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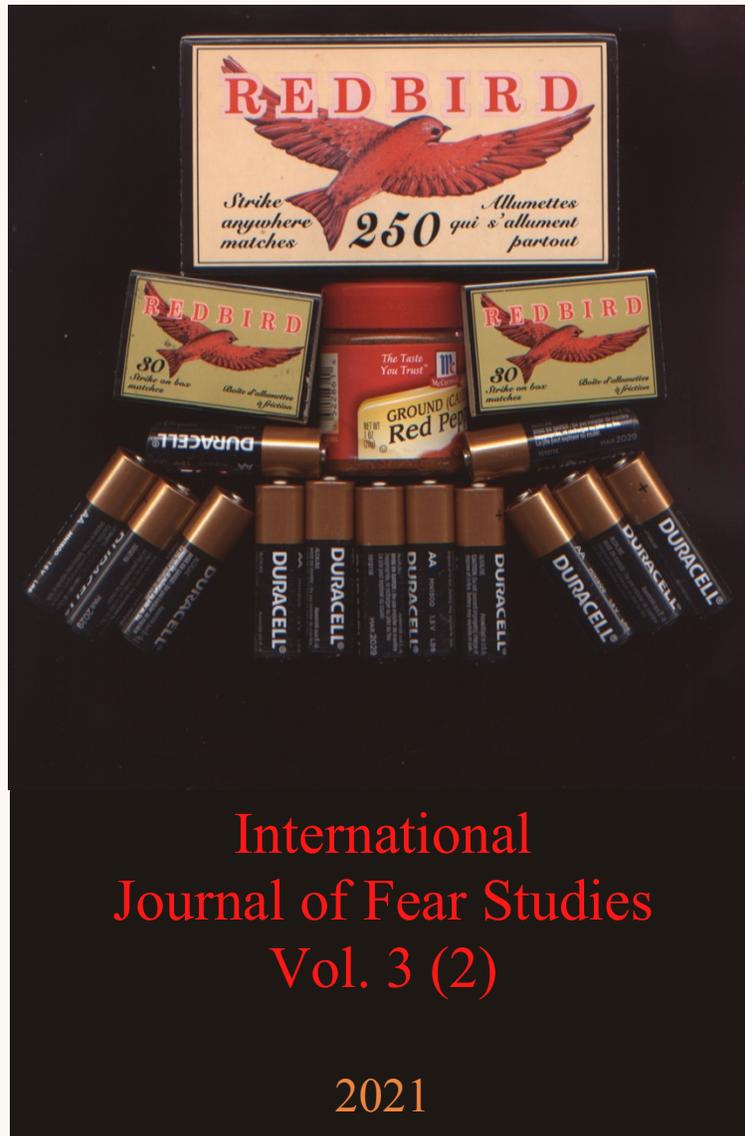
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Philosophy with Children as a Way of Overcoming the “Shadow Adults Cast over Childhood” and the “Pedagogy of Fear”

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Abstract

This article introduces two ideas with contractive affects and effects—the “shadow adults cast over childhood” and the “pedagogy of fear.” These act to order and frame the conceptual problems that the traditional educational system poses. There is an offering solution, one that is based on a Philosophy with/for Children (PwC/P4C). While both limit and contract the space children inhabit, PwC/P4C is an active, dynamic pedagogy that illuminates the child’s world.

The Shadow Adults Cast Over Childhood

In an earlier article “Pedagogy of Fear as Paralyzing Men’s Question” (2015), I characterized the educational philosophy that has traditionally dominated the Western world as “casting a threatening shadow of knowingness on...children’s world” (p. 2). This narrow or contracted hierarchical space is predicated upon insistence by educators and society for absolute answers and textual reading competencies, rather than questioning capacities and enactment of adult-child dialogue(s).

Traditional pedagogues have long been accustomed to encouraging students to stay silent rather than speak, to regurgitate rather than be creative, and have offered prepared answers based on textbooks, authorities, traditional etc., rather than challenge conventional wisdom or ask, think, ponder, and wonder about the world around them (Gur-Ze’ev, 2010). Imprinting images on the minds of all involved—students, parents, teachers, decision-makers—this ossifying practice creates a reductionist epistemic environment designed to convey the message that learning is passive, teaching is a form of articulation, knowledge is an object, and smart students are those in possession of knowledge—that is, those who master a small area of knowing and play the role(s) assigned to them by adults. For their part, the “good” teacher is imagined as an omniscient informer, who conducts the classroom and draws out of their students measurable (quantitative) achievements in line with statistical models and normal curves.

Just as this overshadowing of students is characteristic of parents in the domestic sphere so too it is typical of those in charge of the formal education system. Underestimating students’ ability

to deal with their surroundings, adults who espouse this restrictive policy rationalize it is meant to protect pupils from themselves, society, and the world. Pupils are thereby confined to a demarcated and delimited universe of ideas that prevents from them engaging with multiple perspectives, free conceptual play, process-based inquiry, and/or developing new concepts. This (en)closed space of answered questions is determined *a priori* by adults, who lay out the students' life stories before them as narrow, circumscribed, partial, and frequently specious. More often than not, the storyteller reflects their own fears about the world and themselves and the future—thus, they purvey a sense of lack of trust in the pupil and their learning (Kizel, 2016a).

The notion of the “shadow adults cast over childhood” coincides with the tradition of the “colonializing” adult—as set forth in Rousseau (1997) and Matthews (1984, 1994)—and Gur-Ze'ev's (2010) critical theory. In *Emile, or On Education* (1762), Rousseau argued that childhood is completely ignored owing to the grown-ups who are always looking for the adult in the child without valuing and taking their youth into consideration. The charm of childhood, he maintained, lies in the fact that it represents a pure expression of natural human good, innocence, creativity, and *joie de vivre* before these are corrupted by social life. Furthermore in Rousseau's critical view of the *status quo*, individuals assuming a new and irreversible status the moment they become active in society, children should be kept away from the company of adults as long as possible and educated in such a manner as to preserve their child-man image.

Opposing the traditional Christian theology of original sin prevalent during his day, that dictated the view that the purpose of education was to break and correct human nature, Rousseau espoused a naturalistic and paedocentric pedagogy. Its goal is to arouse the good qualities in children and aid in their development toward a full human potential. As representatives of society, educators should likewise be committed to ecological and organic principles, because all individuals are sentient beings and affected from birth in diverse forms by their surroundings—of which adult influences may offer corrupting aspects of childhood and damage authentic features of children.

A decade later, Kant justified the contractive paternalistic attitude towards children by asserting its inevitability, that no child is inherently deserving of freedom. In his view, contra Rousseau, human beings enter the world undeveloped, and so others (adults) are required to make choices on their behalf (Kant, 1960). Children are thus cast as passive citizens, and the right to political freedoms held by active citizens must rest on the latter's ability to function as mature moral agents. Their capacity to rationally reflect on their multiple, conflicting motives and govern their drives appropriately, would then ensure their autonomy and independence from external sources, says Kant.

Kant's view of childhood as a state in which self-control has not yet developed has heavily influenced contemporary theories, perhaps most prominently through Kohlberg's (1984) scheme of the stages of moral development—itsself largely based on Piaget (1972). Following Kant, political philosophy also placed great stress on rationality, insight, consideration, and responsibility—attributes it denies to children. Children are thus being excluded from politics, and are framed outside conceptualizations of mature political subjects only when subjugated within the political system. Children are thus being excluded from politics, and are framed outside

conceptualizations of mature political subjects, and only included when implicitly subjugated within the political system—however, in the latter they are still deemed a non-political entity.

The contemporary educational system is governed by the same process. The child's capacity for mature, marvelous, and independent thought being denied, children are largely confined to a school(ing) framework ostensibly devoted to equipping them to think. In contrast, Matthews (1994) argued that inherent children's thought serves as the basis for philosophical thinking, with their naivety enabling them to explore the things adults take for granted or regard as insignificant. Children bring forth an organic wonder and fascination to inquiry into their world. In this reading, children are little philosophers who raise big philosophical questions. In order to nurture these skills, they must be allowed to participate in philosophical, moral, and metaphysical discussions rather than subjected to adult colonialism. Rejecting Piaget's (1972) theory that the development of children's thinking capacities is a biologically-conditioned process dependent upon age, occurring as an inherent part of growing up, Matthews contends that as children mature, almost invariably, adult colonialism deprives them of their innocence and curiosity and the ability to ponder philosophical questions and play with ideas and issues.

Just as the humanities and the human sciences address the adult rather than the child so both educational theory and practice are based on the premise that those who deliver it know what is best for those on whom it is imposed (e.g., children). However, when it the educational system makes available the right resources (e.g., teachers, inspectors, principals) and proper means at the right (developmental) point, children will enter the system as learners and depart as educated people—that is as budding philosophers in their own right.

[in a colonialist education system of fear, teaching is more a]
*“Trampling children's natural abilities and crushing
 potentiality and authenticity...”*

Gur-Ze'ev (2010) likewise in a critical view, suggested that education is a matter of shaping and excessively disciplining the individual. As a collection of practices and theories designed to form, fashion, and police the human subject, it seeks to make children into one person rather than another or something instead of something else. He maintained that the school system—in which children operate as passive objects—plays a normalizing role, being responsible for preserving the existing order in a self-evident space in an effort to colonialize, both internally and externally, and uproot all sense of Otherness. Preventing any possibility of perceiving what lies underneath the surface, it fixes character, potential, and social opinions in order to enable so-called cultural progress. It actually sustains social existence *via* systematic and violent de-humanization. Preparing a place for each individual within a framework of predetermined parameters, rules, modes, and possibilities/impossibilities, it reproduces the *status quo*, end up with the subject's productivity being buttressed by their being forced into a systematic objectification.

I thus suggest that the current traditional education system *casts the shadow of adult colonialism* over the world of the child *via* what Fisher names as the insidious toxic combination of adultism-fearism within the 'Fear' Matrix of culture (e.g., Fisher, 2003). Essentially a form of existential and academic-pedagogic-educational castration, it asphyxiates rather than enables, is

authoritarian rather than nurturing, unilateral and hierarchical rather than dialogical, encouraging passivity rather than activity. Trampling children's natural abilities and crushing potentiality and authenticity, it constitutes a deliberate adult attempt to extrapolate what is expected from students—without their full and willing participation. Starting off already with answers—a formulated knowledge of what one needs to know, where one needs to go and what is better than what—it promotes ordinariness, transforming children from someone into something.

The Pedagogy of Fear

In this oppressive educational space, this overshadowing frequently assumes the form of a “pedagogy of fear” (Kizel, 2016a). A hierarchical and centralist approach, this is driven by shock-conditioned-learning and fright, fear of punishment and an overall lack of trust in children's capacities—it is these very features that unfortunately characterize the education system as a whole today. Hereby, it engenders an educational paralysis that manifests itself in an educational hierarchy "that produces and reproduces the system and its justification into the organizational and educational practices of the educational system" (Kizel 2015, p. 214).

Based on adult's chronic fear of the unknown—of what cannot be controlled—the pedagogy of fear seeks to ossify children's abilities, knowledge, and feeds *a priori* premises, serving both as the logic behind both the educational system and as a way of monitoring and controlling students and teachers. Mistakes being dangerous, it seeks to establish a hostile and traumatic epistemic environment in which error is avoided. Within this context, students understand that within the delimited, concrete place and role allotted to them (by most educators), their job is to listen, repeat, and desist from asking questions that require critical thinking or philosophical inquiry.

The pedagogy of fear sanctifies answers, knowledge, the predetermined outcome leading to what has already been thought of. Interested in children's precision and regurgitation rather than thought and interpretive processes, it focuses upon memorization/repetition in the form of an exact response to closed questions. It thus narrows and contracts diverse perspectives while adhering and embodying developmental theories that rest on biased monolithic, all-embracing, and linear premises regarding children's development. In its essentialist by nature, it assumes—or more precisely, imposes the view that children are incapable of expressing themselves and their ideas, engaging in creative and autonomous thought, and observing and wonder at the world. Reducing children to measurable statistics, they reduce them to the status of an object, ignoring their selfhood, sovereignty and independence.

“Perceived as incapable or uncontrollable, children are not recognized as independent entities...”

Children's voices and their ability to ask questions, question conventional assumptions, and address unfamiliar issues threaten adults who circulate in a pedagogy of fear and mistrust; both because they themselves are the product of the same pedagogy (which they in turn pass on to the next generation) and because of their fear that they will be unable to give satisfactory/ satisfying answers, thereby losing their authority.

In this modality of a pedagogy of fear, teachers, principals, and educators all are discomfited by any perspective not dictated by the social hierarchy and conventional wisdom. The pedagogy of fear is thus not merely shaped by uncertainty but also serves to reproduce and shape the next generation of fearful students, teachers, principals, and parents (Kizel 2015).

“...teachers are dominated by fear”

The hierarchical structure of the educational system in general and schools in general highlights the way in which fear and the lack of opportunity to think and challenge have pervaded younger generations. In this sense, "the hierarchy is non-conceptual for both adults and children, the educational space demarcating children's steps and abilities and the adult's shadow forming the clear boundary around their activity" (Kizel 2015, p. 219). These narrow parameters leave very little, if any, room for asking questions, inquiry, or distinctiveness. Perceived as incapable or uncontrollable, children are not recognized as independent entities or others, thus not being invited to participate in any dialogue or to give their opinion about phenomena, feelings, consciousness, ethics, or any other serious subject.

This pedagogy of traditional educational systems is based on the transfer of knowledge, the student constituting a so-called "empty container" into which the teacher pours information. Its hierarchical form rests on the premise that the teacher is superior to the student, both with respect to cognitive-intellectual processes and in the scope and depth of knowledge. Educators are thus preoccupied with loading and passing on data to students rather than challenging them and nurturing their cognitive skills.

The fact that teachers are dominated by fear has been noted by various philosophers. In *Emile* (1762), Rousseau asserts that fear is a basic emotion that emerges at a pre-verbal stage. When infants' eyes become accustomed to light, they begin distinguishing between pleasure and pain, light's sensory effect being experienced as enjoyable as it enables them to understand the existence of objects beyond their sensory perception. As they develop, however, this sight-drive becomes a desire, the dark thus turning into something painful and frightening. During this habit-forming process, they bring the expected into alignment with the wanted object, beginning to fear the unexpected. They must then train themselves to deal with encounters with the new.

In addition to this gradual acquaintance with the other/different, children also learn from social reaction to fear. This enables them to overcome their initial trepidation by gaining an understanding of the world through the experience of others. According to Rousseau, the static environment is a friend of fear, making children feel comfortable and calm when in reality they are becoming more sensitive and fearful of change. Rousseau thus promotes learning by discovery and dynamic experience, in which to enable children to understand that the way in which they interpret and live in reality may be mistaken. When a child encounters a new object, he or she begins learning—that is, to make errors. Protecting children and seeking to make them safe and give them stability and a sense of security thus ignores the learning that comes from discovering the new. This runs directly counter to the true goal of education, and in effect 'safe' education being a dangerous and spurious practice.

Children should rather be taught to conduct themselves as individuals so that they can become independent and capable of dealing with risks, difference/otherness, and contingencies even when such encounters are frightening and discomforting.

In his theory of human nature, John Dewey argues, *inter alia*, that unity must be sought over duality, the individual therefore needing to overcome the polarities within themselves and society—including that between the senses and intellect (Dewey, 1962). In this framework, thought, learning, and understanding through experience lead to a congruence between theory and practice. According to Dewey, learning takes place when a person is faced with a moment of discomfort. Discussing the emotions in general and fear in particular, he maintains that the latter is essentially rational and conceptual in nature, serving as a necessary catalytical aspect of learning, and an interpretive lens through which educators meet their students (English & Stengel, 2010).

The central human emotions—*fear* and *interest*—are awakened when an individual is faced with unease (Dewey, 1962). The educator's job is to encourage students to entertain the fear and doubt that arise when learning something new. Rather than coming to a too early and immature form of understanding—one based on an emotional response identified with fear that interferes with the learning process—children should be encouraged to contain their discomfort until they can let their interest come into play. Emotions taking form with the development of the capacity to reflect on one's actions, while fear as an initial reaction is inconducive to learning, all enable one to constitute a major part of human reflective evaluation. Rather than being aroused by the first encounter with something, it only emerges when the significance of the experience and behavior to which it leads is grasped (Dewey, 1894). Although challenging existing habits—say in the moment of discomfort—emotional responses remain as senses or evanescent feelings, only becoming useful to understanding when the reflective process has been completed.

According to Freire (1970), dealing with difficulties is always tinged with fear, especially when individuals doubt their capacities and skills. This sense has three dimensions—intellectual, social, and educative. Only inner discipline can overcome obstacles, curiosity being insufficient in and of itself. Intellectual discipline is an ability to integrate the text beyond one's initial curiosity and the barrier of understanding, involving the social value of learning and critical reflection. Not merely individual, it is a social experience that involves both the student-teacher relationship and the student's peers.

In order to overcome challenges, pupils must ask others for help, participate in a group, and embrace diverse perspectives. Hereby, objects of fear are transformed into objects of learning. In addition to the social context, the educator also plays a central role in overcoming fear. This ability rests on the awareness of his or her own anxiety. Like the pupil, the teacher has the right to feel fear. Not invulnerable, they experience the same basic emotions as children.

Regarding education as a political act, Freire (1970) understands fear to play a political role—fear of freedom becoming part of the world of teachers and pupils alike. The oppressed cannot struggle for freedom as long as they are unable to face the risks involved, their efforts further threatening their oppressed comrades. While both teachers and students must gain knowledge of fear, the difficulties the former face are more complex, containing both political and pedagogic dimensions. The proper response to fear is the same for both groups, however—namely,

intellectual discipline. For a comparative reading and critique of English's & Stengel's review of the three educational writers (Rousseau, Dewey, Freire) see Fisher (2011).

The Fear That Lies at the Heart of the Pedagogy of Fear

Kukkola (2014) identifies three problematics in the study of fear: (a) no deep, coherent definition covers all the senses and aspects of existential fear within the educational framework and a better understanding of the phenomenon is thus to comprehend the role it plays; (b) fear has traditionally been regarded an instrumental tool to heighten educational involvement, yet, the question of whether fear opens up a new educational space or serves as an already-existing but unexplored field remains a matter of dispute, however, and lastly, (c) education is customarily perceived as schooling, its diverse dimensions thus frequently being neglected.

Various philosophical scholars have discussed the characteristics of *fear*—discomfort (Dewey), uncertainty (Plato), a sense of sin (Nietzsche), doubt regarding ability (Freire), and reflection (Dewey). These concepts are linked in divergent ways that contribute to a notion that, while absolute and irrefutable, fear is also associated with external ideas, existing in a lived reality that impacts its formation. In general terms, a concept is defined by its relation to the space in which an object appears, denoting a given field out of which the entities that embody it emerge (or should do so). Philosophical concepts are defined with respect to the physical environment that enables them to materialize and replicate themselves. They thus seek to manifest a pattern that unites the disparate performances that embody them in any given space. Although they gather together multiple representations into one configuration, the latter do not all necessarily appear simultaneously.

The school educational system characterized by the “pedagogy of fear” fuels a discourse, milieu, and apparatus that prevent students engaging with/in existential questions (Kizel 2015, 2016a). It prevents the ‘good’ uses of fear as found in Dewey and Freire’s progressivist philosophies. Deliberately setting out to constrict and narrow the range of educational perspectives to be entertained, the pedagogy of fear also rests on an unease with engaging in philosophy with children/students. This derives from a difficulty in abandoning the idea of the teacher’s superior status, an underestimation of children’s abilities and capacities, a conservatism passed down through the generations, and a perpetual fear of a threat to measured and certain reality. Adults have a dread of letting children’s distinctive (and menacing) voices be heard, of the possibility embedded in philosophical discussion that leads to independent thinking, and of perspectives beyond those dictated by hierarchical authority.

This pedagogical structure affects not only pedagogy but also the organizational aspect of the educational system. Prompting an educational paralysis that takes the form of an educational hierarchy that replicates this very pedagogy—and in particular the justifications adduced in support of it—it translates them into fear-normalizing organizational and educational practices. Hereby, the fear of asking existential questions is institutionalized and organizational habits form that perpetuate the paralysis. Fisher (2006), Furedi (2006), Massumi (1993) and others would call this a “culture of fear” phenomenon.

“...fear has become dominant in society...”

The pedagogy of fear is predicated on Piagetian developmental theories and insights regarding children's feelings that take account of the existing educational environment rather than independent personality types. It thus promotes a neo-liberal discourse that avoids asking questions that might challenge conventional certainties and champions scientific assessment, adherence to curricula, and an anti-communalism. These principles all draw on a perception driven by agents of authority, and the traditional school structure resting on a narrow pedagogic mechanism that constricts student and teacher thinking alike. Preventing any pondering that might undermine the existing order and openness to the world, the pedagogy of fear attempts to train students to fit into society and its hierarchical system as culture of fear and authoritarianism at the expense of their free independent thinking.

According to Svendsen (2008) and Massumi (1993), people have become accustomed, not always in a healthy way, to focusing on high-risk states. In the wake of their astute insights, I suggest that the traditional educational system has created a mechanism for protecting children against danger or hazardous circumstances. However, on the down-side, the clinical discourse regarding the protection of minors has also led open philosophical questioning to be replaced by an attempt to avoid confusion and perplexity amongst children. Hereby, fear has become dominant in society—a low intensity anxiety that informs all experience and interpretation of the world (Svendsen, 2008). Bauman (2006) refers to this as “diverted fear” so pervasive as to be labeled “liquid fear.” Stemming from a threat in the present or past, this manifests itself as uncertainty and a sense that the world is dangerous, unpredictable, and insecure.

The pedagogy of fear also affects the relations that should exist between autonomous human beings—that is, children—and their surroundings. The ideal of autonomy is independent action, self-evaluation, and responsibility for one's thoughts and judgments, emotions, and decisions. The opposite is heteronomy—behavior dictated by an outside force. Gur-Ze'ev (2010) refers to this as “normalizing education” informed by an invisible oppression and violence, as claimed in the tradition of critical theory from the Frankfurt School. As part of the shadow adults cast over the world of the child, the pedagogy of fear is characterized by symbolic violence, preventing autonomous forces from resisting its brutality.

Alternative Option: The Philosophy of Shedding Light on Children's Lives

The two previous sections addressed two issues I regard as contracting the world of the child—the shadow adults cast over it and the pedagogy of fear. Here, I wish to submit that philosophy with children/philosophy for children (PwC/P4C) are committed to shedding light into the child's world, thereby enlarging it by opening it up to broader views.

Both within and outside the school framework, PwC/P4C serves as a platform for self-determined learning in light of the developments of the past forty years. Based on the philosophical writings of Matthew Lipman—in particular his ideas regarding the search for meaning—this approach contains six dimensions that contrast with classic classroom disciplinary learning. Thereby this solution advocates a “pedagogy of searching” in place of the “pedagogy of fear” that dominates traditional learning systems.

In contrast to the competitive atmosphere and rivalry frequently promoted (even if only tacitly) in schools today, *communities of inquiry* encourage cooperation and collaboration in support of self-determined and shared learning. The diminishment of the competitive element in classrooms in and of itself further facilitates the establishment of communities of inquiry characterized by inclusion, partnership, and cooperation (Sharp, 1988). These conditions foster the openness necessary for the emergence of—and sometimes answers to—philosophical issues. By delimiting the space in which students are allowed to voice their ideas, adults tend to ensure that the latter remain banal, serving their surroundings and primarily adult needs, wishes, and goals.

PwC/P4C prioritizes questions over answers, cultivating communities that facilitate a form of learning that resists the educational hierarchy that boasts of omniscience. The coordinator serves as a participant in the learning process rather than as a “judge.” Therefore, learning exists for the (real) present rather than the (unknown) future. Improvisation is favored over predetermined content, learning being perceived as liberating the learner from disciplinary boundaries.

All these dimensions underlie PwC/P4C’s pedagogy of searching, at whose heart lies the pursuit of meaning in aid of personal development—and thus self-direction and capability. This approach runs directly counter to the pedagogy of fear and its perpetual excessive demands on the learner, which induce distress, and an overall apprehension about taking risks, reduced competence, and make omniscient “guides” indispensable (Kizel, 2016b). The former philosophical dimensions recognize the children’s ability to think deeply, their natural capacities, and the autonomous nature of childhood, opposing the adult “steamroller” structure of school education which, rather than fostering children’s skills and development, tramples them under the force of over-blown authority. Contrary to the “banking” model of education outlined by Freire (1970) in his early critique, they cultivate a space in which traditional pedagogy can be criticized. Hereby, they also enable children to voice their opinions relatively without fear as autonomous thinkers.

Lipman (1973) also fiercely criticizes the educational system and its traditional forms of pedagogy. He pointed to the anomaly embedded in the school structure, where he argued that the latter inculcates a negative charisma in students. Failing to recognize their intellectual abilities, it cannot instill self-belief in them, making them suspicious of every intellectual source, task, or problem set before them and choking their natural curiosity. Later (1980), he distinguished between *education* and *schooling*, comparing this to the distinction between the *ideal* and *reality* within education. Herein, he contends that education should teach children how to think and develop their abilities. This allows them to enrich and influence rather than compete with one another, thus enabling them to grow. Schooling, in contrast, typically lacks significance, merely seeking to equip students with basic literacy skills and delaying their objectifying entrance into the labor market (Lipman, 1980).

While aware of the ineffectiveness of the educational system, we continually seek to correct rather than redesign it. Reform requires addressing a series of fundamental issues—the goals of education, the learning process, the type of knowledge gained, and its relevance for students. School education being based on utilitarian values external to a person—and thus also to education—it cannot but fail to satisfy children’s hunger for meaning (Lipman, 1988). Education itself then becomes meaningless to them (Lipman, 1973).

Any alternative to school education must constitute a meaningful experience, as well as take fear consciously into the circle of awareness and design. The educational process adopted in schools must thus enable students to discover and reinforce their own abilities and cultivate their self-image (Lipman, 1991). The latter, develops when pupils employ their skills actively and creatively. Education (i.e., schooling) that does not provide students with an opportunity for active participation and setting their own mutual goals cannot strengthen their individual expression or recognize their distinctive ideas and views (Lipman, 1980). Thus, educational reform must make room for students to actively create and engage in knowledge in their own distinctive voices.

Lipman's critique of the educational system also addresses the social conditions in schools in general and classrooms in particular. Pupils should be exposed to an environment that instills mutual respect, dialogue, and creativity rather than manipulative prejudices and a hierarchical relationship between teachers and students that by definition promotes adult colonialism (Lipman, 1988). They should be given the opportunity to bring themselves and their worlds into the classroom instead of being required to listen passively to teachers delivering ossified knowledge.

While maintaining that the educational environment should encourage students to develop their own thoughts and ideas, Lipman (1980) is also aware that current policies do not foster such abilities or forms of expression, thereby denying pupils freedom of intellectual expression. The pedagogy of fear institutionalizes initiation into adulthood and the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation, the desire to keep everything the same preserving the educational *status quo*. In contrast, the pedagogy that lies at the heart of free philosophical thinking shifts the center of knowledge from the adult and their fears and culture of fear, where the center of attention and design formation of learning is on the child (Lipman, 1973); this is in line with the progressivist idea that the goal of education is thinking rather than rote learning.

The reflective elements linked to the careful and thoughtful thinking promoted by PwC/P4C help deepen the understanding of big ideas, thus enabling students to become autonomous rather than heteronomic adults (Kizel, 2016c). Answering the child's need for meaning and relevance, they foster open, free, independent thought that highlights the necessity for shedding light on children's lives—not only as future citizens but as thinking subjects in their own right.

The four factors adduced above—value, relevance, meaning, and relations that overcome the deficiencies of the traditional educational system—find expression in a reflective practice that provides children with a real opportunity to search, deepen their knowledge, and expose themselves to different opinions, freeing them from the burden of utilitarian criteria such as grades. Philosophical discussion enables young students to examine issues from their own perspective, listen to divergent views, and discover their own unique path through the world. Above all, it is founded on a discourse between individuals that serves as the minimal condition for social citizenship. Instead of stressing discourse, hierarchical instruction, transferring set knowledge, emphasizing monolithic truth and single answers and perspectives, education should encourage dialogue in order to equip students with discourse, thinking, verbal skills, and a democratic experience that highlights diversity.

The approach promoted by Lipman and his followers as encapsulated in P4C/PwC enables students to evade—both philosophically and practically—the adult shadow cast over them and the pedagogy of fear. Philosophical communities of inquiry shift power from the adult to the child's world, the facilitator enabling the process to work. Forfeiture of power and engagement in egalitarian dialogue allow not only the development of independent—and critical—thinking but also identity-formation in a social sense (Kizel, 2016d).

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