their characters as models of inquirers and critical thinkers, why don't they question the foundations of the systematic and constant discrimination and oppression that cause suffering to a good part of the people that inhabit the same world? There's no possibility of being politically "neutral": if we don't question the foundations of a capitalistic society, we in fact accept these foundations and then we contribute to the uncritical acceptance of the status quo.

Others will argue that these kinds of interests should come from new novels created in parts of the world other than where the program was created. It is possible that the persons who inhabit the places where misery is most exposed should bring to the surface new materials with new forms of inquiry, especially in the social and political spheres. But we should not think that such injustices are the exclusive concern of one part of the world when, actually, they belong to a broader logic that is supported outside the part of the world where the hunger and the misery grow up and they affect all those who inhabit and share this single world.

The fall of the Soviet empire and the end of the Cold War has helped to emphasize and accelerate the process of globalization and, at the same time, have signified, primarily, the victory of one imperialistic system—capitalism—over another—Soviet communism. This victory has been essentially economic and political, but the economic effects are especially devastating. The savage law of the market seems to be imposing its cruelest tyranny. Countries as equally non-democratic in politics as Cuba and China are very different in economy because of their different possibilities towards free enterprise. In Latin America, political parties with conservative and regressive platforms in politics—more social injustice, fewer civil rights for minorities, interference of the government in justice and the press, etc.—are winning elections with economic weapons. Brazil is the best example: Lula was leading by a wide margin in the polls until some months before the elections when the FHC—with the support of the extreme right—"invented" his Real Plan and with the main argument of stopping inflation they beat Lula by 2 to 1 in the recent elections.

This primacy of economics in world politics submits education to the wild logic of the market, to its brutal consumerism. This submission is evident, for example, in the systematic intent to weaken the educational system in the name of "educational adjustment" and under the watchful glance of the World Bank, performed by some submissive governments of Latin America. They dismantle public and free education for the most impoverished sectors of society with the argument that our countries need more productive and efficient educational systems that will allow our children to insert themselves better into our society and will make of them "successful citizens" of the new world that is opening. In reality, the intent is to make our children reproducers of a consumerist and alienating logic that they will never be able to put in question.

The question that moves us to write this paper is what role the Philosophy for Children program plays in this economical, political and educational system: Is it a subtle way of producing and stimulating some superficial or formal changes so that the fundamen-
tual structures may be preserved? Or can it be a tool useful for bringing about the deep questioning and revision of the prevailing system? In other words, what relationship does Philosophy for Children want to have with the status quo? Does it want to preserve it, to legitimize it or to put it into question? Or in more optimistic terms: Can Philosophy for Children constitute itself as a truly liberating tool?

These questions lead us to propose the following plan. We need to risk three questions related to the activity of philosophy. First (I) we’ll ask the question concerning the origin of our philosophical activity. What moves us in this historical movement towards philosophy? Why do we go now in this direction with more than 26 centuries of history called philosophy? Second (II), we’ll examine the nature of philosophy. Is there a “what” of philosophy? Is there a specific character of the philosophical task? Which is it? Third (III), we will ask ourselves the “For What”—the purposes of philosophy. If we say that the Philosophy for Children program should play a liberating role, it is because we are assuming a certain aim to philosophy that we’ll need to elucidate. More, if we say that the role of philosophy is developed in a pedagogical practice, it is because we have made some assumptions of the relationship between philosophy and education that we also need to make clear. Lastly, we’ll examine the relationship of the nature of philosophical activity and of the Philosophy for Children program, trying to illuminate the question that we have already stated regarding the possibility of Philosophy for Children constituting itself as a liberating practice.

I. The “why” of philosophy: its historical and its present origin

“Philosophy springs from suffering...”
—David Kennedy

It is important to sustain the historical character of this question. The question of the origin of philosophy is usually asked ahistorically, looking for something common in different cultures and epochs that have led us and still lead human beings to philosophy. Instead, we must relate philosophers and all social actors to historical conditions that explain the activity of philosophy. The condition most often used to explain the origin of the philosophical activity is wonder, and the source most often cited is Aristotle. But before Aristotle, Plato made it clear in the mouth of Socrates, in the following passage of the Theaetetus 155d:

In effect, this feeling, the wondering, is mainly characteristic of the philosopher. Because philosophy has no other origin than this.

In attempting to characterize philosophers and in trying also to answer the criticism that received because of their practical uselessness, Socrates made it clear (cf. 173d ss.) that the philosophers are people who have grown up in “freedom and with free time” (175e), people who are not interested in concrete matters, such as the real world of human beings, and justice, but devote themselves to explore the nature and essence of matters like human being or justice. It was idle wonder that moved the first philosophers to philosophize, and that caused other people to see them as sober or useless, people whose activity was incomprehensible and without any finality.

Aristotle made more explicit the relationship of philosophy to the abstract and concrete. He did so in the well-known passage of Metaphysics A2, 982b11-28:

That it is not a science of production is clear even from the history of the earliest philosophers. For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize; they wondered originally at the obvious difficulties, then advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters; e.g., about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and the stars, and about the genesis of the universe. And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the name of myth is composed of wonders); therefore since they philosophized in order to escape from ignorance, evidently they were pursuing science in order to know, and not for a utilitarian end. And this is confirmed by the facts, for it was when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation were present, that such knowledge began to be sought. Evidently we do not seek it for the sake of any other advantage, but as the man is free, we say, who exists for himself and not for another, so we pursue these as the only free science, for it alone exists for itself.

For Aristotle, the origin of philosophy has nothing to do with the productive or the practical. He believes that, among the human disciplines, some are practical, some are productive and some are theoretical, and these latter are not motivated by any need, and have no finality outside themselves. That is why, for Aristotle, philosophy “is the only free science” (982b27), because it has its end in itself and not in other things: “all the disciplines are more necessary, but none is better” (983a9-10). The absence of need that prompts it and of ends that give sense (meaning) to it makes philosophy the best knowledge. Wonder is a feeling, an animate state that arises in the Ancient Greek who has no needs. And, of course, there were lots of people in Ancient Greece who had all kinds of needs, but the historical condition of the born philosophers was the leisure (scholē) of not needing to produce more than wonder, regarding the natural order (kosmos) that they saw, which disguised the order that they were imposing in the polis.

And now, what is it that moves us to philosophize in this place? Which are the historical “a priori” that lead us to philosophize? As we have suggested in the introduction, we live in a technological society that has increased its globalization rampantly since the end of the Cold War. It is the realm of the market, of the consumerism and efficiency that produced the forces that won the war; of the substitution of the “other” from “communism” towards “Islamism” or just “the east”; of the worry of the north over the ecology of the south when the north is affected, but otherwise in the name of a “global community”; of the deep crises in the southern societies, of economics, education and political representation.

Given this map of global turmoil, we claim a full commitment of philosophy towards reality as well as a
"rational" commitment towards reality. We are not ready to concede that philosophy has no end in a world where it is necessary to disentangle the pitiless logic of reality. We claim a subversive and transformative task for philosophy. This task for philosophy is not new. Even among the Ancient Greeks, Plato submitted to it, in the Republic (cf infra III), but it was only with Marx in the modern nineteenth century that this commitment became an imperative task of philosophy. Philosophers from Marx on might have ignored, accepted or rejected this imperative, but no philosopher was able to avoid the eye that critically observes the relationship between theory and practice.

Philosophy still is born and grows from wonder, wonder that is still provoked by the spectacle of our world so far from the harmony and the order that ancient, aristocratic Greek philosophers saw in it. The heavenly movements are no more seen as ordered, and the orders of the earth have changed their form; but these changes have not resulted in human relationships that are less disordered and unequal. We still feel the wonder that the marvels of the world evoke in us, and we feel the new wonder that is provoked by the present injustices of the world. Wonder is nowadays a mixed feeling of admiration and dissatisfaction, of marvel and bother. It seems as if the world could be a wonderful place to live in, yet at the same time it bothers us to see millions of people forced to live a less-than-human existence. The mysteries of the world surprise us and elicit our admiration, while its injustices smash against us with the same force. We need—as Dewey and Suki say—to turn this world into poetry, but also—as Marx says and as we would like Mark to say—to turn this world into justice.

This is the páthos that leads us to philosophy. It is a human páthos, this ambivalent wonder, so near and so far from the Greek wonder; so near its marveling, so far from its conformity and its legitimating indifference towards the injustice of reality. It is a wonder that inconveniences us and moves us to think, to question, to say and to act.

II. The “what” of philosophy: its tempestively critical character

The critical function that the philosopher intends to practice as a profession cannot reach recognized normality without losing a good part of the moral advantage conferred by real dis­ dence.—Jacques Bouveresse

In their most recent book, Ann M. Sharp and Laurance Splitter relate philosophical activity with critical and creative thinking, with seeking for meaning, with questioning, with dialogue and with social and ethical conduct.

Sharp and Splitter affirm that philosophy is, among other things, an essentially critical mode of thinking. As a critical mode of thinking, philosophy basically wants to answer the question, “How ought we to think?” and then it is called to give criteria that allow us to assess our thoughts, that is, to assess the judgments that express them. To improve thinking as a process, philosophy uses tools such as self-correction and questioning assumptions, that show the tentative and controversial character of the philosophical task.

But these critical procedures that philosophy applies to thinking, stressed by Sharp and Splitter, don’t fulfill its critical potential. Philosophy should not only be a mode of thinking about thinking but should extend the criticism that it applies to thinking to the reality that has nurtured and contributed to forming those modes of thinking. It is not enough to think well to be a philosopher. It is not enough to be critical with our ideas and beliefs. We need something more, which is given by a certain relationship with what is outside us. Philosophy is the art of juxtaposing everything and even more important than to juxtapose our modes of thinking is to juxtapose the foundations of that social order that gave place to them. Taking an image from the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, we could affirm that the work of philosophy is like that of an electric beater. We have to beat and revolve, beat and revolve, but not arrange anything. We have to distrust what is given. We have to remove everything, question what is affirmed, show what is hidden, discover what is covered. For what? “For making apparent what is latent,” answers G. Lichtenberg. In this sense, philosophy, more than a critical mode of thinking, is essentially a critical task.

But philosophy also has a very close relationship with creative thinking. In this regard, Bertrand Russell has said, “The first thing philosophy does, or should do, is to develop imagination.” Then, as an essentially creative task, philosophy should imagine forms other than those given, should not accept any imposition, should create the different, should propose the dissimilar, should widen the realm of possibility, should rebel against the one-dimensional character of established reality. Philosophy as a creative discipline affirms plurality; and herein lies its main freedom. In widening the realm of what is possible, philosophy stimulates the practice of freedom, and at the same time it challenges the stability of the established order. Bringing imagination to power was one of the beliefs of the student movements which, in the 1960s, was seen as subversive by the dominant order.

Philosophy is also connected to conceptual analysis, not as an end in itself, but as a means to improve thinking. In this sense, philosophy is a search for meaning, a search for connections and relationships between thoughts, ideas and experiences, beginning with our own personal lives.

Philosophical practice is a dialogical practice. Dialogue is not the only means by which we can have a philosophical inquiry, but is its most natural way of expression, and is also indispensable, in a sense. The open-ended character of dialogue, its possibility for evoking the self-correction of its participants, and for facilitating the building of the participants upon each other’s ideas, are some of the points that have historically and constitutionally linked dialogue with philosophy.

Questioning is also an essential activity of philosophy. Philosophy is the making of open questions, and the
opening of given questions. We could not think of philosophy without the formulation and the correction of questions; without questions to answer, always in a provisory and tentative way; without questions never totally closed. Philosophy begins with questions, develops itself with questions, and would come to an end if its questions were closed.

Finally, philosophy is very close to life. It is not only that we should think better, or that we should know what to do, but that we should do it. As Mark Horkheimer said, “Philosophy is a fighter of the divorce of ideas and reality.” The aim of philosophy is not only to understand better what is happening, but to act according to this understanding. We need to make our ideas real. And this relationship between the real and the ideal, or between thinking and acting, leads us to deal with our third question: the question of “For what?” of the philosophical task.

III. The “For What?” of philosophy

The answer that the pride of philosophy consists precisely in its uselessness, constitutes coquetry that no longer amuses, even the young. —G. Deleuze & F. Guattari

As we learned regarding the origin of philosophy, that Aristotle legitimized for the philosophers the role that they had had historically, Plato was a deep critic of what he himself described in the Theaetetus as what philosophers used to do. In his stronger politico-philosophical wager, The Republic, he answered the two stronger criticisms that philosophers used to receive in his time: their uselessness and their perversity. He did this with several allegories in the beginning of book VII, culminating with the well-known allegory of the cave.

Presenting the allegory, Socrates makes it very clear that he is trying to examine the relationship between human nature and education. Education, says Socrates in 518c, should not tend to introduce knowledge in a soul that lacks it, as if it were a process of giving light to blind eyes, but should help eyes to direct the light that every-one has. Education should accompany the soul in its search for the good and the true. Plato thought that the good and the true were located in a transcendent idea: the idea of the good that is an ethical, epistemological, political and metaphysical support of the sensible world. And once education has helped philosophers to know this idea of the good, Socrates affirms (519c) that they won’t be allowed to remain in mere contemplation of the idea, but they will be obliged to liberate all the other citizens from the yoke of ignorance, mixing themselves with the work and the world of those others.

We have tried to show in this summary picture, a certain function that Plato gives to philosophy. In The Republic, the figure of the philosopher that governs, or the governor who philosophizes, that is, the synthesis of the philosopher king, shows the way in which Plato conceived of the relationship between philosophy and politics. The evils of politics won’t end until governments philosophize; or to put it differently, the polis is the unavoidable ambit of the action of philosophers. Philosophy and politics are joined in the figure of the philosopher king. The allegory of the cave reinforces this political task of philosophy and indicates the inter-dependent character of the two disciplines: education, as a liberating task of philosophers, first applied to themselves, and then to the other citizens. By means of this liberating education, philosophers accomplish their political function. The mandatory obligation that Plato proposed for philosophers, to assume this pedagogical and political task, constitutes one of those authoritarian, objectionable elements of his proposal. Against the objection that such an imposition would be unfair to philosophers, Plato affirms that in proposing the polis, it is not the happiness of a part of the polis that matters, but the happiness of the whole. (519c, 419a)

For Plato, the general interest can and should be privileged over individual interests. In any case, I would like to remark on the social function that Plato proposes for philosophy—a clearly pedagogical and political function.

The relationship between philosophy and pedagogy has been the object of many studies in the history of thought. For example, John Dewey has said that, “The most penetrating definition that could be given of philosophy is that it is a theory of education in its more general aspects.” There is no doubt that philosophy has a close relationship with education. We can say that education is the best tool to accomplish this critical task that essentially constitutes philosophy, and at the same time that philosophy is the instrument by which education can accomplish its liberating function, so that philosophy and education are mutually instrumental to the realization of one another’s tasks; or that they give sense to one another. A philosophy without education is handless, endless, unaccomplished in its more precious social task—the one that socially constructs persons more thoughtful, more critical, and more free from the knots that generate conformism and irreflective acceptance of what is given. In its turn, an education that doesn’t philosophize, loses its deeper purpose of liberation.

IV. The Philosophical Task of Philosophy for Children

No status quo, not even a completely desirable one, ought to be accepted uncritically. —Jane R. Martin

Matthew Lipman has given four reasons why children should do philosophy as soon as they go to school: A) If we take away from philosophy its traditional character, we can see that philosophical activities are in harmony with the intellectual dispositions of children, like curiosity and wonder. B) Children need the critical tools that will allow them to evaluate the philosophical dimension of the school curricula. C) Children need to find meaning in their own lives. D) In providing meaning to education, philosophy helps children to find meaning in the whole process of learning, inside and outside the school.

We have no problems in accepting these reasons that children should do
philosophy. Nevertheless, we need to point out that the critical tools that the program gives to evaluate all school activities seem insufficient. On the one hand, if the first task of philosophy is self-criticism, the Philosophy for Children program needs to criticize itself more profoundly. Consider an example from the main concept of the community of inquiry. There are no materials in the program that stimulate the revision of values in which the community of inquiry is based. (For example, democracy, empathy, tolerance). The novels and also the classroom exercises assume these values, and this very fact can lead children to rebel against such an imposition or to simply accept them uncritically—both unacceptable (unphilosophical) alternatives. But even more, the essentially critical task of philosophy should not be directed to school subjects, but to the reality in which the school operates. Education should not only be critical of thinking and of the school curricula, but of the society in which the school functions. As Jane Martin has forcefully maintained, "in an unjust social reality, a desirable education should produce social critics. If education is not committed to the questioning of that unjust order, if education cannot provide children with the tools by which they could put that order into question (and philosophy is the discipline that can provide those tools), then education legitimizes that unjust order. There is no objective or impartial education. From the moment when the educational system is based on a certain order, not revising it implies accepting it, and—much more than that—the formation of uncritical and conformist persons.

This does not mean that philosophy should lose its integrity, as Martin suggests. On the contrary, philosophy has integrity in its criticism, or it is not philosophy. In all its branches, philosophy applies its criticism to what is real, or it is abstract, useless, and without sense.

Lipman and Sharp have answered Martin:

We do not see that present efforts to introduce philosophy to children in any way involve shielding social institutions from the students' critical scrutiny. Certainly, helping children understand the value of consistency between beliefs and actions is a step towards demonstrating the danger of a society in which ideals and actions are tragically split. But this is not the same thing as urging students to commit themselves to social action. To do that would fly in the face not only of the practice of philosophy but also of the commitment of educators to impartiality. The educators' question might be, "If the traditional striving for objectivity and impartiality is abandoned, who is to decide which point of view is to be presented in the classroom?"

I don't want to defend Martin's position as a whole, but I would like to defend its criticism of the legitimate character of the status quo that Philosophy for Children can emulate, and at the same time, I would like to point out what I consider a weak answer, from Lipman and Sharp. The fact that children understand the importance of being coherent, or of maintaining consistency between their ideas and their actions, may have no utility in societies that are cynically unjust and that have no need to hide unjust beliefs that are perfectly compatible with unjust actions. For example, the political actions taken by Hitler in Nazi Germany (including the extermination of millions of human beings on the pretext of improving the human race) were perfectly coherent with his ideas that were embraced by the majority of the German people. To be capable of measuring the consistency between ideas and actions in this case would have been completely useless. This can be an insufficient tool of social criticism, and sometimes, as in this case, it can also be sterile.

It is necessary to help children examine the social and political assumptions of their society. In this sense, philosophy should help children ask questions like, "What kind of society do we want to build?" "What do we consider justice to be in this society, not only in appearance, but in reality?" "What kind of human being does our society foster?" "What is the relationship of economy and politics in our society?" "What do we understand by values like solidarity and tolerance?"

"What does living in a really pluralist society really imply?" Etc. The way and the language in which we formulate these questions can be different according to the age of the children, and we are not proposing to push children to take social and political action, but we are proposing to help them to be conscious of the social and political values that their societies presumably carry. Which way they will take once they are conscious of these values is a question that each of them will answer as an active member of a community of inquiry, but we need to abandon the illusion of an impartial teacher; the teacher who is not committed in her community of inquiry to a profound revision of the values carried by her society is nothing less that the best ally of the status quo. The commitment of the teacher is not related to any specific course of action, but with the stimulation of inquiry into alternative courses of action.

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Epistemological Considerations for the Community of Inquiry
Maughn Rollins

The Community of Inquiry, as it is defined in Philosophy for Children, is ostensibly democratic in its accommodation of pluralistic points of view. This democratic commitment is so central to the program that there seems to be very little worry about the possibility that the program excludes certain points of view. In fact, in all the literature I've read regarding Philosophy for Children, there has been very little discussion of what epistemological theory the program is based on, apart from explanations of the importance of dialogue, and some very cursory dismissals of solipsism and relativism. 2 There has even been some claim that the community of inquiry does not rely on any particular epistemological theory—that its commitments are procedural rather than substantive, in a way that avoids reliance on particular theories such as realism or relativism.

I disagree. I believe the program presupposes some very definite epistemological commitments. In pursuing the matter, however, I have found that the program generally requires commitment to one of a number of epistemological positions that are each sufficient but not necessary. In this paper I will contrast three epistemological positions, and I will discuss the implications of each position for Philosophy for Children. In particular, I will show how each position implies a different understanding of the goals and methods of the community of inquiry.

The three positions I will contrast represent a broad range of epistemological theories, but are not meant to be exhaustive. Also, my intent in this paper is not to defend any of the positions against the others. Finally, my explication of the three positions is more of a thought experiment that a strict analysis, in that some of the characteristics or directions I assign to certain positions do not follow necessarily from their definitions, but are based on my observances. Finally, I don't mean to imply that anyone is or should be committed exclusively to one or the other of these positions as I have laid them out.

II. REALISM
Epistemological realism is most often raised today as a criticism of, or a "straight man" for, non-realist theories, and it is perhaps easiest to describe realism in contrast to nonrealism. Non-realism suggests that there is and will always be some difficulty about human understanding; that our understanding of the world and ourselves may not correspond exactly with reality "as it is." Realism, on the other hand, suggests that there is no such difficulty, or very little of it; that the world is, pretty much, as we know it. Two beliefs are essential to realism. The first is that the world itself is unitary—is one and unchanging. The world that archaeologists and poets describe is, after all, the same world. And though change is part of the world—seasons change and rivers flow, islands sink and deserts shift—these all occur in unchanging patterns that can be understood and even predicted. The second belief is that this unitary world is readily comprehensible by humans; that humans all over the world experience the world quite directly; that our experience makes reality immediately evident to and describable by us.

Of course, there are many aspects involved in human understanding, e.g., perception, conception, theorization, and verification, and one may be a realist only regarding one or a few of these rather than all of them. For example, one might believe that the human senses, though limited in scope and subtlety, give an accurate if partial account of the physical world, and that the concepts we use to describe that world are extremely apt, but that the theories we have come up with which employ those concepts, in science, in history, in philosophy, in theology, etc., are fallible and tentative.

There is another point of argument between realism and non-realism be-
sides the question of how well we know the world, and that is, how well we know the world, and that is, how well do we know what is important? A realist with regard to normative questions, again, believes two things: that "the good" is unitary (not relative), and that it too is readily knowable by humans. Normative realists may disagree on how it is that humans may come to know the good—e.g., by revelation, intuition, study, or some kind of empirical research. What normative realists have in common is an extreme confidence in the good they have come to know. Of course, the degree of such confidence varies, even among realists. But I am reserving the name realist for those with a very high degree of confidence in their normative outlook. I will describe people who believe in an objective "good," but who worry that their own understanding of it may be wrong, as a type of non-realist.

Practically all normative realists have been faced with the problem that others in the world do not share their confident grasp of the good; but what distinguishes these realists from the non-realists is that this problem does not shake their confidence. Their inability to persuade an opponent about what is important does not cause them to wonder about their own normative outlook, but to criticize the understanding or the sincerity of their opponent. Richard Rorty has worried about this kind of confidence in these terms:

"Common sense . . . is the watchword of those who unselfconsciously describe everything important in terms of the final vocabulary to which they and those around them are habituated. To be commonsensical is to take for granted that statements formulated in that final vocabulary suffice to describe and judge the beliefs, actions and lives of [even] those who employ alternative final vocabularies. (74)

But of course, realists may be unselfconscious (confident) about their views without being uncritical about them. In this regard, I find it useful to distinguish dogmatic realists, who accept their outlook uncritically, from reasoned realists, who have examined their views closely, tested them, and altered them thoughtfully, and whose confidence in their own understanding is based on solid reasons, as they see it.

What value does the realist see in the community of inquiry? Presumably, realists' confidence in their own practical and normative outlooks translates into a concern that children be educated toward those same outlooks. This concern is usually expressed in terms of children's interest (desert, right) to know the "truth" about the world. Realists hope that education will liberate children from the superstitions (beliefs contrary to truth) they may have accidentally acquired. In light of this hope, realists must have mixed feelings about the community of inquiry. In the best-case scenario, for realists, members of the community may lead one another to consensus on the very outlooks they take to be true. It is important to reasoned realists that children not only accept the truth as they see it, but do so without compulsion, as a result of open inquiry, and that in doing so they understand that truth, as well as believe it, and develop the reasoning with which they can defend it. For reasoned realists, then, the community of inquiry offers the best means by which children may come to be possessed of the truth. And presumably, dogmatic realists would appreciate these benefits as well.

But of course it's also possible that the members of a community of inquiry will lead each other away from the truth realists see. Members in the community may find a different outlook more reasonable, or they may find no particular outlook more convincing than any other, and may develop an attitude of radical skepticism. In these two ways children participating in philosophical communities of inquiry have often disappointed their realist parents, teachers and ecclesiastical leaders. And it is these possibilities that make the community of inquiry an unacceptable educational procedure for dogmatic realists—they who doubt whether their outlook can always be reasonably explicated, but who cherish it as truth nonetheless.

Reasoned realists, however, do not want children to accept their truth uncritically. Reasoned realists believe that their truth is the most reasonable, and should only be accepted on that basis. For that reason, reasoned realists must defend the community of inquiry as the only means by which the reasonableness of their truth can be fully appreciated. They see in the community the best chance to convince skeptics and holders of contrary opinions, of the reasonableness of their truth. And they hope that if that reasonableness hasn't become clear to a community yet, it still may become clear in the future, by means of more and better reasoning. Reasoned realists have a familiar and a legitimate place in the community of inquiry.

The commitment of reasoned realists to the community of inquiry indicates another aspect of their realism: that their confidence in the truth they have found goes hand in hand with a confidence in the process of reasoning they employed to find it. The belief that reasoning or rationality is not only useful but "true," in the sense that the knowledge it yields is not only useful but true, is a theme that runs throughout the literature of Philosophy for Children. Thus, the first major work in the literature, Philosophy in the Classroom, takes a high-minded, modernist view of rationality as the vehicle of "the impartial, objective pursuit of truth" (xiii), and of philosophy as the vehicle of rationality:

"Human beings became civilized as they became reasonable. . . . Philosophy is the finest instrument yet devised for the perfection of the thinking process. (xi)"

This kind of rational realism has historically been, and continues to be, a strong motivation for introducing Philosophy for Children. But I will show that it is not the only, or even a necessary motivation.

III. FIRST-ORDER NON-REALISM

Every form on non-realism begins with a distinction between reality and human understanding, and gives some
explanation of how understanding is fallible. Reality, for non-realists, is always illusive. Virtually all theories of non-realism relate the fallibility of human understanding to conceptual frameworks—value-laden systems of linguistic concepts and theories that organize the raw data of experience and make it intelligible. Nietzsche was the first to articulate the concept of "horizons" within which particular systems of human knowledge and values operate, and since Nietzsche it has become commonplace if not obligatory for philosophers to relate their thought to the horizon of their own time and place, and to the horizons of their ancestral cultures (the latter being variations on Nietzsche's own "genealogy"). To do so is, of course, to admit that one's thought is at least limited by, if not wholly contingent on, one's cultural milieu, and the recognition of this kind of limitation is what all non-realists have in common.

There are various notions about conceptual frameworks (conceptual schemes, world views, and paradigms being roughly equivalent terms), the nuances of which are not germane to this paper. One aspect common to all such notions, however, is that conceptual frameworks are largely social, rather than individual phenomena, because meaning cannot be had in isolation. In explaining this idea, Charles Taylor relates meaning to language:

There is no way we could be inducted into personhood except by being initiated into a language. We first learn our languages of moral and spiritual discernment by being brought into an ongoing conversation by those who bring us up.

The conclusion that frameworks of meaning are social follows from the premise that meaning is derived via language, and that language is a social project (Taylor 34). Taylor's idea that language is the tool of discernment is already non-realistic, and becomes even more so when he suggests that articulation is part discovery and part invention:

We find the sense of life through articulating it. And moderns have become acutely aware of how much sense being there for us depends on our own powers of expression. Discovering here depends on, is intertwined with, inventing. Finding a sense to life depends on framing meaningful expressions which are adequate.

For this paper I wish to distinguish two categories of non-realist epistemology. The first category I shall call "first-order non-realism." What distin­guishes first-order non-realists from other non-realists is the confidence that conceptual frameworks only limit but do not distort human understandings of reality (except when a framework is taken to be the whole truth). As in the parable of the seven blind men groping at different parts of an elephant, first-order non-realists take the perspectives of different conceptual frameworks to be partial, but objective as far as they go. Or take the analogy given by a director of mine in a workshop on multiculturalism in Hawaii: Imagine being led into a completely dark room. Suddenly a window is opened and you can make out the contours of the room and the other people in it. Then a window is opened on the opposite side of the room, the added light making further distinctions possible. Then another window is opened, and so on, the light from each illuminating more detail. "Every time you learn a new culture," my director told us, "you open another window on the world."

The obvious imperative implied by first-order non-realism (and the moral given with the above analogy) is to expand one's repertory of conceptual frameworks, since the more points of view one can appreciate, the richer one's experience will be, the more comprehensive one's understanding of the world and of one's self, and the more extensive one's sensibilities. More is better. Thus, first-order non-realists define being knowledgeable in terms of broadening and deepening the understanding, of making it richer, of widening one's point of view, of liberating oneself from personal limits, of becoming flexible, tolerant, open, and willing to step out into the unknown. To these metaphors they contrast metaphors of partiality such as narrow-mindedness, ignorance, dogma, prejudice, blindness, habit, laziness and fear.

For first-order non-realists, then, the goal of inquiry is to make one's understanding more and more comprehensive by learning to understand different points of view. In all areas of inquiry, that perspective is superior which subsumes the most points of view. And the drive toward comprehensiveness is the principal characteristic of being reasonable. What makes a first-order non-realist a non-realist is the conviction that complete comprehensiveness is practically, if not theoretically, unattainable. The imperative to seek out new points of view, therefore, never ceases. And therefore, it is the dispositions of openness, tentativeness of belief, and willingness to change, rather than commitment to any particular point of view or body of knowledge, that constitute reasonable­ness for the first-order non-realist. All knowledge and perspective resulting from open inquiry is subject to perpetual revision in the ongoing project of inquiry aimed at comprehensiveness.

Moreover, this same disposition to openness is imbued with moral status in first-order non-realism as follows: That moral perspective is superior which has subsumed the most (moral) points of view. The first-order non-realist defines morality in terms of the process (open inquiry aimed at comprehensiveness) by which one should arrive at one's moral beliefs, rather than in any substantive terms of what is good or right. Taylor argues that procedural conceptions of morality "leave perplexing gaps in [moral] theory," as they leave their proponents without a clear "understanding of the strong good involved." (87) This is only partially true of first-order non-realists, who can explain their commitment to procedure as a commitment to com-
prehensiveness of moral sensibility, in light of the partiality of particular moral views. But it is true that first-order non-realists cannot describe what a comprehensive view of the good would be before that view is reached. They can only say what is good under a current synthesis of moral views, and they must always qualify that such an understanding is only tentative.

However, in some but not all versions of first-order non-realism there is a kind of faith in a particular kind of world that will emerge as people synthesize their individual and cultural points of view into a comprehensive reasonableness. Charles Peirce, for example, hoped that communal inquiry would result in the emergence of concrete reasonableness and cosmic love. On the one hand, that kind of faith, if held too strongly, is at odds with the first-order non-realist dogma that all understandings are ultimately contestable, since in principle it is possible that a future understanding which is more comprehensive than the one that now points toward democracy and beauty, will deny the value of those same qualities. On the other hand, it is not inconsistent with first-order non-realism to detect dualities and/or principles that endure in public understandings as they grow more comprehensive.

One other important assumption underlies first-order non-realism, which is actually a corollary of the assumption that frameworks are objective if partial. It is that all or most conceptual frameworks are commensurable—compatible; that they reveal the same reality, like windows in the same room; that they don’t require one to choose between them; that they can all be true at the same time. Taylor is a first-order non-realist, who goes so far as to admit the theoretical possibility that the insights of some divergent cultures of equal status may be incommensurable—that there may be no way of arbitrating between their divergent moralities. But Taylor argues that that case has not arisen yet, and that there is no reason to assume, a priori, that it will. “Until we meet this limit,” he asserts, “there is no reason not to think of the goods we are trying to define and criticize as universal....” (62) Indeed, for first-order non-realists, that limit never arises. First-order non-realists don’t worry that there may be no way of arbitrating between divergent viewpoints, because they assume that with enough subtlety and effort, all viewpoints of equal status can be reconciled.

The first-order non-realist conviction that all or most conceptual frameworks are commensurable may be held regarding descriptive frameworks or moral frameworks, or both. Philip Pettit, for instance, holds the former conviction that, “there is nothing that the members of one culture can know that is inaccessible in principle to people outside.” (116) And Splitter and Sharp make strong claims regarding the latter:

Much of the conflict in which the world finds itself embroiled might have been avoided, and could almost certainly be settled, if only the main disputants were both able and inclined to engage in dialogue with one another. (46)

As I have suggested, either of these convictions may be held in various degrees. That is, first-order non-realists may disagree about the extent to which certain conceptual frameworks are commensurable, and about whether all frameworks are in principle commensurable, or only most. In the categorization I am attempting, then, what distinguishes first-order from second-order non-realists is sometimes a matter of degree, i.e., of the extent to which they believe conceptual frameworks are commensurable.

The community of inquiry holds much importance for the first-order non-realist, the most obvious being the opportunity for the exchange and integration of divergent conceptual frameworks, in the project of comprehensive understanding. Indeed, many of the arguments in Philosophy for Children literature, in favor of the community of inquiry, describe the benefits of inter-personal and inter-cultural exchange in the terms of first-order non-realism. Thus, from Philosophy in the Classroom:

Philosophy for Children can be expected to flourish in a heterogeneous classroom where students speak out of a variety of lifestyles and experiences, where different beliefs as to what is important are explicit, and where a plurality of thinking styles, rather than being deprecated, is considered inherently worthwhile. (43)

Laurence Splitter and Ann Margaret Sharp argue more specifically that the most important result of the community of inquiry is that children broaden their conceptual outlooks, and that this does not require an exchange between foreign cultures, but can take place in a dialogue with members of one’s own social and linguistic framework:

Progressing beyond the boundaries of our own experience by building relationships which expand these boundaries is the key to the making of meaning. Implicit in [this idea] is the idea of a duality between one’s private experiences, thoughts and feelings on the one hand and a more public, more impartial perspective from which matters can be judged [more] objectively on the other. (50, my emphasis).

This distinction between private and public understanding is in itself a very cogent characterization of first-order non-realist epistemology.

Sharp and Reed argue that in fact, the community of inquiry as defined by the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, because it is the most dramatic model of inquiry ever devised, is the most objective:

The exclusion of women, children and various minorities from philosophical discussion not only deprives them of their right to discover their own humanity within the context of the conversation but also severely limits the ability of the conversation to produce objectivity and meaning. (14)

In a short time the issues raised by [IAPC programs] will also become a focus of professional philosophy.... Philosophical positions will tend to be viewed against the backdrop of assumptions about childhood ways of knowing, perspectives and experience. [This] will contribute significantly to the growing comprehensiveness of the philosophical conversation and to the evolution of the discipline of philosophy itself. (50, my emphasis)

These passages raise another benefit the community of inquiry holds for
those non-realists who define conceptual frameworks in terms of dialogues ("conversations" for Taylor and Sharp, "vocabularies" for Rorty): that the opportunity to be initiated into the ongoing social conversations where meaning is established is a political right.

Martin Benjamin and Eugenio Echeverria argue further that since "knowledge in any domain is essentially social and the product of a community of inquirers," classroom communities of inquiry are more educational than traditional classroom instruction—they give children a more realistic understanding of how knowledge is established, and prepare them better to participate in that process (Sharp and Reed, 71-5).

For first-order non-realists the principle of commensurability among divergent conceptual frameworks is not merely an assumption but a goal of inquiry which influences how communities of inquiry should be run. For example, it cannot be a legitimate goal of inquiry, for first-order non-realists, simply to explicate a number of divergent points of view. The task is always to see how such points of view can be integrated into a unified, more comprehensive view. To this end, Splitter and Sharp emphasize the process of "translation" in communal inquiry:

Translation, in the broad sense... is the process of connecting, or bridging, that which is not understood with that which is. It is an activity in which bridging, that which might be lost in translation (a common enough notion to language translators). But first-order non-realists cannot accept the incompatibility of divergent viewpoints. They must describe viewpoints for which they have found no bridge as only seemingly incompatible, and seek again for the common ground between them. In order to accomplish this, in practice, first-order non-realists often rely more on skills of interpretation than on skills of analysis. The first-order non-realist believes that there is some interpretation that will make any two viewpoints convergent.

The democracy of the first-order non-realist extends not only to new and different knowledge content, but to new and different methodologies for, and standards of knowledge as well. In the community of inquiry this again leads to a de-emphasis of traditional forms of reasoning, since first-order non-realists are less inclined to criticize a foreign viewpoint from the standards of their own, admittedly partial, standards of reasoning, than to try to reconcile their own standards with those that inform the foreign viewpoint. It is this preference for reconciliation that characterizes the displacement in Philosophy for Children of logic with "reasonableness" in the Peircean sense. It is also significant, in this regard, that "self-correction" in Philosophy for Children is defined in terms of incorporating "personal and partial" views to broader, more public views; of yielding subjective understanding to intersubjective agreement, rather than in terms of evaluating one's own views and the views of others.
under some particular rational system with final authority.

One rather paradoxical repercussion of this drive toward reconciliation or synthesis of viewpoints is that first-order non-realists are actually intolerant of pluralism. The other side of their seemingly democratic impulse to embrace all viewpoints is the impulse to assimilate those viewpoints into a homogeneous "mainstream," and a suspicion of viewpoints that resist being assimilated. This paradox of intolerance has most recently manifested itself as right-wing political criticism of multiculturalism as a threat to solidarity. The relevance for communities of inquiry is that first-order non-realists are not actually happy to let members in the community "agree to disagree," but must exert pressure on the members to find or create (some would say force) commonality. Thus Pettit: [The] universality of [our] communicative intention shows that even if we cannot provide a theoretical case for the permanent possibility of intercultural access, we are all of us, just in virtue of participating in the practice of assertion, committed to the belief in such access.... Whether or not cultural openness obtains, we believe it. (211)

It follows from the first-order non-realistic view of the relative objectivity of public understanding (inter-subjectivity) that children who resist the interpretation of their idiosyncratic viewpoint that will make it compatible with the mainstream view, and who prefers their private understanding, must be thought of as ignorant by first-order non-realists, for whom comprehensiveness is the essential quality of reasonableness.

Taylor goes so far, in this regard, as to deny the possibility of radically original understanding. He argues that even "original vision... will ultimately be lost in inner confusion, unless it can be placed in some way in relation to the language and vision of others." (37) This is not merely a practical problem—that idiosyncratic vision, if not meaningfully communicated, dies with the visionary—but a psychological and epistemological dilemma: that original vision can only be understood in relation to public thought and language. (37-8) Splitter and Sharp are in substantial agreement:

Generally speaking, we can say that to find meaning in something—a word, story, concept, statement, activity, event, or even a life—is to locate that item in a framework which is connected to something in our own experience, something which already makes sense to us. (99)

Finally, first-order non-realists, unlike realists, are never wholly satisfied with the synthesis of viewpoints achieved by the community. They always worried about what was left out. This is an inductive: since every viewpoint and every synthesis of viewpoints in the past has been shown to be partial, it is unlikely that any perspective in the future will be otherwise. An underlying skepticism is a healthy disposition that first-order non-realists hope the members of the community will develop. And the first-order non-realist will always push the community of inquiry to look for viewpoints not yet considered.

III. SECOND-ORDER NON-REALISM

What I call second-order non-realism makes the same distinction between reality and understanding common to all non-realist theories, but holds that divergent conceptual frameworks are not necessarily commensurable. In contrast to the analogy offered to first-order non-realism, of cultural frameworks as unobstructed windows on the world, second-order non-realists see human understanding as spectacles through which we view the world, but these spectacles are of different materials (crystal prisms, uneven glass, sheer stone, etc.), that filter and alter our experience of the world in various ways.

Many second-order realists infer from the problem of incommensurability that it is at least futile, and in a sense meaningless to wonder what an unframed or pre-conceptual world would be like. Rorty, for instance, dismisses the question of how this or that human "vocabulary" corresponds to reality or even to pre-linguistic human intuition. Rorty sides with Davidson that language is not a medium at all, either of representing an extra-linguial world, or of expressing an extra-lingual self. (10)

Some second-order non-realists, however, share the sense of their first-order counterparts that we can get some grasp of an objective, pre-conceptual world. And to an extent, these second-order non-realists share the bent of first-order non-realists for assembling an ever-more-comprehensive synthesis of viewpoints, since understanding that is reached from many divergent points of view is still likely to be more objective than that reached by any one. But second-order non-realists are less confident in the results of such synthesis, since any number of viewpoints may share a common source of misinterpretation of experience. Second-order non-realists are also less willing than their first-order counterparts to push for the reconciliation of divergent viewpoints, since they hold basic incommensurability to be at least a real possibility, if not the crux of modern reality:

In the latter days of the history of philosophy [there is] the progressive realization of the existence of competing philosophic systems as irreducible schemas of interpretation that apparently will not yield to refutation, reduction, or assimilation by alternate philosophic schemas.... Philosophic activity in Western culture is, for the most part, a result of the competition among irreducible, autonomous, internally consistent and coherent theoretical paradigms (Hall 17)

Of course the possibility of incommensurability is not an all-or-nothing problem. Even views which share some common ground may trail off in incongruent directions, into incommensurability, such that their common ground doesn't make them mutually explicable.

This possibility of incommensurability carries several implications. First is the possibility that people possessed of radically different conceptual frameworks will be unable to communicate to each other at least part of their vision or feeling. Again, incommensurability doesn't only occur at the level of entire conceptual frameworks, such as when two cultures conceptual-
ize time differently, but occurs at many levels of conception and of feeling, even, for example, between two people from the same culture, who speak the same language, but cannot, even so, communicate to each other part of what is real and important to each of them, or who can make each other understand in a sense, but cannot move each other to mutual appreciation. Rorty explains it this way: Anything from the sound of a word through the color of a leaf to the feel of a piece of skin can, as Freud showed us, serve to dramatize and crystallize a human being's sense of self-identity. Any such constellation can set up an unconditional commandment to whose service a life may be devoted—a commandment no less unconditional because it may be intelligible to, at most, only one person. We call something "fantasy" rather than "poetry" or "philosophy" when it revolves around metaphors which do not catch on with other people—that is, around ways of speaking or acting which the rest of us cannot find a use for. But... something which seems pointless or ridiculous or vile to society can become the crucial element in the individual's sense of who she is.... Conversely, when some private obsession produces a metaphor which we can find a use for, we speak of genius rather than of eccentricity or perversity. (37, my emphasis).

The epistemological problem of how to communicate and make sense of original vision is not only a problem between the individual and society, but between the public and private aspects of the individual: how does the self that operates in social discourse make sense of the visionary self? One answer to this problem is the process of translation advocated by first-order non-realists: that original vision simply must be related to what is already familiar. But second-order non-realists worry that the translation necessary to make divergent frameworks (or divergent aspects of a single framework) mutually communicable will result in significant losses of meaning on either side.

Such a loss of private meaning is especially worrisome for existentialists and process philosophers who take personal, idiosyncratic experience to be more real and more important than the conceptual (social) ordering of that experience. David Hall, for instance, relates the process of understanding reality to Charles Peirce's sense of "the objective vague," which could be clarified and articulated only at the risk of falsification." (xiii) Hall explains that experience, including perception, feeling, and intuition of reality, is the concrete, immediate and multivalent source from which conception is merely a pragmatic abstraction:

Selective abstraction has determined just which of those data constituting the welter of primordial experience will be employed to ground the interpretative ideas and practices that provide us with the formally abstract constructions forming intellectual culture. (47-8)

In substance-or form-oriented philosophies, the function of universals is to lead us away from particulars toward increasing generality, which constitutes increasing reality. Process philosophers employ universals in order to drive more deeply into the welter of individual experiences.... The process thinker must often find his way through a world of formal abstractions in order to devise means of returning to the concreteness and particularity of experience. (192)

It is the concrete and particular experience that is in danger of being lost in the process of conceptual and emotional abstraction, which occurs as the individual attempts to translate that experience into terms that have currency in relevant social discourses. Even Taylor senses this kind of tension when he states that, "our identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it." (29)

This is not to say that public understanding is not beneficial to the individual, or that social discourse is not itself altered by the idiosyncratic views it subsumes. But something of the private view is lost in the translation to public discourse.

Second-order non-realists who prefer to preserve the integrity of original vision than to make it conform to the public mind and heart are then faced with the epistemological problem of how to make sense of original vision without relating it to what is already familiar. Hall provides one answer: that one who experiences an original intuition of reality may communicate their experience by "imaginative representations" which actually invoke the same intuition in another person, rather than communicating an abstract intuition in terms that allow it to be situated within the conceptual framework in which the other already operates:

Inspiration results from an act of symbolic reference from the appearance of imaginative representation to the reality of the relevant intuition. (208)

Non-literal, or metaphorical, language is an essential tool of the process philosopher since the subject of his thought and experience is capable of only partial rationalization. Metaphor and imagery... serve two functions: first, a deeper penetration into the reality of experience is attained; and, secondly—and equally important—a sense of the profound depths lying beyond the reach of any words is gained. (202)

Hall's description of inspiration is similar to Rorty's description of the idiosyncratic visionary producing a metaphor that others find "useful." 13

The second implication of the possibility of incommensurability is that there may be no non-arbitrary way to arbitrate between conflicting viewpoints; that "there will be no way to rise above the language, culture, institutions, and practices one has adopted and view all these as on a par with all the others." (Rorty 50) Unlike first-order non-realists, therefore, those of the second-order must face the possibility of radical relativism:

After twenty-four hundred years, the process of the civilizing of experience has not led to the establishment of significant criteria for deciding the superiority of any given theoretical understanding. (Hall 24)

The third implication of the possibility of incommensurability is a more profound distrust of reason, among second-order non-realists, than first-order non-realists are capable of. Whereas the first-order non-realist sees reason as one true and objective way of knowing the world, which might have to be reconciled with other objective ways, the second-order non-realist sees reason as a game played by this and that culture, with normative rather than objective status, in the sense that "these are the rules we play by."
second-order non-realists do not see any means of demonstrating the reasonableness of standards of reason. There is no non-circular way to reason about reason; no way to evaluate reasoning processes by standards not derived from that process itself. Weak and strong reasoning can only be understood relative to this or that system of reasoning—rules of a reasoning game—which isn’t more or less correct, but more or less useful for a particular purpose. Thus Hall:

The coexistence of a set of conflicting and mutually irreconcilable world-views suggests that the original acts of construal that led us to the development of the conception of a coherent cosmos were arbitrary acts, which were later rationalized through a grasping and shaping of theories. It is thus impossible to escape from heteronomy through reason. (105)

And Rorty:

To accept the claim that there is no standpoint outside the particular historically conditioned and temporary vocabulary we are presently using from which to judge this vocabulary is to give up on the idea that there can be reasons for using languages as well as reasons within languages for believing statements. This amounts to giving up the idea that intellectual or political progress is rational. (48)

The fourth implication of the possibility of incommensurability is the ethical concern of how viewpoints become dominant. Hall expresses this concern as follows:

Modern philosophy... has progressed to a point where philosophic doubt has become a consequence of the realization that certainty is unattainable, or the realization that too many mutually contradictory “certainties” are possible of attainment. The most significant consequence of this realization is that without the authority of truth undergirding a given theory, that theory can only lead to commitment through the use of rhetorical persuasion, intimidation, or coercion. (18)

The danger that realism and first-order non-realism both contain the seeds of cruelty (of manipulation and imposition) is one Rorty recognizes and worries about:

To offer an argument in support of one’s redescriptions [interpretation] amounts to telling the audience that they are being educated, rather than simply reprogrammed—that the Truth was already in them.... Redescription which presents itself as uncovering the interlocutor’s true self, or the real nature of a common public world which the speaker and the interlocutor share, suggests that the person being redescribed is being empowered, not having his power diminished. (90)

For second-order non-realists, the danger that one viewpoint will be coerced in place of others that are not commensurable with it is always present between individuals and society, and between cultures of unequal power. It is precisely this danger that leads Rorty to seek democratic solidarity in an “increasing willingness to live with plurality and to stop asking for universal validity.” (67) In direct opposition to first-order non-realists who seek solidarity through an evermore-comprehensive human consensus on the idea of the good, Rorty believes that solidarity is only possible “when one’s aim becomes an expanding repertoire of alternative descriptions rather than The One Right Description.” (39-40)

The fifth implication of the possibility of incommensurability is another ethical concern: How will a society with a dominant viewpoint treat its members who insist on radically individual vision—people the public either cannot understand or cannot empathize with? Rorty, above, states that we are bound to see idiosyncratic fantasies which our public discourse cannot comprehend as perverse. This concern becomes more important, the more emphasis the dominant view gives to public understanding. For example, philosophers of language and of the community of inquiry who stress the centrality of public discourse to personhood are bound to take individuals who cannot or will not make their fantasies public, as less than full persons. In this regard, Taylor warns that “a person without a framework altogether would be outside our space of interlocution; he wouldn’t have a stand in the space where the rest of us are. We would see this as pathological.” (31) The same would be true, for Taylor, of persons with incommensurable frameworks, at least to the extent of that incommensurability.

A final implication of incommensurability, which draws on many of those already considered, is that the process of comparing divergent conceptual frameworks, of examining them in light of each other, is not bound to result in any meaningful synthesis. The second-order non-realist has no firm hope that open, public inquiry will give rise to any particular view of the world, for instance one that is beautiful or humane, or even one committed to open, public inquiry—i.e., democratic. The second-order non-realist joins in Nietzsche’s insistence (against Peirce) that such a view of the world, no matter how many people share it, is neither more “reasonable” nor in any way more privileged than minority or individual aspirations to the contrary. This does not preclude second-order non-realists from democratic commitment; it changes the way they justify that commitment. Rorty, for example, bases his commitment to democracy, not on the belief that it is truer or more “human” than its alternatives, or that open inquiry and enterprise will produce more truth and goodness, but on a contingent (non-rational) liberal aversion to cruelty. The democratic second-order non-realist admits that democracy curtails countless private ecstasies which are no less worthy than those it allows, but it grudgingly willing to be democratic because of a particular belief that it is better to let more people pursue their dreams a little way than to let the strong pursue theirs as far as they can. Even his language of the inherent rights of persons, and the need to see others as persons in themselves rather than projections of one’s own needs, is not understood by second-order non-realists to be a more privileged view that has become evident to those who have committed to become reasonable, but a contingent value they want to spread—an ideology.

All of these facets of second-order non-realism influence how a second-order non-realist would run a philosophical community of inquiry. First,
since reason has a very different relationship to inquiry for the second-order non-realist than it has for first-order non-realists, the second-order non-realist will require of the community a different kind of commitment to reason. For the second-order non-realist, reason is one way of analyzing belief systems (in terms of entailment) and of exploring certain possibilities of integrating divergent belief systems. But reason is ultimately a limited method of discourse unable to choose between propositions it cannot integrate. Therefore, the second-order non-realist will make use of reason and rationality in communal inquiry without giving it any kind of final authority.

Next, second-order non-realists will not urge the translation of private understanding, for the sake of communication, beyond the point at which they determine that translation will result in a significant loss of private meaning. In some cases, they are even willing to allow halting expressions of private understanding to remain partially inarticulate. Also, second-order non-realists will not shy away from the determination that the community has reached an impasse once it has identified incompatible viewpoints that have been made sufficiently public. Again, though second-order non-realists are interested in seeing what kinds of consensus may be reached among holders of divergent views, that interest is always tempered by the second-order non-realist's commitment to the integrity of private meaning.

Unlike first-order non-realists, therefore, who will not take incommensurability for an answer, second-order non-realists will allow the community to wrestle with radical skepticism—the worry that there are no authoritative or even any very reliable answers to some of our most burning questions; they search for meaning, and that the search itself is absurd. Because second-order non-realists do not take this attitude to be unreasonable, they show respect and perhaps even empathy for the skeptical despair of children. This tolerance of skepticism as an acceptable outcome of philosophical inquiry among children is alarming to realists and first-order non-realists, because skeptical despair is practically, if not theoretically, linked to depression, amorality and a reactionary mistrust of philosophical inquiry.

When members of a community of inquiry have identified beliefs or viewpoints that are rationally incommensurable, the second-order non-realist may prompt the community either to cease their inquiry, or to proceed in non-rational ways. Davidson identifies one such way as the exchange of metaphors, which, if efficacious, becomes causes rather than reasons for changes of belief. (Rorty 50) Rorty goes even farther, to suggest that, interesting philosophy is rarely an examination of the pros and cons of a thesis. Usually it is, implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things. (9)

This recalls Hall's description of evoking inspiration via "imaginative representations" of intuition, and is somewhat related to what the developers of Philosophy for Children have termed "creative thinking." (5) For second-order non-realists, this kind of non-rational exchange of metaphors is just as valuable a task of communities of inquiry as is the business of reasoning.

I have argued that second-order non-realists will not urge the community of inquiry to convergence on any particular view of the world, including a democratic view, and that they do not hold their own democratic commitments to be demonstrably superior to contrary commitments. How does this reflect on the second-order non-realists' commitment to the democratic institution of the community of inquiry itself? It is true that their commitment to the community of inquiry is not based on the faith that democratic inquiry is more reasonable than alternative methods of inquiry, i.e., that its fruits are more real or true than the fruits of other methods. Their commitment is based partly on the liberal wish to bring more kinds of people into socially relevant inquiry, and partly on the pragmatic value they see in open inquiry as a tool for exploring the relative usefulness various viewpoints have to the contingent aims of the members of the community. 16 But these are both strong motivators—as strong, in fact, as any motivation allowed by second-order non-realism.

IV. CONCLUSION

It may be argued that the differences in epistemological positions I have described are largely speculations that have little to do with the actual practice of philosophical communities of inquiry. It may be observed, for instance, that a facilitator who urges the community to think harder about how to reconcile divergent viewpoints may not have in mind global convergence or an advance toward complete comprehensiveness; or that a facilitator who allows a viewpoint to be incompletely expressed or incompletely assimilated to the communal consensus, likely does not see herself as protecting the integrity of private understanding. I would argue, in response, that these are precisely the kinds of implications that those of us committed to the community of inquiry should wonder about. I suggest that more attention should be given to the variety of epistemological positions that may be at work in our communities of inquiry, and to how these positions shape the goals and the methods of our inquiry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Ann Margaret Sharp: *Some Philosophical Presuppositions of Philosophy for Children* (unpublished manuscript, August, 1994).
NOTES
1. And in fact, many of the discussions of dialogue I have read have dealt with its educational advantages, political implications, and implications for personhood and self-esteem, without any direct discussion of epistemology.
2. See, e.g., Splitter and Sharp, pp. 92, 96.
3. On the other hand, the book makes an effort to qualify the importance of rationality, in two ways. One is a distinction between the substance and the procedure of thought, the idea being that the standards of rationality apply only to form without limiting content: "Coherence, consistency, and comprehensiveness are values only in the sense that they are standards for effective communication and criteria for effective inquiry. They are appropriate to the way a person should think, not to what he should think." (86) The other limit on the value of rationality is a restriction on the scope of its legitimate employment: "There are other forms of activity in which these rules are hindrances rather than aids... Coherence, consistency, and comprehensiveness are appropriate values for philosophical discussion and inquiry but not for other aspects of a person's life that include characteristics of spontaneity, randomness, or routine to which the aforementioned values are irrelevant." Ibid.
4. See Taylor at 17. Rorty remarks similarly: It was Nietzsche who first explicitly suggested that we drop the whole idea of "knowing the truth." His definition of truth as a "mobile army of metaphors" amounted to saying that the whole idea of finding a single context for all human lives, should be abandoned. (27)
5. All of these terms were taken from Ann Margaret Sharp: Some Philosophical Presuppositions of Philosophy for Children (unpublished manuscript, August, 1994).
7. Taylor actually rules out the possibility of incommensurability in a way that begs the question: He argues that the usefulness of the modern Western conceptual framework is sufficient justification to accept it as true, and by it to judge contrary frameworks (at least moral frameworks) as of unequal status.
8. "Peirce... subsumed all ideas under the growth of concrete reasonableness in the world. It is, he thought, by committing oneself to the ideal of reasonableness that the self becomes itself in its fullness." (Sharp 15.)
9. Many first-order non-realists who say that conflicting viewpoints may turn out to be incommensurable, are never, in practice, ready to admit that such has been established.
10. Rorty is not denying the reality of the extra-human world. Rather, in a pragmatist turn, he disqualifies the search for correspondence between human knowledge and extra-human reality as a meaningless task. (8).
11. Pettit describes incommensurability as the possibility "that there can be impermeable divisions in the community of human knowledge[,] that there are really many different communities of knowledge, communities that are hermetically sealed off from one another." (210) But see my explanation in the next paragraph that incommensurability occurs at many levels.
12. Splitter and Sharp assert that it is necessary and beneficial for the self to become "decentered" by taking other viewpoints into account, but again, do not see that a decentered self involves any loss of meaning, or of self.
13. Unlike Hall, however, Rorty is unwilling to characterize such visions as intuitions of reality: "The difference between genius and fantasy is not the difference between impressions which lock on to something universal, some antecedent reality out there in the world or deep within the self, and those which do not. Rather, it is the difference between idiosyncrasies which just happen to catch on with other people—happen because of the contingencies of some historical situation.... To sum up, poetic, artistic, philosophical, scientific, or political progress results from the accidental coincidence of a private obsession with a public need." (Rorty 37.)
14. The second-order non-realist admits, further, that this belief may, as Nietzsche warned, be based in fear that he would be among the many rather than the few, if it came to that.
15. See Splitter and Sharp, 134-5.
16. See Benjamin and Echeverria at Sharp and Reed, p. 17.
Gareth Matthews needs no introduction to readers of this journal. The location of his work within the emergent Philosophy for Children tradition has always seemed to me to be unique, fruitful, and somewhat mysterious. To me he is a sort of outsider's insider (or insider's outsider?) to the movement, or a fellow traveler who is also a founder. For example his Thinking column, featuring deft, unpretentious appreciations of the philosophical themes in selected children's literature, has never, to my knowledge, made one reference to the Philosophy for Children novels or manuals, or to community of inquiry methodology; yet the column acts as a continual resource, challenge and encouragement to those of us who think it would be a good thing for Philosophy for Children to broaden its base and include selected children's books among its corpus of texts. In addition, his critique of Piaget in Philosophy and the Young Child—taken up again in this book—must be the only direct confrontation yet with that grownup whose theory of how children think has had enormous, mostly negative, influence on Philosophy for Children's fortunes within the American educational establishment; yet Philosophy for Children seems to have taken no advantage of it in order to advance those fortunes.

In this book, Matthews works the vast, vaguely contiguous fields of academic philosophy, developmental psychology, cognitive science, child study, and education, at his own pace, in his own unique and asymmetrical way. His project has a Wittgensteinian flavor; he is an expert at cleaning up muddles, or carefully tugging apart things that, after he's done them, we see didn't belong together anyway. The chapter themes are wide ranging—from children doing philosophy to the theories of reigning child epistemologists, to children's art, to children's rights, to children's understanding of death, to children's philosophy in itself. To the extent that, within this somewhat random thematic structure, Matthews does evoke a larger philosophical argument about childhood, it is one that I acquiesce to, but that I am not completely comfortable with; nor do I think that it defines the field of "philosophy of childhood" in a manner that fully acknowledges the rich, complex thematicization of childhood in Western thought.

Here is how I think the argument of The Philosophy of Childhood goes:

(1) Doing philosophy is a natural human act, like doing music, and other forms of controlled play. Not only do children do it, they in some degree do it better than adults, because they aren't hampered by adults "pretensions to know" (13). In fact the child is the prototypical philosopher, because doing philosophy means "starting over" (18), locating the "questioning child" in oneself, where we are comfortable with a sort of puzzlement which seem naive to the adult who has lost the philosophical impulse. Philosophy in itself may be defined as "an adult attempt to deal with the genuinely baffling questions of childhood" (13).

(2) Most adults, including and especially many so-called experts on childhood, just don't see children's philosophical nature. Why? Because philosophy has "gone underground" in them. Why? Because, at least in part, of an educational system which reproduces a modal personality which teaches us to ask only "useful" questions, and to ignore (or become uncomfortable with) the baffling ones. This loss of the ability to hear children doing philosophy is reified in mainstream science by a group of so-called experts on cognitive epistemology, who have developed a concept of childhood, based on a stage/maturational model of development. This "standard developmental account" systematically devalues children's cognitive capacity, and construes development as a "stage by stage victory over intellectual deficits" (47). This is the result of a bewitchment by a biological/physiological model of development which decides beforehand that later cognitive structures are always "more nearly satisfactory" (17) than earlier ones. The effect of the standard developmental account has been to "distance" us from children—both from
the children around us and from our childhood selves" (66)—through constructing them as inhabiting "conceptual worlds that are structurally different from ours, but that will naturally evolve into ours" (66).

But being fully developed physically doesn't mean knowing more. (Me talking: In fact it might just as well be the case that a certain unfinished physiology is a state in which more, or better—depending on what you consider most worth knowing—or at least different, is known). Once we have disposed of the prior assumptions of the standard developmental account, there is no reason a child, just like anyone else, shouldn't ask those perennial questions about infinite regress, first cause, or what is real, which Matthews both remembers doing once himself as a child, and finds that "some children sometimes do." When we identify children a priori as "pre-rational" beings, we become blind, not just to their philosophical thinking, but to their art, their moral thinking, their understanding of the deep mysteries like death, and their ability to make important decisions. We lose sight of them, not only as fellow human beings, but as fellow participants in our human discourse, who are sometimes more "developed" in the same language games as ourselves (67).

(3) What makes these theories oppressive of children is that they are not philosophically self-aware, i.e. they do not care to examine or problematize their own assumptions. When we do examine and problematize them, we are doing the philosophy of childhood. The philosophy of childhood starts with questions like: what is it to be a child? Just what kind of difference is the difference between children and adult human beings? To what extent is "childhood" a cultural and historical construct? What are the hidden assumptions of the scientific theories which we apply to children's minds? As we clear away the underbrush around these concepts, and expose the naive assumptions and distorting paradigms, something begins to happen:

(4) We come to realize that children can do philosophy; that they are often morally aware before we think we are, and sometimes morally more aware than we are; that they can make real art; that, to the extent they have direct experience of them, they come to an understanding of deep mysteries like death in as adequate a fashion as adults do; that they are often capable of acting as "rational agents" earlier than we have assumed.

So the goal of the argument seems to be that children are a lot more like adults than the experts will allow; that adults—namely, the cognitive scientists and those who accept their account on authority—have put a false distance between themselves and children through rationalistic theoretical constructs which are basically unreflective. In every case, Matthews' deconstruction of developmental psychology's assumptions leads to allowing children into the world of reason associated with adults. The differences between adults and children are based, it would seem, more on experience than structure.

My major worry with this argument is that, in criticizing the cognitive scientists' caricature of the child as pre-rational, Matthews may be naively accepting the definition of rationality which led to this distortion. The Cartesian ghost represented by Piaget's radically decentered "epistemic subject," taken as sole paradigm, is indeed so narrow as to produce just the kind of criteria which would exclude children. So instead of identifying the fault in a rationalistic ideal of reason, Matthews claims the child for this ideal as well.

To the extent that Matthews' intentions are corrective (as he several times says they are), I don't dispute this claim; in fact, working as I do in the field of early childhood studies, where Piagetian stage theory and maturationalism in general have a stranglehold on adults' ability to construct children as philosophers, I encourage it. The problem is that if that is all there is, the implicit direction of his argument is toward characterizing children as little adults, rather than attempting to understand their differences as representing a positive form of knowledge. That is what the developmental psychologists do: they compare children's ways of knowing to adults', and then characterize the former as not-yet-adult, rather than as anything in themselves. So if Matthews is just going to argue that some children can think like adults, he is playing directly into the hands of the dominant, hegemonic epistemology of the day, which is the source of the problem he is addressing.

The mistake which the cognitive scientists make has to do with epistemological egocentrism. The standard developmental account is a view from one privileged epistemic location—the European, adult, (male?) Western one—which is based on a certain style of subject-object relation which presumes to be, by its very self-description, at the most Archimedean, and at the least, religiously devoted to its own skeptical ideals. But I suspect that each person's unique location, upon which converge a myriad of historical, cultural, and genetic determiners—male, female, poor, rich, privileged, powerless, child, adult, elderly, cultural or racial majority or minority, medieval, Renaissance, aboriginal or modern, etc.—places him or her in a different epistemic space, and that each space, while sharing basic location with other spaces, also affords knowledge unavailable to other spaces.

Once we begin to suspect that childhood may afford knowledge unavailable to other locations in the life-course—might in fact know something we are overlooking, or that we're not quite getting, or perhaps have forgotten—then the child joins the ranks of those whose voices have been suppressed by the dominant epistemology, like women, "primitives," the insane, the poor, and in our culture, people of color. And those voices come to represent, to a certain extent, the hope for the epistemological evolution of the race, for in Hegelian terms, they represent the anti-thesis, and as such are instigators of and openings to a higher integration of human epistemic space. This is why Romanticism counterposed the child and the aboriginal to Enlightenment rationalism.
So that would be one piece of a philosophy of childhood: child as excluded voice, bearer of a form of knowledge which, because it is relatively unformed, throws into question the formalized knowledge of the era. Here the child becomes an involuntary critic of the current official account, an unconscious prophet, in her very marginalization, of a more inclusive one. What, for example, are the universal epistemic implications of the young child’s animism, or what D.H. Winnicott called “transitional critic of the current official account, an young child’s animism, or what D.H. Thinking:

versal epistemic implications of the

wall, to the gloriously naked infant

Here the child becomes an involuntary

formally unformed, throws into question

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marginalization, of a more inclusive

refer

their richest form:1 How could Schiller refer
to the child as “a lively representation
to us of the ideal, not indeed as it is
fulfilled, but as it is enjoined,2 or Picasso say, “I used to draw like Ra

Such preoccupations have been a perennial element in Western philosophy, art, literature, spirituality, and psychoanalysis, where the child is a powerful symbolic presence. From Taoism’s baby to the child Hermes and the Hellenistic eroti, to the “little child” of the gospels, to Augustine’s “singing voice of a child” behind the garden wall, to the gloriously naked infant child/spouse to the Virgin of Renaissance art, to Wordsworth’s “best philosopher” and Coleridge’s and Schiller’s unitive knower, to Andersen’s lone witness to the emperor’s naked state, to Freud’s primary narcissist, to Jung’s archetype of the divine child, Levinas’ paradoxical other who is me (“I do not have my child; I am my child”), Lyotard’s infant of the “abîme” and Derrida’s child as a human limit condition along with the animal, the divine, the mad, the primitive; from the Greek contempt and pity for childhood (and womanhood) to the grand psychomaturational ideal, inaugurated by Christianity, of wisdom as a recapitulation of childhood; and so on—this myriad of images of the child in Western thought and art make it clear that the child is a cipher for our deepest preoccupations with fundamental human issues like animal/ human/superhuman, instinct/culture, sexuality/aggression, innocence/evil, autonomy/heteronomy, etc.

What this indicates to me is that any philosophy of childhood is also a philosophy of adulthood, since the two concepts are by definition mutually necessary. The two major attempts we have at the modern history of their relation—Phillipe Ariès’ Centuries of Childhood and Norbert Elias’ The Civilizing Process—show that they were “created”—i.e. given their modern cultural/historical formulation, together. The idea of the child as in need of strict discipline, of separation into age-graded institutions, and even as worthy or in need of the sort of study which culminates centuries later in the standard developmental account—this idea is inextricably connected with a modern ideal of an adult who is in a new position vis-à-vis his “child,” i.e. his bodily, instinctual and affective life, his life as a vulnerable, incomplete, and dependent being. Elias argues that the “new” adult of the Renaissance—actually a product of several centuries of “sociogenesis”—has a much lower shame threshold than his medieval counterpart, and a much stronger sense of himself as an individual rather than as a member of a collective. In short, he is the modern private “self,” who lives in a more repressive, anxious relationship with his own childhood, and therefore with children in general.4 This analysis is confirmed by Ashis Nandy’s account of colonialism and childhood. Both the child and the “native,” he claims, come to represent “inferior versions of the adult.” For the European, they come to represent the repressed, the instinctual life, nature as regression, a “heart of darkness.”5 More recently, in a post-modern, post-Freudian world preoccupied with instinctual liberation, the child still represents nature, the body, instinct, but is welcomed as a symbol of freedom from the oppression of the super-

dom from the oppression of the super-

ego.6

Matthews seems to be ambivalent about the child-adult relation himself, which is perhaps characteristic of our times. On the one hand, he appears to somewhat despise the Romantic view of the child as a regressive, primitivist ideal; on the other, he offers the child as a model for philosophical openness. But one needn’t hold to a mystical, “Heaven lies about us in our infancy” theory to recognize the child as difference. The case can be made on the basis of a whole series of quite obvious lived differences between children and adults: size, experience, hormonal patterns, brain size, state, and structure, radical physical and economic dependence, to name some major ones. How can these help but make for some qualitative difference in lived experience, and therefore for some different forms of knowledge? These differences seem to be under erasure in Matthews’ account.

What’s missing, I would repeat, is a theoretical structure which recognizes the inextricable reciprocity of adult and child, and which understands both children and adults to be involved in a developmental process in which the poles of the relation are interactive and mutually formative. “Child” always lives in a relationship to “adult” as its future, its goal, and its closing; and “adult” is always dealing with the “child” he was and still is—what Bachelard calls the “monumental life” of one’s lost-but-still-present childhood,7 and, correlativelly, with the displacement caused by the presence of actual children in his life. Yes, the child is, as Matthews has argued with characteristic precision, delicacy and charm, a natural denizen of the Western philosophical tradition. In fact “child,” with her “naively profound questions,” (37) is the fountainhead of that tradition, if doing philosophy means “locating the questioning child” in oneself (14). The significance of this for me is, not that children are in many ways just as rational as adults, but that adult rationality is missing something—it is a scaled-down, or unreasonably restricted view of reason—and that the child’s epistemic location represents, in relation to the adult’s location, what Merleau-Ponty described as “a dimension of being and a type of knowledge which man forgets in his natural attitude.” Thus, to reintegrate, among other excluded voices, the excluded voice of the child into
Western reason is related to what he calls "the task of our century, . . . the attempt to explore the irrational and integrate it into an expanded reason." And what Matthews refers to as "the value system that systematically devalues children's thought, their sensibility, their experience and the works of their creation" (123) is a product of that very hegemonic, unexpanded reason of the "natural attitude." Thus childhood, like other forms of excluded reason, is in a prophetic relation to our traditions.

Matthews never claims to be writing the philosophy of childhood; in fact early in the book he says quite explicitly that what he offers is "a personal response to some of the issues that belong to this new subject"(9). I think the book is brilliant in execution, and eminently useful as a text for the exploration of "this new subject"; in fact its very lack of overall integration lends itself nicely to the use of chapters as separate readings. I am simply a little worried that Matthews' own location in mainstream academic philosophy, with its presumptions of disciplinary rigor and/or modesty, might lead him to exclude a wider range of founding questions. These questions are present in all sensitive accounts of childhood, wherever we find them in history, anthropology, literature, psychoanalysis, spirituality, the arts, philosophy, or some integration of those (even child psychology raises some interesting questions about childhood from time to time!).

My worry is probably misplaced. In fact, apart from his being a master of dialectics, it is probably Matthews' location within a stable, boundaried intellectual tradition which enables him to make the arguments he does, and which provides a first opening for the emergence, in these perilous times for children, of a rich, complex, and nuanced philosophy of childhood discourse.

NOTES

By David Kennedy, Western Carolina University
Francine: A Fairy Tale for Philosophers Young and Old

Judith A. Boss

"Methinks that dreams from a remoter world visit the soul during sleep." — Percy Bysshe Shelley

Francine set down her book and laid back on her pillow.

"Free me, I pray you, please free me!" The copy of Flatland fell from her bed onto the floor with a dull plop.

Francine felt herself rising.

Shapelessness began to take shape into flickering forms. She could feel herself floating, now flying. Effortlessly. It was a familiar feeling. Only... she couldn't quite remember... She was flying—flying over rolling hill-pastures that changed to flat fields and towns that looked like gayly colored illustrations from a child's story book.

The scene changed and then rearranged itself back to its former familiarity. On and on she flew to her appointed destination—over countryside that looked familiar yet unfamiliar as though she had traveled this route many times before. Francine glanced around as she hummed a little tune—a Child.

There were roads now with strange objects moving in odd formations. And houses—but not exactly houses like she had known. She could see everything that was going on inside them without really going inside.

"Freedom, oh, Francine," a tiny voice wept (for the name "Francine" means "freedom").

The voice grew louder.

At last... yes, there it was! She could see the source of the cry quite clearly now. It was coming from a small square figure in the town below her.

"Quartus 5, Quartus 5," she called out happily. "I'm here—up here!"

Somewhere she knew his name although she couldn't recall ever having been introduced. She thought too that it was quite an amusing name. The name reminded her of the bottles of milk she had on her cereal for breakfast.

Quadrilateral Quartus 5 (being the fifth son of a fourth son in his family of shapes) jerked to a bisectional position on his prison bed. He looked around anxiously. His points began to sweat.

"What the...?" he muttered, trying to keep from losing control of himself.

"I must be dreaming..."

"I've come at your request, sir," Francine said politely biting her lip to keep from giggling. Amusing and improbable as she found the scene below her she did not forget her manners. "Look up, look up and you'll see me. I'm up here." She waved her hand hoping that would get the square's attention.

"Look 'up?' he finally said almost to himself. "'Up? What is 'up'? There is only longitudinal and latitudinal and variations in between." (Quartus, being a professor by training, had a tendency to get rather pedantic when he was nervous.)

The square glanced furtively around his cell. "You are mocking me. Please don't talk nonsense whatever, whoever, you are."

Then he realized he was talking aloud and immediately stopped lest any guards overhear him and come to investigate. With this in mind, the hapless square settled back in his bed and tried, without success, to fall asleep. It sounded like the voice was coming from inside of him, yet not "inside" of him—that wasn't quite right, he thought to himself. Maybe it was just his lonely mind playing tricks on him. No, the voice was definitely real. Perhaps it was a hidden speaker in his...
cell and his captors were playing tricks on him—trying to break his spirit. What more did they want? Why wouldn't they just leave me alone, he thought bitterly. But no, that didn't make sense either. He'd already renounced his theory and was simply awaiting sentencing now. Being rather pessimistic by disposition Quartus 5 was convinced that the sentence would be a public bisectional execution at dawn. This was the cruelest and most humiliating form of death and was used only for the most dispicable of criminals. It involved bisecting the noble body of a equilateral polygon, into that of angles open for all to see.

"Up here! Look up!" Francine finally replied after giving the matter some thought. For she had no idea what "longitudinal" and "latitudinal" meant and could think of no other way to explain something as simple as "up." She gave a loud sigh.

Her sign created a gust of wind which made the lines of the building to shudder. The square grabbed at the edges of his bed and shivered in fear. "What is it you want," he cried out, forgetting about the guards. "Show yourself. Are you some sort of demon come to torment me in my last hours? What sort of cruel trick is this? Show yourself you basest of cowards!"

"Well, okay," Francine said quite content to play along with his game (at least that's the way she saw it). "I'll show you myself, or at least I'll give it a try if that's what you need to believe that I'm really quite real." With these words she reached down and touched the center of his cell with her index finger.

For a split second, when her finger made contact, a vision appeared in front of Quartus 5 and then disappeared again as quickly when she withdrew her finger.

Quartus 5 almost collapsed into an irregular polygon at the spectacle. "A miracle," he cried, "Oh, a circle, priestly circle. Truly you are a vision from heaven!"

All this floating and flying was making Francine a little giddy. She chuckled and the air tingled like the sound of a thousand harps playing in harmony. Then, in a playful gesture, she reached down and touched the room again, this time a little closer to Quartus 5.

The square gasped and fell prostrate to the floor his corners folded in awe.

"Please, please, get up," Francine giggled, trying to hide her amusement at the sight. "I'm not God or anything like that. I'm just a—well, a girl. I heard you calling for help. Please do get up off the floor." She tried as best she could, under the circumstances, to sound stern yet respectful.

The square slowly pulled himself back into shape. He was deathly pale.

"Why are you afraid of me?" Francine asked giggled. Her mind was whirling now with new thoughts that seemed to come out of nowhere. "Wasn't it you who said we existed? Isn't that why they threw you in jail?"

She didn't know how she knew all this but she did—just like she knew his name before they were even introduced.

"We—who's 'we'?" the square stammered.

"A third dimension. You know—beings from a third dimension," Francine was quite enjoying the new knowledge she seemed to have. "You even talked about how we are real in a speech you gave before the high judge at your trial," she said with the voice of authority. "Have you forgotten so quickly? You're right you know."

Quartus 5 sighed heavily. "Oh me, oh my, how I wish I'd never come up with that theory. It was my undoing. And my poor wife and children—oh the humiliation they have had to endure because of me." He began to weep.

Francine reached down to comfort him. At first she nearly scared him out quickly? You're right you know."

Quartus 5 shook his head, if you just go up and over— that's all. It's simple as ABC." And with that she repeated it once more so he could see how it was done.

Quartus 5 shook his head, if you could call that part of him a head. He was clearly feeling unnerved by the whole experience. "But that's impossible," he replied in a tone of exasperation, his voice getting louder and louder. "An object can only move longitudinally and latitudinally and all variations in between. I don't know what you mean by 'up.' 'Up' has no meaning and hence does not correspond to any reality."

Unfortunately the guards overhead those last words and they were now heading down the hall to investigate the disturbance in cell 9.

"Quickly," Francine said, "there is no time to waste." Just as the guards were opening the cell door Francine scooped up Quartus 5 and deposited him inside another line drawing, which she took to be a house, a few yards away. This world, she noticed, seemed to be on a much smaller scale. A few yards here was more like a few miles in her town. The whole scene sort of reminded her of the doll town—Pleasantville they had named it—she and her sisters had in the attic. The tops of all the doll houses were open so they
could just reach in and pick up one of the dolls or a piece of doll furniture and put it in another room without ever using the doors. Some of the buildings, like the Pleasantville supermarket and the school, were even just drawings she and her sisters had made on big sheets of corrugated cardboard.

Anyway, unbeknownst to her, or perhaps she had known since she wasn't really sure any more what she really knew and didn't know anymore, Francine had put Quartus 5 down in his wife's bedroom. Quartus 5's wife was startled almost to oblivion by her husband's sudden appearance. After recovering her senses, she rushed to him and embraced him. Together they sat down and he recounted all about the incredible events that had happened that evening. "And you should have seen the guards' faces when I just disappeared before their eyes—zap! 'Up' into another dimension," he laughed, having by now forgotten all about the terror he had felt when Francine first appeared.

"Enough of that metaphysical chatter, it's only brought us heartache," she warned him. "But we must find a safer place for you. This is the first place they'll look."

Meanwhile Francine floated lazily above, although Quartus 5 and his wife, being unwilling or unable to look up, seemed quite unaware of her presence. Being three dimensional, Francine could see everything that was going on in the prison at the same time she could see inside the house. In fact, she could even see inside of Quartus and his wife whose name she had discovered was Quadrapula. Quite a lovely name, Francine thought, and wondered if it mean anything. She seemed very sensible, Francine thought.

Francine looked around the house. It was not furnished at all like her own room at home with its dormer windows and white lace curtains and pink floral wallpapered walls with pictures of little angels and bunches of roses on the border along the ceiling. She wondered where her room was right now. Francine was so intent on studying the interior of their house and wondering about different things, that she almost missed seeing the troops approaching the house.

"Quickly, quickly," she called out as she suddenly caught sight of the isosceles police officer at the corner of her eye. "There is no time to loose. Oh, please do hurry!"

Quadrapula paled and lurched for a suitcase beside the bed.

"No, there is no time to get anything together. Quick! Out the back door," Francine urged.

"We must go now, out the back door before they get here. Forget the suitcase," Quadrapula said suddenly. "They are almost here. There is no time to get anything together. Don't ask me how I know, I just know."

"Yes, yes, my very thoughts," replied Quartus 5 somewhat confused. "It's like you read my mind."

"Run! Run!" Francine cried. "They are coming up the front path!" She put her hand down immediately in front of the first row of troops to slow them down. They crumbled as they hit the intersection of her hand with their world. The rest of the troops, seeing what had happened, panicked and turned and ran in the opposite direction as fast as their points would carry them.

* * * * * * * * *

Professor Pointplus, a pentagon, usher the two fugitives into his home. He glanced carefully around to make sure they hadn't been followed and then closed and bolted the door.

After Quartus 5 had related all the events that had transpired in the past few hours, Professor Pointplus sat back and took a deep puff on his pipe.

"Are you saying," he said skeptically, "that you had a visitation from an angel or some alien from another dimension? Is that what you're trying to tell me?"

Quartus 5 felt a sudden pang of despair in his corners. If Professor Pointplus, head of the mathematics department at the greatest theological institution in all of Flatland, didn't believe him who would? "What I am saying," Quartus 5 replied, searching for the right words, "is that it MUST have been a visitor from the third dimension—call it what you like. You remember of course that we did speculate about the existence of a third dimension."

Professor Pointplus smiled and set his pipe down beside him. "Yes," he said slowly as though talking to a child, "speculated—mathematical theory. And as a mathematical theory I agree with it—and the existence of a fourth dimension and a fifth dimension and ad infinitum if you will. I am certainly open-minded when it comes to new ideas."

"But this, ah—this ethereal creature you speak of—these inventions of your imagination (and I don't mean to be rude dear Quartus 5 but I can't think of what else it could be) are really quite far-fetched and impossible. And, I hasten to add," he said tapping his pipe on the edge of the ash tray, "rather childish."

He finished emptying out his pipe and then began again, "Be reasonable, dear Quartus 5. You're a grown square. And you are, or once were, an important figure in the fields of philosophy and science. Now we all know there are no such things as angels or aliens from other dimensions—these creatures are just figments of wishful thinking—a longing for an all powerful parent figure as the great polygon Dr. Sextagone has already demonstrated."

Quartus 5 started to protest but Professor Pointplus raised his hand to silence him. After refilling his pipe, Professor Pointplus continued. "Perhaps your months in prison have affected your mind," he said keeping his voice down as he did not wish to alarm Quartus 5's wife who was in another room visiting with his wife.

"But my escape from prison. My sudden appearance in my own bedroom," Quartus 5 protested. "How can you explain that?"

"I'm sure there is some reasonable explanation. As I said figments of an overactive imagination, wishful thinking, perhaps even," Professor Point-
Quartus 5 objected. "But there is nothing wrong with me. I feel fine. And I must tell the world about my discovery. They'll want to know!"

He looked at his wife, who had just re-entered the room. Surely he could count on her support. "You saw it dear, you saw it. Tell him."

She looked embarrassed. "Yes, at least I think I did," she answered without looking at her husband. "But then--I just don't know. It was all so confusing. I'm not sure what I saw or heard anymore."

"The voice telling us to run," Quartus 5 interjected. "Remember? We both heard the same voice, the very same words? Isn't that right?"

"Yes, but perhaps it was just a coincidence. And the mind can also play tricks on us. There's so much we don't know yet about the brain."

Quartus 5 looked back and forth between the two of them. He felt defeated. Suddenly he felt very sad and lonely and empty.

"Darling, perhaps a little rest wouldn't do any harm. We can go to the Island of Retreat, away from all of this," Quadrupula said, I gently touching his side.

"No! Come away with me, get away from all this craziness," Francine interrupted. Quartus 5 started. The others looked at him with expressions of worried concern.

"They can't hear me any more," Francine said. "They have shut me out. Come away with me to my world. It is so much prettier and there are so many more things to do—games to play, trees to climb, and blue sky and sunshine and all sorts of birds singing—oh, all sorts of things to do!"

"I cannot go. It's out of the question," Quartus 5 suddenly said out loud.

"Huh, what my good square?" Professor Pointplus asked leaning forward.

"I cannot go. It is out of the question," Quartus 5 repeated.

"But it would be a nice vacation," his wife replied softly, thinking he was speaking of the Island of Retreat. "I have a sabbatical coming up soon and then I'll be able to join you there."

"I cannot leave now. Besides what kind of life would it be for a two-dimensional being as myself in a three-dimensional world? I must stay here and make the others believe me now that I know the truth. They are missing so much. I must convince them—make them see," Quartus 5 said resolutely.

Professor Pointplus made a barely perceptible motion to his housekeeper. Francine saw her retreat to the study to phone the isosceles police.

"You must come with me," Francine cried, "or it will be your death. You cannot remain here. Run! They will not believe you. You have already seen. They think you're crazy. They will kill you or lock you away in a mental institution!"

There was a heavy knock at the door. "It's time," a voice called out.

Francine could see the isosceles police patrol at the front door. "They are here," she cried in anguish, for she had by now become quite attached to Quartus 5 and could not bear the thought of seeing him killed or locked away.

She reached down for him.

Another knock. "It's time. It's time," repeated the voice.

Francine jerked to a sitting position and rubbed her eyes.

Her mother opened the bedroom door and poked her head inside. "It's time to get up Francine, dear, or you'll be late to school."

"Oh, I was having the strangest dream," she said to her mother. "Only I can quite remember it."

"Here's your robe dear. No time to dawdle. It's already late."

"Mom, do you believe in angels or aliens from another dimension or that stuff?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I don't know. But I think I do."

Her mother smiled and patted her on the head. "You've always been such an imaginative child," she said affectionately as she left the room. "But come, you're a big girl now. Hurry up or you'll be late for school." Her mother shut the door behind her.

A sense of sadness and loss came over Francine. Tears filled her eyes and gently rolled down her soft cheeks. Francine lay back and looked up at the ceiling. Something was different. She sat up and looked again, wiping the tears from her eyes so she could see more clearly. There between one of the angels and a bunch of roses in the wallpaper border along the top of the window was a square. It was barely discernible, but Francine felt quite sure that it hadn't been there before. It was the most beautiful square she had ever seen, if one could describe a square as beautiful. Francine got up and looked out the window. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful world.
The Natural Enemies of the Moon
Luis Maria Pescetti

"I beg your pardon...Could I ask you a question?"
"Yes."
"How far is the moon from here?"
"From where you are standing or from where I am?"
"Let's see, let me think (thinking)... from where I am."
"Do you want to know the answer in hours or pounds sterling?"
"Well, I had thought of kilos, but it's all the same to me?"
"Well, I should say some fifteen liters away."
"Liters per second or per minute?"
"Per kilo, why?"
"I was trying to figure out the size in terms of the sun."
"Why should you be concerned about that?"
"Well, in case the moon should fall, I would like to be sure that it does so sun-wise and not in the direction of my house."
"We could think it's the earth that will fall on the moon."
"I beg your pardon, I don't understand this sudden change in your reasoning."
"Well, since the earth is bigger than the moon, it will be the latter which will suffer some injur, not the earth."
"Yes, but... What happens if it is I who falls on the moon? Since I am so much smaller, won't I be injured?"
"In that case, yes. Have you noticed a tendency of yours to falling upwards?"
"Well, not exactly that, but last week I got tired climbing three flights of stairs... and yesterday I climbed six with no problem at all."
"Good gracious!"
"And I was carrying a bagful of oranges, some 6 pounds, perhaps."
"Couldn't the oranges have been the reason for your lack of gravity? Or rather, the cause for your being more attractive for the moon?"
"I hadn't thought of that...We shall get a couple of them and experiment (goes into his house, comes back with two oranges). Let's see, you must control. I will first jump with no oranges at all. Would you hold them for me, please?"
"I would rather not do that until we can be sure it was not the oranges."
"I understand. I'll leave them on the floor (leaves oranges on the floor and jumps). How was it?"
"Normal, I would say it was just an ordinary leap."
"Fine. Let's see what happens with an orange (takes one and jumps again). And now?"
"Well, I don't want to frighten you, but I could almost assure you it was a little bit higher."
"Bad indeed! And there's me carrying oranges as if nothing were to happen. Let's go on with the next one." (Takes it and jumps again.)
"I can't believe it! It was clearly higher. My hypothesis is confirmed."
"(Puts a hand on the other's shoulder)."
"My dear friend, I owe my life to you. I would have never imagined that I was being attracted to the moon because of the oranges."
"Do you reckon the moon likes oranges?"
"Maybe she doesn't but she could have some kind of power over them."
"Maybe oranges are to us what fish-hooks are to fish."
"Shocking! If it hadn't been for your participation, who knows? Perhaps in a couple of months, or days. I would be out there, floating irremediably rising."
"I don't want to sound alarming, but... Have you eaten a lot of oranges lately?"
"You are right, yes! As dessert, as juice, in fruit salads, marmalade, duck l'orange, pork a l'orange... I think I'm in danger. There's nothing left to do..."
"Don't despair. We must think of something, there has to be an answer."
"Wear some weight on your feet? No, it would be worse; on one side, I would still be attracted by the moon, and on the other, the weight would keep me down. I would be torn apart!"
"No, I was thinking of something else... We must nullify the effect of the oranges. Oranges, the color itself is made up of...?"
"The combination of red and yellow."
"Both of which are warm colors. Which is a cold color opposite to those?"
"Blue?"
"Perfect! You must eat blue things!"
"You amaze me once again, you are brilliant. Let's see, I must eat blue things, but not just anything, but blue fruit. That's it! Blue fruit... Grapes!"
"Exactly. Grapes are the natural enemies of the moon."
"Please come to market with me, so I can buy orange... Sorry, I meant grapes. It was a lapsus linguae."
"No. You are still under their power, and you will continue so for some time. Oranges will tempt you in an irresistible way, and you will feel that grapes are ugly or evil, nasty. You must be careful."
"You are right, I promise I will eat grapes even if I get crushed to death against the earth because of their weight."
"No, grapes are good. They would never do that to you. Don't allow any negative thoughts to drift by. Would you like to dart off to the moon?"
"Of course not!"
"Then remember that grapes are the natural enemies of the moon. Say it."
"Orange...Oh my God! Again!"
"Try! You are stronger than oranges!"
"(With great difficulty) "Grr... Grr... Grapes. Oh, I feel my blood boiling!"
"Go on, go on! do not give up!"
"...are the natural enemies of the moon."
"Great! Now let's go to market."
"I want an orange! Please! I want to go to the moon!"
"Don't give up, my friend! Let's go to market and get some grapes."
"Ugh! Disgusting! But you're right, let's get some grapes before it's too late."