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Philosophizing with Children's Literature: A Response to Turgeon and Wartenberg

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Introduction

With the maturation of a field comes the opportunity and the responsibility to reflect on its sources, its areas and directions of development, debates among its proponents, and critiques originating from inside and outside the field. While early proponents of philosophy for children supported each other in the face of misunderstanding and misapprehension, differences inevitably arose among them, not only concerning materials and methods, but also concerning the very meanings of philosophy, childhood and education. These differences remain among contemporary scholars, educators and practitioners, who continue to engage in robust debates about how to research and practice philosophy with children and adolescents and how to theorize its foundational concepts. Understanding and sustaining both the practical and theoretical aspects of these debates and their intimate relation to one another is critical to the ongoing vitality and growth of this movement. The more we strive to understand the merits of rival interpretations and the critical value they provide for our own, the more we increase the quality of scholarly argumentation, engage meaningfully with scholarship in related fields, and protect our community of scholars and practitioners from debilitating schisms.

With a view to promoting such scholarly argumentation, in this essay we consider issues addressed by Wendy Turgeon and Thomas E. Wartenberg in their essay, "Teaching Philosophy with Picture Books" in the second volume of *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis* (ATTP) devoted to original essays by "veterans" of the philosophy for children movement (Volume 41, Issue 1, 2021), guest edited by Susan Gardner.[1] We agree with Turgeon and Wartenberg that the question of what kinds of materials are best suited to philosophizing with children continues to be an important topic of research and of debate in our field and, while we appreciate their insights, we characterize the terms and the nature of the debate differently. In doing so, we challenge some of their arguments, as well as their representations and interpretations of certain scholars in the field. In addition, because they review another of the most important current debates in the field—systemic racism in children's literature, in academic research, and in the politics of philosophical dialogue with children—we present an account of our position. We acknowledge that our familiarity with philosophy for children scholarship is limited to that which is written or translated in English and are therefore not aware of contributions about these issues published in other languages.

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[1] For this essay, we also draw on Wartenberg's new book *Thinking Through Stories: Children, Philosophy and Picture Books* (2022) in which he expands on some of the ideas explored in the article with Turgeon. With this book, Wartenberg raises new criticisms of curricular philosophical novels, which we do not address here.

Philosophizing with Children's Literature

As with other practitioners and scholars in our field (Kennedy 1992; Matthews 1976; Murris 2022; Sprod 1993), Turgeon and Wartenberg defend "the use of picture books in philosophical inquiries [as] fundamentally sound and an excellent path to encourage children to engage in philosophical enquiry" (2021:96). While the focus of their scholarship is picture books, many of their arguments apply more broadly to children's literature and even to children's popular media.[2] They argue, for instance, that using picture books "gives the children entrance into a genuine philosophical topic by presenting problematic examples for them to discuss through the engaging lens of a narrative" (2021:107-108). Indeed, the relationship between narrative and philosophical thought has been widely theorized by Cora Diamond (2010), Martha Nussbaum (1992), and others.[3] Therefore, while Turgeon and Wartenberg are correct to highlight the philosophical value of narrative, that value does not distinguish picture books from other forms of adult's and children's media, including the philosophical novels and stories of Lipman and many others (e.g., Bowen 2006, Camhy 2007, 2015, Daniel, 2002, Eyre, 2007, Gaarder 1994, Kennedy, 2012, 2019, Kohan and Vigna 2013, Michaels 2007, Montero 2017, Reed, 1989, Sharp 2000a, 2000b). Nor is "the delight that children have in being read aloud to" (2021:107) a unique feature of picture books. Elsewhere, Wartenberg emphasizes that picture books are "charming and enjoyable," with "entertaining narratives" (2022:36). Another advantage identified by Turgeon and Wartenburg (that is also not unique to picture books) is that they are familiar to parents and teachers who may be unfamiliar with philosophy. This is a significant advantage, particularly in light of the "wide range of [web-based] materials" they cite that support using specific picture books in philosophical inquiry (2021:106).

Turgeon and Wartenberg note that the images in picture books stimulate children's imagination (see 2021:99), and that "[m]any stories include a whimsical use of pictures to suggest such a second narrative as a supportive and enhancing account of the verbal story or perhaps even a sub/contra-text [...] for philosophical inquiry" (2021:103). These insightful remarks indicate the need to theorize how images, as well as narratives, can have philosophical meaning. Wartenberg has written on this topic (2006) and on philosophy in film (2007) (another kind of image). Joanna Haynes and Karin Murris (2012; see also Murris 2016, 2022) have advanced our understanding of how images in picture books work in the context of philosophical inquiry. We note that some stories and novels written as stimulus texts for philosophy for children have been illustrated (e.g., Sharp 2000; Cam 1998), though not (as yet) with high-value artwork.

Turgeon and Wartenburg conclude: "Our position is not that one method for engaging children in philosophical inquiry is better than the other, but that each has important virtues as well as

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[2] Turgeon and Wartenberg do not explain how they distinguish picture books from other formats of children's literature. Elsewhere, Wartenberg distinguishes "three basic types of illustrated books: illustrated novels, picture books, and comics, of which graphic novels are a particular kind," and indicates that illustrated novels are "generally intended for adult consumption" (2022:53), though he also states that his "approach" uses both "picture books and also chapter books" (2022:41). It seems clear that Turgeon and Wartenberg understand picture books to be books for younger children in which illustrations play an integral, rather than an incidental function.

[3] Interestingly, Matthews and Lipman came to see the power of narrative to engage students in philosophical inquiry at about the same time: Matthews delivered "Philosophy in Children's literature" as a lecture in 1973 (later published in 1976) only a few years after Lipman piloted *Harry Stottleemeir's Discovery* in 1972.

drawbacks" (2021:96). While we agree that different kinds of texts have different virtues and drawbacks for use in philosophizing with children, we disagree that there is a difference of methods or approaches here—a 'Lipmanian approach' and a 'picture books approach.'[4] It is commonplace in educational discourse to distinguish curriculum—the materials used to teach a subject matter—from pedagogy—the method used to teach it. In the case of philosophy for children, the subject matter is philosophy and the pedagogy is philosophical inquiry. Indeed, the web-based resources Turgeon and Wartenberg cite are pedagogical resources for how to inquire philosophically with almost any stimulus text. They assume that in defending the use of picture books, they are defending a distinct approach to philosophizing with children. To defend that assumption, more would have to be said about how picture books necessitate a unique pedagogical approach (which might, then, disqualify some of the web-based resources they cite). Indeed, the fact that elsewhere, Wartenberg uses the Lipman/Sharp phrases "a community of philosophical inquiry" (2022:80) and "a classroom community of inquiry" (2022:81)—without attribution—to describe philosophical discussions using picture books, indicates that this is not a different approach. Turgeon and Wartenberg are more correct when they cite different "approaches to the use of picture books" (2021:103).

If the issue raised by Turgeon and Wartenberg is about curriculum rather than pedagogy, it has to do with how different curricular materials support philosophical discussion, rather than with the merits of different approaches to philosophizing with children. Moreover, by positioning themselves as defending an approach, Turgeon and Wartenberg make it seem as if *all* picture books qualify as useful resources for philosophical inquiry, which, of course, is not the case.[5] Once it is accepted that many picture books can be useful in philosophical inquiry with children and adolescents—a moot point if our reading of the literature is correct—other, more significant considerations come into focus. Philosophy for children facilitators are then called upon to select materials based on their philosophy content and their appropriateness for particular educational contexts, such as whether they contain images or messages that are problematic in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and whether they offer diverse representation among those categories.[6] The fact that many proponents of doing philosophy with children's literature have published guides for its use in philosophizing with children, including Matthews,[7] Sprod (1993), Turgeon (2020), Wartenberg (2009), and others, is another indication that using children's literature is not a unique approach. However, these guides do point to an important difference in philosophy for children programs: whether and how teachers and others without academic preparation in philosophy are meant to facilitate children's philosophy. Without commenting on this broader issue, Turgeon and Wartenberg acknowledge that:

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[4] Elsewhere, Wartenberg describes this distinction as between "two fundamental approaches," one pioneered by Lipman and one by Matthews (2022:42).

[5] Wartenberg disagrees, stating categorically that "there are no picture books that cannot be used by creative facilitators to initiate philosophical discussions" (2022:106).

[6] Lipman's curricular novels have been justly critiqued for containing gender stereotypes, for instance, that "moms are often busy at the stove while dads are represented sitting in an armchair reading the newspaper; the boys embody analytical (Harry) or critical (Tony) thinking skills; Mark is a rebellious protester while his sister Maria is docile and obedient; and Lisa and Suki represent intuitive and creative thinking" (Miraglia 2021:84; see also Wartenberg 2022).

[7] See Matthews' curriculum series *Wise Owl: Talking and Thinking about Children's Literature* at https://www.montclair.edu/iapc/wise-owl/.

> Most teachers at the pre-college levels are not themselves well versed in philosophy, its concepts, and tools of analysis. Using children's literature may be difficult without a lot of support, either in terms of guiding documents that highlight potential philosophical avenues for discussion or the presence of an experienced P4C [philosophy for children] practitioner who can help shape the dialogue, along with the teacher. (2021:104)[8]

This problem has received considerable attention in the field (see, e.g. Gazzard 2012, Gardner and Weber 2009). Laurance J. Splitter and Sharp argue, for instance, that with the proper disciplinary preparation, students and teachers can develop "an awareness of the philosophical dimensions inherent in the material in question" (1995:185).

In summary, the benefits of picture books identified by Turgeon and Wartenberg are not unique to picture books, but apply to most forms of children's literature and media, including curricular philosophical novels; and the question of what to use in philosophizing with children is a curricular and not a pedagogical matter. In relation to the latter, the method Turgeon and Wartenberg describe for philosophizing with picture books is one that applies equally to other curricular philosophical stories and novels:

> One of the basic tenets of Philosophy for Children is to let the children determine the direction the discussion is to take. The idea is to encourage the children to explore their own ideas through interactions with their peers. In order to do this, the teacher needs to be self-effacing, that is, they must refrain from putting their own ideas into the mix or shutting down an avenue of inquiry because it was not what they had planned. There remains a strong role for them as the discussion's facilitator [...]. (2021:104)

We see this as more evidence that Turgeon and Wartenberg have not identified a distinctive approach; rather, they have expressed a preference for using picture books over other suitable curriculum materials.

The Philosophy for Children Founders on Philosophical Texts

Gareth B. Matthews

A significant shortcoming of Turgeon and Wartenberg's essay is that it gives short shrift to the legacy of the late American philosopher Gareth B. Matthews (1929-2011), who was the first to write about philosophy in children's literature—including picture books—and to experiment with using

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[8] On this point, Splitter and Sharp argue that, "Even though some might believe that approaching philosophical issues through picture books and novels is easier than working from purpose-written materials, we suspect that it is more likely to be the other way around. In most countries today, teachers are not trained in the art and craft of philosophical inquiry. To explore the philosophical dimensions of literature—and to teach children to do the same—requires an expertise that cannot be taken for granted, especially given the complexity of a good piece of literature" (1995:185). Elsewhere, Wartenberg acknowledges that "In my earlier book [2009/2014] I asserted that *anyone* could facilitate elementary-school philosophy discussion [...]. But I was not saying that a facilitator did not need to have *any* philosophical knowledge in order to facilitate a philosophical discussion. I only claimed that they could find all the information they needed in my book because it presented detailed analyses of a set of picture books I suggested using, including a discussion of the philosophical theses put forward in each picture book" (2022:75, emphasis in the original).

children's books to initiate philosophical conversations with children and with his university students (see Laverty and Gregory 2022a; Murris 2022). These experiments led to Matthews' 1973 lecture, "Philosophy and Children's Literature,"[9] his "Thinking in Stories" column, in which he reviewed philosophical children's stories,[10] and his teacher guides *Wise Owl: Talking and Thinking about Children's Literature*.[11] Wartenberg featured material from Matthews *Wise Owl* series on the innovative website "Teaching Children Philosophy" he developed at Mount Holyoke College.[12] Matthews created his own website "Philosophy for Kids!,"[13] including his "Philosophy Startup Kit for Schoolkids." These websites, in turn, became the model for the website "Philosophy and Children's Literature" at the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children.[14] Matthews' use of children's stories to prompt philosophical dialogues became a compelling alternative to Lipman's curricular philosophical novels, and has become the predominant approach to philosophy for children.

In addition to originating the use of children's literature for children's philosophy and creating the first curricular guide for doing so, Matthews initiated philosophy in children's literature as a field of scholarship. Over four decades, he published extensively in this new field (see e.g., 1976, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1994, 2004, 2005, 2009), and today there is a secondary literature on his work (see Carlisle 1992; Cavell 2008; Gregory and Laverty 2022a; Haynes and Murris 2012; Johansson 2011; Kennedy 1999, 2010; Kidd 2020; Murris 2022; Wartenberg 2008). Matthews' legacy in theorizing and promoting philosophy in children's literature has been extended by practitioners and scholars who learned from his example, including Sara Goering (2007), Jana Mohr Lone (2022), Peter Shea (2022), and Wartenberg himself.[15] Regrettably, Turgeon and Wartenberg diminish Matthews' contribution to the observation that, "Early on Gareth Matthew[s] used familiar children's stories like [Arnold Lobel's] Frog and Toad readers to explore rich philosophical topics like friendship, loyalty, and self-image" (2021:102).

The only other attention Turgeon and Wartenberg give Matthews is to take issue with the charge made by Morteza Khosronejad and Soudabeh Shokrollahzadeh that Matthews and Wartenberg are "instrumentalists" regarding children's books. However, they misconstrue that charge as having to do with "focusing solely on the storyline itself, paying insufficient attention to the images and the story they might tell" (2021:102). In fact, while Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh do make that latter charge, their concern about instrumentalism is different: that because the founders of philosophy for children lacked a theoretical understanding of children's literature, including picture books, they used children's literature merely as an instrument for doing philosophy, which had both a negative effect

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[9] Matthews subsequently presented the essay to the American Philosophical Association and published it in the journal *Metaphilosophy* in 1976.

[10] See www.montclair.edu/iapc/thinking-in-stories. By Wartenberg's (2022) definition of 'picture book,' virtually all of the fifty-eight children's books Matthews reviewed for the "Thinking in Stories" column were picture books.

[11] See www.montclair.edu/iapc/wise-owl.

[12] The site was redesigned by, and is now hosted by the Prindle Institute for Ethics at DuPauw University. See https://www.prindleinstitute.org/teaching-children-philosophy

[13] See www.philosophyforkids.com.

[14] See https://www.philosophyforchildren.org/resources/questions-library.

[15] In his new book, Wartenberg credits Matthews with introducing him to philosophy for children and acknowledges that "I saw myself as carrying on in his footsteps" (2022:51). He also credits Matthews with being the first to propose using commercially published children's books to philosophize with children (2022:41).

on children's appreciation of, and attitude toward literature, and a limiting effect on the founders' ability to theorize philosophy for children itself.[16] Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh do not, in fact, charge either Matthews or Wartenberg with this kind of instrumentalism. They explicitly state that "Contrary to Lipman, who instrumentalizes children's literature, considering it a 'springboard', [...c]hildren's fictions [sic] for Matthews is authentic literature" (2020:8). Indeed, Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh credit Matthews with discovering "a new genre in children's literature named by him 'philosophical whimsy'" (2020:8). As Kenneth B. Kidd put it, Matthews "preferred materials that playfully stage philosophical issues to materials that explicitly model philosophical processes (e.g., *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*) or introduce philosophical thinkers (e.g. *Kierkegaard and the Mermaid*)" (2020:41).

Elsewhere, Wartenberg describes a unique approach to philosophizing with children that Matthews developed as a Research Fellow at the School of Epistemics at the University of Edinburgh. Matthews conducted philosophical dialogues with children that began with original, philosophical story-beginnings he wrote, which he then completed based on the children's dialogue and shared with them to evaluate (see Matthews 1984; Burdick-Shepherd and Cammarano 2022). Noting that these stories resemble Lipman's novels in consisting of dialogues among children about traditional philosophical issues, Wartenberg claims that "The problem with both of these philosophers' procedures is that they limit the range of potential issues that children cannot [sic] discuss in their philosophy sessions to those that are widely acknowledged as philosophical in the Analytic tradition of philosophy" (2022:45). While it is a mistake to categorize Lipman as an analytic philosopher, we agree that any philosopher's background and field of research will necessarily inform—and therefore limit—their preference for, if not their recognition of, certain kinds of philosophical issues (see Kohan and Cassidy 2022, Laverty and Gregory 2022, Murris 2022). Of course, this applies to philosophers who recognize philosophy in picture books no less than to those who write curricular philosophical stories (Matthews famously did both); and as Wartenberg allows, the latter can very well include philosophical issues from a variety of philosophical traditions, as evidenced by the curricular philosophical novels of David Kennedy (2012, 2019).

Matthew Lipman

Lipman's views on the educational uses of literature were complex and evolved over the course of his life. As Turgeon and Wartenberg observe, he "believed that philosophical novels written with the express purpose of engaging children in philosophical discussions were better suited than picture books to the task of introducing philosophy into elementary school classrooms" (2021:96). One misgiving Lipman had about children's books in general was his impression that they disrespect children, in failing to portray the poignant problematicity of children's experience. In his estimation, "children are thought to inhabit a world whose security is ensured by adults, a world into which the

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[16] This is also the crux of Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh's critique of Lipman. Turgeon and Wartenberg, however, attribute the critique to Lipman himself. They claim, without reference, that a "'Lipmanian' argument against using [picture books] notes the danger of ruining an imaginative story by treating it in too utilitarian a manner, say, by mining it for philosophical ideas. Literature should not be used for philosophical discussions, the argument goes, because that is not its 'job.' The function and beauty of literature will be lost if it is used simply as a jumping off tool for philosophical discussion" (2021:96) Lipman made no such claim that we can discover.

threat of problematicity does not intrude, with the result that, under such circumstances, active thinking on the child's part is hardly necessary" (1988:186-187).

Believing that "the image of the child that children's literature projects has much to do with the image of themselves that children internalize" (1988:187), Lipman concluded that children should see themselves mirrored in "stories of thoughtful, sensitive children acting courageously or in ways that show profound care and concern" (1996a:35). Defending his own philosophical novels for not including "kidnapers or extra-terrestrials or downhill racers," he explained that "these romantic, other-worldly characters or events in which we all love to dwell are ways of defying or escaping the inevitable necessity of making judgments" (1996a:32-33). Lipman was rightly concerned that "the more remote the models are from actuality, the more difficult it is to identify with them (1996a:34).[17] Nevertheless, as Matthews recognized, fantasy, science fiction, dystopian fiction, and counterfactual historical fiction often raise thought experiments, moral dilemmas, and other philosophical perplexities ripe for inquiry (see Gregory and Laverty, 2022b).

Lipman's claim that children's literature does not portray either the complexity and problematicity of children's experience or children's capacity to inquire, reason, and make judgments that improve their circumstances, may well hold of a great deal of children's media today; it may have been true to a greater extent in 1988, when he made that observation, and it was likely quite true of the books he read as a child. Most media for children is, after all, produced for, and shaped by the market economy, the interests of which are often in tension with literary and artistic concerns; and much of what is commonly regarded as of high quality (including many 'classics') is riddled with racial, gender, and class biases (see Nel 2017).[18] Still, Lipman's claim is certainly false with respect to the market as a whole. Describing what he calls "the philosophical turn" in children's literature, Kenneth B. Kidd notes that "children's literature is drawing nearer adult fiction, resembling such in complexity and aesthetic sophistication [and] also drawing nearer adult critical discourse" (2020:8). Kidd observes that while "Children's literature can be narrowly prescriptive [...], much of the time it is imaginative, expansive, and surprising in its strategies of engagement and cultivation" (2020:4). He is confident, further, that "contemporary children's literature often models and invites critical engagement" (2020:12). Indeed, as Turgeon and Wartenberg point out, "characters in certain picture books are depicted as engaged in philosophical discussions" (2021:97).

Lipman's own recognition of the philosophical sophistication of some children's literature is reflected in his commissioning Matthews to write the "Thinking in Stories" column, for *Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children*. Nevertheless, Lipman did not believe such literature could sufficiently model the processes of philosophical inquiry for children. For Lipman, because children are capable of skillful thinking and collaborative inquiry, they deserve to be educated in exemplary methods for

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[17] Thus, reflecting on her students' experience with one of Lipman's novels, a sixth-grade teacher in Washington, D.C. recognized that "areas that have to do with the kinds of concerns they have to deal with in their own lives manage to surface often when analyzing this book" (Harris 1991:73).

[18] Wartenberg seems unaware of this problem. While claiming, correctly, that "picture books [...] have the potential to counter problematic views children imbibe from popular culture" (2022:69), he does not suppose that picture books are an important part of children's popular culture and that a great many of them communicate 'problematic views'.

doing so. He theorized that narrative texts are more effective for that purpose than expository texts that explain those processes. Indeed, Lipman seems to have had Matthews in mind when he wrote:

> Children are, some people have gone so far as to claim, "natural philosophers." Establish a free and benign environment, and children will naturally engage in higher-order thinking. Models of such thinking are not required. I doubt that there is much evidence to support this claim. We are led, then, to consider the alternative thesis, which is that modeling is needed in order to elicit higher-order thinking from children. (1991:218-219)[19]

As Turgeon and Wartenberg point out, the need for such modeling was the reason Lipman invented the genre of the curricular philosophical children's novel, that should "provide models of inquiry, models of cooperation and models of caring, sensitive individuals [that] demonstrate the feasibility of such an ideal children's community" (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan 1980:170).

Lipman developed a unique theory of how a curricular novel that combines narrative and expository formats, as well as conceptual and schematic modes of organization, can provide many kinds of cognitive modeling, including logic, mental acts, dialogue, and philosophical themes (see Lipman 1991:212-225, 1996a). With regard to logic, Lipman designed novels that

> employ two distinct models of logic. One, exhibited through a progressive discovery of rules explicitly stated, is that of a deductive system of formal logic. The other consists of a kind of 'good reasons' approach [which] emphasizes the seeking of reasons for opinions, actions, and beliefs, together with the assessment of the reasons given." (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1977:109-110, emphasis in the original)

Lipman also sought to dramatize education that involves recursiveness: "things like *thinking about thinking* and *inquiry into inquiry* and *learning to learn*. And with recursiveness, children are in a position to assume [...] more responsibility for their own education" (1996a:29, emphasis in the original). Yet, he also intended his novels to "indicate to [readers] the occasions on which logical thought is appropriate and those on which non-logical thought might be preferable" (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980:176).

Another kind of cognitive modeling Lipman's novels provide is the depiction of children employing diverse mental acts and thinking styles. Thus, various characters in the novel *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* are meant to consistently demonstrate "wondering (*Harry Stottlemeier*), thinking in formal logical patterns (Tony Melillo), intuitive or hunch-like thinking (Lisa Terry), seeking and enjoying explanations (Fran Wood), being sensitive to the feelings of others (Anne Torgerson), and

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[19] As Nussbaum observed, "Lipman [...] thinks that children can profit early on from highly specific attention to the logical properties of thought, that they are naturally able to follow logical structure, but that it usually takes guidance and leading to help them develop their capacities" (2010:73). Kenneth B. Kidd makes a similar observation: "Especially for Matthews, the child is not merely a capable practitioner of philosophy but rather the most exemplary one. Lipman is not as rhapsodic about the child as Matthews [...]. All children are curious, Lipman believes, and all children can think philosophically. Matthews, however, courts a romantic understanding of the child as natural philosopher [...]" (2020:32). Wartenberg also views children as "natural-born philosophers" (2022:17,33,112).

thinking creatively (Mickey Minkowski)" (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980:147). Lipman noted that "it is literature that introduces us to the depicted performance of specific mental acts. Jane Austen's characters infer, presume, speculate, guess, and consider" (1988:186-187; 1991:238).

Central to Lipman's novels is that they offer models of dialogue,

> [...] both of children with one another, and of children with adults. They are models that are non-authoritarian, anti-indoctrinational, that respect the values of inquiry and reasoning, encourage the development of alternative modes of thought and imagination, and sketch out what it might be like to live and participate in a small community where children have their own interests yet respect each other as people and are capable at times engaging in cooperative inquiry [...]. (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980:105)

One fifth-grade teacher in Washington, D.C. observed this kind of modeling in real time:

> [Lipman's] stories were interesting and a challenge to the students, for it gave them an opportunity to compare themselves with some of the characters in the story who were in the same age range as themselves. It gave them an opportunity to observe how these characters were inquisitive [...]. They were able to see how these children continuously explored the How?, What?, When?, Where?, and Who? of situations in the story. The stories enabled the students to investigate, observe and understand that it's normal to think and read as the characters did in the story. (Harris 1991:53)

Nussbaum similarly observed that Lipman's "series of books—in which complex ideas are always presented through engaging stories about children figuring things out for themselves—show again and again how this attention to logical structure pays off in daily life," (2010:73-74) and that "The series as a whole takes students to the point where they might begin to work through Plato's Socratic dialogues on their own" (2010:75-76).

Wartenberg suggests that the modeling of philosophical dialogue is "another reason for using picture books to teach children philosophy" (2022:71). He notes that "stories that model a philosophical discussion, such as virtually all of Arnold Lobel's Frog and toad stories, are helpful in this regard because children can take from the character's interactions an initial understanding of how to take part in a philosophical discussion" (2022:111). Wartenberg acknowledges that this is what Lipman refers to as 'modeling', but implies that picture books do it better, though his thinking on this point is difficult to follow: "I was critical of [Lipman] for not explaining how such modeling was supposed to work to get children to understand the nature of philosophical dialogues. The difference is that in discussing bravery through "Dragons and Giants" [Lobel 1979], children come to see both Frog and Toad as engaged in the very same type of activity as they are" (2022:71).

Quite a different order of modeling Lipman intended his curriculum to perform was to reconstruct important themes, debates, and positions from the history of (Western) philosophy—not as authoritative, but as resources for exploring children's philosophical questions. As Darryl De Marzio notes, in Lipman's novels, the Western tradition "is not presented as a series of historical epochs (e.g., ancient philosophy, modern philosophy, post-modern philosophy), or a series of systems

of thought (e.g., idealism, rationalism, empiricism), or an orientation to the major figures of philosophy (e.g., Plato, Descartes, Kant)" (De Marzio, 2011:42). Rather, as Lipman put it, "Such a curriculum would represent central themes from the history of philosophy but would be translated into ordinary language.[...] It would also be sequential, so that successive stages would amplify old themes and introduce new ones, present new points of view, and provide for a critical look at other disciplines" (1988:183).[20]

In his new book, Wartenberg acknowledges that "Lipman's novels make good choices for teachers with little or no philosophical background but a desire to incorporate philosophy into their classrooms" (2022:44-45). However, he criticizes Lipman's novels for being "designed to raise very specific philosophical problems for the children to discuss [which] seems to go against his own recommendation to allow the children to discuss what they want," and because "the philosophical issues that Lipman includes in his novels are ones that *he* recognizes as distinctly philosophical" (2022:45, emphasis in the original). These criticisms are not against being directive in introducing children to traditional philosophical problems—which applies to the use of children's literature as well as to curricular philosophical novels, and which Wartenberg explicitly recommends: "One reason that I start the discussion with a preselected question is that this ensures that the initial question is a philosophical one. It also allows the facilitator to be better prepared" (Wartenberg 2022:79). Rather, Wartenberg here critiques the apparent contradiction in Lipman's embedding philosophical issues from Western philosophy in his novels while insisting that children's philosophizing begin from their own questions. Following John Dewey's lead, Lipman's novels foreground the aesthetic, ethical, political, and other philosophical dimensions of ordinary experience, and provide a variety of perspectives on those dimensions from the Western canon. Children are thus introduced to these predetermined areas but are invited to raise questions about anything that puzzles or interests them.

The manuals that accompany Lipman's novels contain resources to support multiple avenues of inquiry the children may pursue. Lipman believed that the more children come to recognize these philosophical dimensions in their own experience, the more they will inevitably raise questions about them—as they will in recognizing the scientific, religious, and other dimensions of their experience. Granted, providing children access to questions, concepts, and debates from a philosophical tradition as part of their cultural heritage is not an aim of all, or probably most practitioners or theorists of philosophy for children today. But for those who uphold this aim, it makes a difference in the selection of materials to be used with children. As Splitter and Sharp expressed this aim:

> [W]e emphasise that Philosophy for Children aspires to be a philosophy curriculum in the classroom, and not merely a timeslot for providing teachers and students with opportunities to 'do philosophy' in an ad hoc and unstructured manner.[...] [F]ew would seriously suggest that a curriculum in [mathematics, science or history] could consist of a

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[20] In his 1969 university textbook *Discovering Philosophy* Lipman printed selections from philosophers in thematic sections, each of which ended with a fictional dialogue written by Lipman, between two of the philosophers in the section. Lipman could not and did not claim that his curricular philosophy novels represent the entirety of Western philosophy, and he has been justly critiqued for omitting significant aspects of that tradition, such as the Frankfurt school (see Waksman and Kohan 2013). It is important to note, however, that, in keeping with many professional philosophers in Europe and North America at the time (and to a lesser extent, today), Lipman used 'philosophy' to mean Western philosophy exclusively, which largely neglected women and non-White philosophers, and often ignored racial justice when considering justice.

random collection of stories which might generate some discussion of a mathematical, scientific or historical nature. Our primary argument is [...] that serious philosophical inquiry [...] is more likely to bear fruit when [...] students are given the opportunity to engage philosophy as a discipline and a curriculum. We must face the reality that if we want to bring a sense of structure, continuity, comprehensiveness, and even profundity to philosophy in the classroom, finding a collection of philosophical themes and concepts within the pages of a picture book or novel is unlikely to do the job. (1995:187)

Here Splitter and Sharp acknowledge that their argument for a philosophy curriculum in no way disqualifies the use of children's books in thinking and talking philosophically, though they relegate such books to a secondary role. The attempt to initiate children into philosophy as a discipline—characterized by certain kinds of questions, methods of inquiry, cognitive and social practices, and a history of ideas—rather than to merely provide children the opportunity to philosophize, is the most important contrast between the approach initiated by Lipman and Sharp and that initiated by Matthews.

Apart from the philosophical novel, Lipman also believed that children learn how to be reasonable from other models—all of which apply to philosophizing with picture books—including the sound pedagogical judgments of teachers[21] (especially judgments that facilitate children's reasoning), the behaviors of other children in a community of inquiry, and the cognitive interactions of the child's family upbringing (see Lipman, 1991:218-291; 1996a:31-33). Significantly, Lipman's theory of the text, the family, the teacher, and the community of inquiry as cognitive models derives from his study of social learning theory, as delineated by George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner. As Lipman observed, "One of the advantages of holding a social theory of cognition is that it provides a role for cognitive modeling as part of the learning process" (1996a:33). Indeed, the power of cognitive modeling through social interaction has been verified in numerous empirical studies conducted by contemporary educational psychologists (see Reznitskaya and Gregory, 2013).

This is not to say that Lipman's theory of what constitutes reasonableness, or his theory of the role of cognitive modeling in education for reasonableness is unproblematic. Nor do we claim that Lipman's novels ideally operationalize the kinds of modeling recommended in his theories. Here we simply indicate the nature and the complexity of these theories, which Turgeon and Wartenberg do not address. Nor do they take issue with Lipman's position that helping children to become more thoughtful (reasonable, imaginative, and morally sensitive) is among the primary purposes of engaging children in philosophical practice. Their only disagreement with Lipman concerns his position that using stories that model thoughtful children is the ideal way to do so. However, the objections they raise to this position are rhetorical and anecdotal:

Can't children learn to be thoughtful from their interactions with each other in philosophy discussions even if the stories they read do not provide a model of such

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[21] "[T]eachers can begin to view themselves as co-learners, co-searchers for more sufficient and comprehensive answers, always willing to listen to anyone ("even a child") who might have fresh and original insights about human concerns. The teacher then becomes a philosophical model for the children in the classroom which confirms the children in their freedom to think for themselves, to create new and fresh alternatives when confronted with problems of prime importance" (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan 1977:12).

thoughtfulness? We see no reason to deny this possibility [...]. And indeed, we have found that the children we have worked with using picture books do become more thoughtful as a result of their interactions with their peers under the guidance of a facilitator. (2021:97)

It is significant that Turgeon and Wartenberg here attribute children's learning to be thoughtful to the pedagogy of well-facilitated philosophical dialogue. Indeed, they point to the aspects of that pedagogy highlighted in social learning theory. For Lipman, the philosophical content of a children's story (literary or curricular) and the pedagogical practice of a community of philosophical inquiry are both necessary for the kind of learning he had in mind. Regarding the former, there is clearly much more to Lipman's theory of the narrative text as cognitive model than Turgeon and Wartenberg relate. This is fair enough, given the scope of their essay; however, it is unfair that they imply that Lipman took the efficacy of his novels as "self-evident" without any theoretical or empirical justification.[22]

Regarding literary standards, Turgeon and Wartenberg opine that "the philosophical novels that Lipman wrote are not great works of literature" (2021:97). Kidd observes similarly and in greater detail that "Lipman's novels in dialogue compare unfavorably to contemporary children's literature, as well as to the classics that Matthews champions. *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* is deadly earnest and not whimsical in the least. Most children would find it hard going, and it never took off as literature" (Kidd, 2020:47). Of course, this criticism is not universal. And as Turgeon and Wartenberg allow, Lipman "was open about [his novels] not being great works of literature, but that was not his goal" (2021:97). Notably, the philosophical children's novels by Gaarder, Kennedy, Sharp, and others have not drawn similar criticism. Nor can Wartenberg's categorical praise of "[t]he charm and wonder so evident in picture books" (2022:60) be substantiated by a review of picture books currently published.

We now move to consider Turgeon and Wartenberg's engagement with critiques of Lipman by Murris, Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh. Turgeon and Wartenberg paraphrase Murris's critique that "Lipman prioritizes a very specific notion of philosophy, academic Analytic philosophy, thereby failing to do justice to his own goal of creating genuinely reflective children" (2021:98). Regarding the latter, what Murris in fact argues is that:

> With Lipman's and therefore P4C's epistemological and ontological roots in Plato's rationalism and American Pragmatism, his preference for Anglo-American philosophy is understandable and justifiable. But his selection of what to include and exclude in [his] P4C curriculum has turned some philosophers (e.g. in Germany), who otherwise might have been interested in [his] P4C curriculum, against it." (2016b: 67)

Significantly, Murris (2022) makes the same critique of Matthews' selection and analysis of philosophical children's literature. As Turgeon and Wartenberg note, however, "there are recent examples of specifically written 'philosophical novels' which are linked to alternative models of philosophy, such as phenomenology and continental philosophical [sic] in general" (2021:98).

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[22] "Lipman's assertion about the advantage of using expressly written philosophical novels is not entirely justified. It is not at all self-evident that the most appropriate way to teach young children to philosophize is to have them read novels in which the characters are shown engaging in philosophical discussions" (Turgeon and Wartenberg, 2021:97).

Turgeon and Wartenberg also cite Murris' observation that "Lipman's novels start with the 'abnormal' child, the thinking child—the adult philosopher's child" (2016b: 63). They somewhat misconstrue her to mean that "the children depicted in Lipman's novels are not ordinary children who are acting the way children normally do" (2021:98), whereas Murris's argument is broader and more radical, and includes children's literature:

> Not only [Lipman's] philosophical novels, but also existing children's literature, perpetuate many adults' assumptions about who and what children are and is therefore never politically innocent. Texts written for children are not only didactic when they encourage children to behave like sensible or thoughtful adults, but in an even more dangerously subtle way, [when] they legitimise and encourage children to behave in a way that—according to some—is 'natural' to children. (2016b:63)

Neither is Murris's concern, as Turgeon and Wartenberg put it, that there is "a tendency within education to ignore the real child as a person and substitute some model from psychology or educational theory [that] fails to honor the very real capabilities of children to reflect on their experiences" (2021:98). Rather, she is concerned that most stories for children—those by Lipman as well as those in children's literature, including picture books—are written and used by adults in such a way as to prevent children from challenging the messages they convey about what it means to be a child. For that, Murris contends, teachers need to know how to invite children to "meta-think" about the story—something that "cannot be modeled by a text itself as each text requires a 'stepping-out', a critical reflection on the narrative itself in ad infinitum. Whether this text is a philosophical novel from the P4C curriculum, or a picturebook makes no significant difference when engaging in the meta-thinking" (Murris, 2016b:75). Cleary, Murris is here addressing pedagogy rather than curriculum, and while Turgeon and Wartenberg do not address this argument, we agree with Murris and Kidd that certain texts, including comics, graphic novels, and picture books are more likely to "unsettle expectations about form and content as well as child-adult relation" (Kidd, 2020:54).

Another argument for preferring children's literature to Lipman's novels is attributed by Turgeon and Wartenberg to Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh, who are said to argue that "Lipman's position implicitly limits philosophy to logical/rational discourse and misses the rich depths of the role of imagination in making meaning" (2021:98).[23] In the first place, we note that Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh make no such claim. In fact, they interpret Lipman to "suppose the tradition of writing purposefully philosophical narratives as encouraging rather than pre-empting children's imagination" (2020:5). Second, we note that the bulk of Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh's critique—that in spite of his intentions, Lipman's novels fail to engage children's imagination—is their own summary of Haynes and Murris (2012), whom Turgeon and Wartenberg neglect to cite on this point. Third, because this is a response essay to Turgeon and Wartenberg, we do not take up the argument as presented by Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh or Haynes and Murris here. Instead, we suggest that Lipman's rejection of the false dichotomy between logical rigor and imagination (see Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan 1980:99) was a major theme of his early work in Deweyan aesthetics

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[23] Turgeon and Wartenberg, however, defend Lipman by stating that "Exploring how language works and what concepts are is a primary activity of the young child and Lipman's approach does focus on this" (2021: 98).

(1967), his philosophical novel *Suki* (1978) which foregrounds aesthetic experience, his early championing of creative thinking as a necessary component of higher-order thinking (1991), and his extensive writing about moral imagination (e.g., Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980). Given this, we are puzzled that Turgeon and Wartenberg relay Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh's argument as unproblematic.

To conclude, Turgeon and Wartenberg offer no evidence that there was anything like an "admonition of Lipman and his followers not to use picture books in elementary school philosophy discussions" (2021:102).[24] A more accurate summary of Lipman's view would be that while many children's books prompt and sustain children's philosophical thinking in worthwhile ways, most do not portray children thinking and dialoguing in such a way that can be a model of collaborative philosophical inquiry, and most of those that raise philosophical questions do not attempt to represent different positions about them from the philosophical tradition.

Ann Margaret Sharp and Laurance J. Splitter

Turgeon and Wartenberg attribute to Splitter and Sharp the "claim that the pictures and illustrations in children's books foreclose the cognitive options of the children engaged with them. The idea is that the illustrations in picture books do 'work' that is properly left to the children themselves by filling in the text with images that the author and illustrator deem appropriate" (2021:98). It is well known that Lipman's novels were published without illustrations—a decision he, Sharp, and Oscanyan explained by stating that, "to [provide illustrations] is to do for children what they should do for themselves: provide the imagery that accompanies reading and interpretation" (1980:36). To that end, Lipman's novels for younger children provide spaces for children to create their own illustrations. Both the fear of stifling children's creativity and the invitation to invite them to create their own illustrations are tied to Lipman's recognition that young children, in general, have an acumen for art unparalleled by most adults. Coincidentally, Lipman and Matthews were both inspired to recognize children's philosophical acumen in part by their experience of children's art (see Lipman 2008; Matthews 1994). Nevertheless, Wartenberg may be correct to suppose that Lipman lacked "an acquaintance with or theoretical understanding of picture books and the logic of the relationship between their texts and images" (2022:55).

Turgeon and Wartenberg claim, without reference, that "The omission of pictures on the Lipman/Sharp novels has drawn criticism on the grounds that children expect and want pictures; otherwise they will find the books boring or not engaging," but acknowledge that, "in our experience children are astonishingly tolerant of the lack of pictures in the Lipman novels" (2021:99).[25] They nevertheless accuse "the Lipmanians" of

> an inability to come to terms with the wonderful illustrations that grace the pages of picture books. It seems inconceivable that anyone who has read books by Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel) and looked at his wildly imaginative drawings could think that a child's

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[24] Elsewhere, Wartenberg claims that "Lipman opposed using picture books to introduce young children to philosophy" (2022:51).

[25] However, Wartenberg acknowledges: "I have never used Lipman's novels in my work with children" (2022:43).

imagination would be stunted by seeing the image of a Star Bellied Sneetch or the Cat in a Hat. (2021:99)

Of course, a good deal of the artwork in children's media is not wonderful, but insipid and banal without being provocative in any helpful way, as well as biased in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality. To this point, Lynn Gluek and Harry Brighouse argue that such works condescend to children when they "'dumb down' language, content and even image" (2008:130). Turgeon and Wartenberg cite Splitter and Sharp's 1995 book, *Teaching for Better Thinking: The Classroom Community of Inquiry*, without quotation, for the "Lipmanian" stance on artwork in children's books; however, the treatment of the issue there is considerably more nuanced than Turgeon and Wartenberg indicate:

> [T]he characteristic display of beautiful drawings in [children's picture] books can be a mixed blessing if it induces an expectation, on the part of otherwise imaginative children, that the author has already determined the visual nature of characters and contexts. If we think of drawings as serving a similar function to texts in stimulating inquiry, we would argue, by analogy, that a good philosophical drawing is one which raises or reflects, rather than settles, a question or puzzle. (1995:186)

While we agree with Splitter and Sharp that not only the quality of the artwork but the way it raises or settles philosophical questions is an important consideration, we agree with Turgeon and Wartenberg, Haynes and Murris, and Khosronejad and Shokrollahzadeh, that the artwork in picture books, graphic novels, and other stories for children can be as philosophically meaningful as their texts, and that high-quality artwork in children's media is more likely to stimulate than to hinder children's imagination.

Race and Children's Literature

Turgeon and Wartenberg rightly raise the problem of racism in children's literature but suggest that this problem is being self-corrected. Numerous scholars argue, to the contrary, that, as a multi-million-dollar industry in pursuit of profits, children's publishing remains a site where biases and racist assumptions are reproduced (see Klein 1985; Naidoo 1992; Ramdarshan Bold 2019; Sands-O'Connor 2008, 2017; Sims-Bishop 2007; and Thomas 2019). We believe that racist, sexist, heteronormative, classist, and other forms of bias that "hide in plain sight" in children's literature (Nel 2017:10) and curricular philosophical novels are among the most important and complex issues confronting the philosophy for children community today.[26] To date, sexism has received some sustained attention by philosophy for children scholars (see, e.g., Field 1995; Sharp 1994, 1997; Sharp and Gregory 2009). Racism, however, is rarely given attention in this community, with the notable exception of a succession of journal articles beginning with Chetty in 2014.[27] That scholarly exchange is the focus of a section of Turgeon and Wartenberg's essay, though they do not share their own

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[26] We do not harbor "the concern that picture books inherently present a misleading picture of complex social issues," as Wartenberg claims, without reference (2022:86). Wartenberg is further mistaken in stating that Chetty "is not sanguine about the possibility of using picture books to discuss race with young children" (2022:87) and that Chetty believes that all "picture books either simplify major complex issues or de-historicize them" (2022:92).

[27] Further examples of writing related to philosophy for children and racism include Rainville 2000, Vigliante 2005, Reed-Sandoval 2019, Elicor 2020, and Kronsted & Wurtz 2021.

perspective on racism. In what follows, we offer our stance on what we take to be the most important points of that exchange.

Perhaps the most contentious issue regarding racism and philosophy for children is whether theorists and practitioners in the movement ought to have a considered philosophical stance on racism. By this we mean a stance that is informed by an engagement with socio-historical knowledge of racism and how it relates to the context in which one is working and the materials and methods that one is employing. This would include the ways that Western philosophy, while largely avoiding racial injustice as a subject of study, has also been implicated in the emergence of racial taxonomies used to justify the exclusion of people designated as 'nonwhite' from the category of persons (see, e.g. Mills 1997). People who have a considered philosophical perspective may disagree with each other on any number of racial issues, but are more likely than those who do not, to recognize and resist racism when it manifests. We believe it is important that people who practice and theorize philosophy for children have a familiarity with contemporary scholarship in the philosophy of race in order to be sensitive to the ways that race and racism are relevant to the texts (commercial and curricular) and the norms of discourse we adopt in that practice, and to avoid the kinds of missteps that can make philosophy for children an inadvertent site of the production of racist ideology.[28]

'Color-blind' Children's Stories

Turgeon and Wartenberg credit Lipman with trying to make the gender and ethnicity of characters in his novels ambiguous, which, they suggest, "facilitates [...] a more porous and open identification between readers and the characters in the novels" (2021:99). However, we doubt the effectiveness and desirability of this approach. Chetty (2008) highlights that only one character in *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, Fran Wood, is explicitly raced and that she is described as "a girl and Black too" at the moment when two boys "tease" her (Lipman 1974/1982:11). Because the other characters in Lipman's novels are not identified racially or ethnically (except, perhaps, by their last names), they are often assumed to be white. Indeed, as early as 1989 a teacher in the United States described a fifth-grade session where a group of children raise the question of whether Harry is white and conclude unanimously that he is (see Harris 1991:62). The common practice in Anglo-American literature of identifying the racial or ethnic identity of only Black and racially minoritized characters leads to other characters being read as white—by readers of color as well as by white readers—unless told to do otherwise. Observing this phenomenon in literary discourse, Toni Morrison writes that "[t]he world does not become raceless or will not become unracialized by assertion. The act of enforcing racelessness [...] is itself a racial act" (1991:46). Chetty has recounted that many of his second-grade students in a racially diverse school agreed with one student's pronouncement that "Stories have to be about white people" (2016b:96).

Race and Representation in Children's Stories

Turgeon and Wartenburg note that "There are many contemporary picture books that feature non-white protagonists," characterizing this as a "trend that will defang any criticism of picture books

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[28] For an overview of philosophy of race, see Zack, 2017; for examples of philosophy, race, and the classroom, see Applebaum 2010, Blum 2012, Harris 1991, and Yancy and del Guadelupe Davidson 2014.

based on the absence of non-Caucasian characters" (2021:99 and note 14). In fact, work to redress the under-representation of racially minoritized people in children's literature in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) has a long history. In 1919, sixteen years after publishing *The Souls of Black Folk*, in which he argued that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line" (1903/1994:9), W.E.B. Du Bois announced the launch of *The Brownies' Book,* "a little magazine for all children, but especially for ours, 'the Children of the Sun'" (1919:286).[29] While *The Brownies Book* ran for only 24 issues, it has been described by Dianne Johnson-Feelings as "precipitat[ing] the development of the body of work now called African American children's literature, in all of its subsequent manifestations and meanings" (1990:37). While subsequent progress has been made, due to concerted efforts by activists, parents, scholars, writers, and illustrators, racially minoritized people continue to be notably under-represented in children's publishing in much of the English-speaking world.[30]

The relative lack of representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) people is by no means the only element of bias and racism in children's literature. Another is the frequent marginalization of BIPOC literary characters in the stories in which they appear. In noting an increase in the number of books featuring Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education identified ten ways that racially minoritized characters were marginalized in books published in the United Kingdom, rendering those characters "visibly invisible" (CLPE 2019:18).[31] Another element, and the most troubling, is racist depictions of racially-minoritized people in many of the classics of children's literature, including *Peter and Wendy* (Barrie 1911) and *Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman 1899) (see Chetty and Karen Sands O'Connor, 2020). While most of these were not originally published as picture books (though picture books and films have since been produced), they demonstrate the need to expand our philosophical thinking about racism in children's literature beyond the concern of whether or not racially minoritized people are represented, to considerations of how they are represented. To do so is not only to engage philosophically with the topic of racism in children's literature; it is an important aspect of the kind of aesthetic and ethical interrogation and critique of that literature as a cultural product, that philosophers in and out of philosophy for children ordinarily conduct.

Race and the Selection of Children's Stories

In his 2014 article, Chetty suggests that "the recommendation of [certain] materials and the omission of more critical perspectives of race amongst recommended starting points and training

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[29] Often described as a sociologist, Du Bois was also a philosopher and a contemporary of John Dewey, though his work in spanning philosophy, childhood, racism and children's literature has been largely neglected in philosophy for children scholarship.

[30] See data on the representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) people in literature collected by the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison (https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/) and the annual surveys of 'Ethnic Representation within UK Children's literature' entitled *Reflecting Realities* by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE, https://clpe.org.uk/) in the UK.

[31] Similarly, remarking on the fact that people of color are dramatically underrepresented in children's literature in the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and dystopian novels, Philip Nel writes that "White children should not be the only ones encouraged to see themselves on a quest in an imaginary world, grappling with technology of the future, inhabiting mythological tales, or banding together to resist a dystopian regime" (2017:195).

materials might constitute a form of 'gate-keeping' of philosophical thought" and that "the notion of 'The Gated Community of Enquiry' might be illuminating in considering how P4C practitioners approach the subject of racism" (2014:14). Drawing upon the work of the late Caribbean-American philosopher Charles Mills, Chetty analyzes David McKee's picture books *Elmer* (1968/1989) and *Tusk Tusk* (1978). Wartenberg mistakenly accuses Chetty of ignoring his own "doubts as to whether these books are actually about racism" and going on "to discuss them as if they did" (2022:87). In fact, Chetty chooses these books only because they "have been recommended [...] by Philosophy for Children practitioners as starting points for philosophical enquiry into racism, multiculturalism and diversity" (2014:14). Chetty notes that while racism is not actually depicted in either story, both are often read as "race fables"[32] (2014:25):

> Neither book speaks to structural inequality, which is historically situated and not arbitrary, and to how it positions groups as inferior and superior. They don't appear to portray oppression. Consequently, the solutions they offer are very different from the kind of solutions often considered appropriate for addressing racism. Elmer's difference is celebrated and integrated into the group in a tokenistic way, whilst in *Tusk Tusk* the solution is toleration, co-habitation and miscegenation. Because they don't discuss structural inequality, they don't open up for enquiry justice-based solutions like repair, redistribution or reconciliation.[33] (2014:22-23)

Chetty (2014) raises concerns about inquiring about racism by use of allegorical children's stories that retreat into theoretical abstraction and ignore relevant factual details.[34] However, Chetty's interest is broader than to critique McKee's books. His aim is to consider what their being recommended as ways into philosophizing about race—particularly in the context of a paucity of scholarship relating to racism and an alarming lack of philosophy for children scholars of color—suggests about prevailing understandings of race and racism among philosophy for children scholars. Chetty reminds us that it is typically adults who select the stories used in philosophy for children sessions and that the story selected to some extent makes some questions more likely to be asked and others less so.

We do not believe—as Chetty has been taken to believe—that picture books should be used to teach children particular concepts or ideas, about race or any other philosophically complex concept.[35] Nor do we believe that facilitators should select picture books that confirm their own view of the

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[32] Matthew Orville Grenby describes a fable as "a fundamentally didactic form, designed to draw in its readers through a compelling story and appealing, even cute characters and to teach important lessons through allegory" (2008:11).

[33] While Chetty takes care not to speculate about author intentionality, Mckee has since said that *Elmer* was inspired by 'a racist incident' (see Jeffries 2012).

[34] Though critical of what he mistakenly takes to be a categorical condemnation of picture books that have been used to invite children to philosophize about race and racism on Chetty's part, Wartenberg agrees with Chetty's actual thesis, in stipulating that his own "endorsement of picture books as allowing for successful discussions of difficult issues comes with the *caveat* that the books have to be chosen with care so that inappropriate conceptions of race and racism will not be supported" (2022:96).

[35] Rather than engaging with Chetty's detailed argument that *Tusk Tusk* is more didactic than Haynes and Murris acknowledge, Murris asserts, without foundation, that he prefers to use picture books didactically (2015:60). In contrast, Williams correctly observes that, "So far as Chetty is concerned, I think a distinction should be made between wishing to bring certain matters to the attention of children and trying to control the agenda and the outcome. I think he wants to do the former" (Williams 2020:9).

world. However, we follow Chetty (2014) in suggesting that this might be what is actually happening. If those who select picture books are unaware of the political dimension of stories, they are likely to take as neutral or universal stories that convey particular political ideas and norms. As the children's literature scholar, Jack Zipes, recommends:

> I avowedly seek a political understanding of our notion of classicism and classical fairy tales, the process of selection, elimination and reward. The fairy tales we have come to revere as classical are not ageless, universal, and beautiful in and of themselves, and they are not the best therapy in the world for children. They are historical prescriptions, internalized, potent, explosive, and we acknowledge the power they hold over our lives by mystifying them (2006:11).[36]

In addition to fairy tales, we doubt that there can be such a thing as a picture book (or any other cultural production) that is politically neutral.

Race and the Facilitation of Philosophical Discourse

While it is commonly acknowledged that being aware of one's positionality as an adult working with children is vital for facilitating philosophical conversations with children—and indeed for all educational practice—it is also necessary to extend this awareness of one's positionality beyond age, to include how one's racialised, gendered and classed identities, for example, might come to bear on the choices one makes inside and outside the classroom. Turgeon and Wartenberg appear to read Williams (2020) as saying that a good facilitator can counteract or neutralize the political message of a children's story, so that any and every text is potentially appropriate for philosophical dialogue. However, Williams' point is narrower, and in agreement with Chetty: that a good facilitator might create meaningful philosophical inquiry—around the issue of hatred, not historical racism—with a text like *Tusk Tusk* to prevent it from being miseducative about racism. We see Turgeon's and Wartenberg's response to Williams as problematic for two reasons. First, in moving critical attention from the text to the role of the facilitator, they dismiss the importance of paying critical attention to children's media (see Nel 2017), thereby devaluing the very cultural product they seek to promote.

Second, Turgeon and Wartenberg imply (as Williams and Chetty do not) that a 'good enough' facilitator can use any text, no matter the content, which we reject on the grounds that no philosophical teacher, however accomplished, can completely neutralize the political content of a text. They write that "Williams [...] acknowledges the concerns raised by Chetty about either simplifying complex phenomena and ideas or dis-historicizing them but stops short of rejecting the use of such books in philosophizing" (2021:101). In fact, Williams not only acknowledges, but agrees with Chetty's concerns:[37] "Chetty suggests there may be a limit to what popular picture books alone can

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[36] Steve Williams demonstrates, through careful citation, that Murris misrepresents Jack Zipes as claiming that fairy tales are "universal, ageless, therapeutic, miraculous and beautiful" (Zipes 2006:2, cited in Murris 2016a:243-4).

[37] In 2010, Chetty and Williams collaborated on a 'Philosophy for Children and Race' online reading group, attended by a number of SAPERE trainers. At the time SAPERE courses did not include any readings by Black or otherwise racially minoritized scholars or any readings relating to racism, though this was a topic teachers on SAPERE courses often asked about. Chetty and Williams along with Christian Albert, a Black Trinidadian British teacher, philosophy for children practitioner, and former colleague of Chetty's at a primary school in London serving a racially diverse community, created

achieve in supporting dialogue about complex social issues with historical dimensions. I agree" (Williams 2020:5). In our view, there is more work to be done to understand the relationship among the complexities and challenges of facilitation, the inevitable political dimension of children's stories and curricular materials, and the diverse positionality of children.

The Politics of Scholarship in the Philosophy for Children Community

As Chetty observes, racism is rarely given attention in philosophy for children materials and scholarship—a pattern he identifies as beginning with Lipman's *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* (Chetty 2008; 2014). Indeed, Turgeon and Wartenburg do not share what they themselves take racism to be. They write that "Murris is critical of Chetty for assuming that he knows what the appropriate theory of racism is and attempting to get children to come to accept it" (2020:100). It is not clear what Turgeon and Wartenberg make of this claim, or how Murris has arrived at this conclusion.

In fact, Turgeon and Wartenberg do not quote, summarize, or comment on Chetty's philosophical account of racism.[38] While both his respondents are cited, his voice is effectively absent from the two-page discussion that he is identified as initiating. Whatever the intention of the authors, this has the effect of readers encountering the voice of each of the scholars in this exchange about racism—Wendy Turgeon, Thomas Wartenberg, Karin Murris and Steve Williams—except for Darren Chetty, the only racially minoritized scholar among them. Such a practice is in keeping with Chetty's notion of "the gated community of enquiry," which he introduces in *The Elephant in the Room* (2014). The paper is described by David Kennedy as critiquing "the central notion of the community of enquiry as an egalitarian safe space" as creating an uneasy paradox in the domestication of interruption, subtly gagging the potential voices of the members of silenced, marginalized and excluded groups, and gingerly ignoring oppositional counter-narratives" (2017:xiii). We suggest that Turgeon and Wartenberg's paper can be viewed as an instance of this occurring in philosophy for children scholarship, which Chetty and Judith Suissa (2017) argue, is itself a community of inquiry and one that has a formative role in philosophy for children training and practice.

We believe the exclusion of any citation of Chetty and of the Black and other racially minoritized scholars he brings into conversation with philosophy for children scholarship (many for the first time) is to the detriment of this discussion. Further, it is likely to be to the detriment of the community of philosophy for children scholars. When one fails to afford the same level of respect to a racially minoritized scholar, one communicates something significant to all racially minoritized scholars about how their work will likely be received, should it introduce new, critical perspectives. There are very few BIPOC scholars in the philosophy for children community—shockingly few when one considers that ours is a pedagogy that regularly advocates dialogue across difference, a willingness

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a philosophy for children resource based on Albert's experience of struggling to find a recognizable Black character he could dress as for the school's celebration of World Book Day. The resource has been used with children, teachers and philosophy for children trainers in the UK to inquire into children's literature, racial representation and education (see https://www.thephilosophyman.com/marksdilemma).

[38] A reference to Chetty's published work was only added to Turgeon and Wartenberg's article after Chetty noted its absence in the article's initial publication.

to listen, and epistemic humility. We believe it is vital to open the gates of the community of scholarship in philosophy for children to minoritized and junior scholars in our field.

Another aspect of the politics of philosophy for children scholarship is that over the past forty-plus years, philosophy for children scholars have paid little or no attention to the voices of BIPOC–be it in philosophy, pedagogy and education, or children's literature. Over almost forty years, a number of books about philosophy for children have been published featuring Black children on the cover while failing to cite a single Black scholar within their covers.[39] From a scan of much existing philosophy for children literature, it would be possible to conclude that while BIPOC children are capable of philosophizing (in classrooms with white philosophy teachers), BIPOC adults have little or nothing to offer those who philosophize with children.

The common practice of making selections of starting materials that are authored only by white people is not a politically neutral practice. The lack of discussion about this practice amongst philosophy for children scholars is not neutral scholarship. The lack of racially minoritized philosophy for children scholars is not a neutral fact. The lack of citation of Black and racially minoritized philosophers and scholars, and philosophers and scholars working on racism and its relation to philosophy and education is not neutral. That some fifty years after the emergence of philosophy for children, there are international conferences that include, at best, a handful of Black and racially minoritized scholars is not a neutral fact. The monopolization of positions of authority by people racialized as white in the philosophy for children community is not neutral. The lack of interrogation as to what these facts collectively mean for the philosophy for children community as an epistemic community is not a neutral fact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our findings indicate that everyone involved in philosophy for children agrees with Turgeon and Wartenberg that picture books and children's literature more generally are useful for intergenerational philosophical inquiry. However, the use of children's books in itself does not constitute a unique approach to philosophizing with children. Rather, the selection of materials for that activity depends on how we understand its nature and purposes. On the one hand, many of the pedagogical elements that Lipman, Sharp, Kennedy, Cam, and others wrote into their curricular philosophical children's stories and novels can be found in some children's literature, while, on the other hand, many of the benefits that Turgeon and Wartenberg and others have noted for children's literature, including literary and aesthetic quality, are available to the curricular philosophical children's story. In any case, the alternatives of philosophical children's literature and curricular philosophical materials are not mutually exclusive. Philosophers and educators should weigh the relative dis/advantages of different kinds of texts in deciding which ones to use to philosophize with children for different purposes.

We have also reviewed a number of concerns about the use of children's literature in philosophy for children. These include those addressed by Turgeon and Wartenberg, including that teachers,

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[39] See for example, Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan (1980); Lipman (1988); Sharp and Reed (1992); SAPERE (2016).

parents, and graduate students without a preparation in philosophy will struggle to select and use children's literature to philosophize with children and that some children's books are morally didactic. We have also reviewed the concerns articulated by Lipman, Sharp, and Splitter, that children's literature does not perform the multiple kinds of cognitive modeling necessary to introduce children to, and initiate children in philosophy as a discipline. Finally, we have reviewed the concern raised by Chetty that much children's literature contains racial and other kinds of bias. We agree with Turgeon, Wartenberg, Murris, Khosronejad, and Shokrollahzadeh that more work needs to be done on the part of philosophy for children scholars to draw from children's literature studies. One of the benefits of doing so is that we can learn how critical race theory, indigenous theories, and queer theory (see Kidd 2020) should figure in philosophical inquiry.

Because this essay is a response to Turgeon and Wartenberg's essay, which itself recounted a number of other scholars writing in response to still others, we conclude with the observation that scholarly discussion, just like the classroom community of inquiry, is a site of knowledge co-creation. This insight obligates all of us to bring to scholarship in philosophy for children the same interpersonal care and academic rigor we bring to scholarship in other fields. While none of us can claim to do this perfectly, it behooves us all to beware the professional harm we may cause to others by not reading them carefully, not citing them appropriately, and ignoring their contribution, as well as the epistemic loss to the community when knowledge creators are marginalized in those ways. We are mindful that, given the lack of diversity among the philosophy for children founders and their contemporaries, racially minoritized scholars in the philosophy for children global community are often junior scholars. We hope they will be supported, mentored, and invited to make a home in the field. Given that philosophy for children as a field has both advocated dialogic pedagogy across difference, and developed in a scholarly community that lacks racial diversity, we would be wise also to reflect on what our racially minoritized peers bring to our attention. We might also reflect on how, for many of us, our experience of dialoguing in racially diverse communities is limited to classrooms where, whatever our personal commitments, we find ourselves in positions of *de facto* authority.

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