REFRAMING AND PRACTICING COMMUNITY INCLUSION: THE RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract
I wish to carry out a philosophical inquiry into contemporary intercultural public spheres. The thesis I will support is that the achievement of inclusive public spheres (namely, with respect to our European and Western experience, the accomplishment of democracy) largely depends on one's willingness and capacity to foster an "appreciation of diversities" by first, enhancing policies and forms of cooperation between the citizens' emotional and motivational resources, and then enhancing their cognitive competences. More specifically, my proposal is to understand such an effort from the viewpoint of post-Weberian responsibility, that is of an ethics and politics that overcome the traditional divisions between theory and practice, cognition and emotion, "Verantwortung" (responsibility) and "Gesinnung" (conviction), and therefore succeed in enhancing the citizens' awareness and attitudes as – in Habermas' words – "democratic co-legislators". Fiinally, a case study of Matthew Lipman's "Philosophy for Children/Community of Inquiry" succeeds precisely in embodying this cultural project.

Key words: Democracy, Interculturalism, Lipman's P4C, Responsibility.

Reformulando e praticando a inclusão comunitária. A relevância da FPC de Lipman

Resumo
Gostaria de realizar uma pesquisa filosófica sobre as esferas públicas interculturais dos dias atuais. A tese que pretendo defender é que a obtenção de esferas públicas inclusivas (especialmente em relação a nossa experiência europeia e ocidental, a realização da democracia) depende amplamente da disposição e da capacidade de uma pessoa em fomentar a "apreciação das diversidades" primeiramente, aprimorando políticas e formas de cooperação entre os recursos emocionais e motivacionais dos cidadãos e, em seguida, aprimorando suas competências cognitivas. Mais especificamente, minha proposta é compreender esse esforço do ponto de vista da responsabilidade pós-weberiana, que é de uma ética e política que superam as divisões tradicionais entre teoria e prática, cognição e emoção, "Verantwortung" (responsabilidade) e "Gesinnung" (convicção), e, portanto, tem sucesso no aprimoramento da consciência e das atitudes dos cidadãos, como segundo as palavras de Habermas, "co-legisladores democráticos". O estudo de caso de "Philosophy for Children/Community" (P4C) de Matthew Lipman tem sucesso precisamente no destaque destes resultados.

Palavras-chave: Democracia, Interculturalismo, P4C de Lipman, Responsabilidade.

Replanteando y practicando la inclusión comunitaria. La relevancia de la FPN de Lipman.

Resumen
Me gustaría realizar una investigación filosófica sobre las esferas públicas interculturales de los días actuales. La tesis que pretendo defender es que la obtención de esferas públicas inclusivas (especialmente en relación a nuestra experiencia europea y occidental, la realización de la democracia) depende ampliamente de la disposición y de la capacidad de una persona en fomentar la "apreciación de las diversidades" primeramente, perfeccionando políticas y formas de cooperación entre los recursos emocionales y motivacionales de los ciudadanos y, en seguida perfeccionando sus competencias cognitivas. Más específicamente, mi propuesta es comprender ese esfuerzo del punto de vista de la responsabilidad pos-weberiana, que es de una ética y política que superan las divisiones tradicionales entre teoría y práctica, cognición y emoción. "Verantwortung" (responsabilidad) y "Gesinnung" (convicción), y por tanto, tiene éxito en el perfeccionamiento de la consciencia y de las actitudes de los ciudadanos como, siguiendo las palabras de Habermas, "co-lesgisladores democráticos" El estudio de caso de "Philosophy for Children/Community" (P4C) de Matthew Lipman tiene éxito precisamente en el destaque de estos resultados.

Palabras claves: Democracia, Interculturalismo, P4C de Lipman, Responsabilidad.

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1. Introduction – The present day challenge to democracy

In a famous debate with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger held in München in 2004, Jürgen Habermas emphasizes a crucial issue concerning the effectiveness of liberal democracy:

> I assume – states Habermas – that the constitution of the liberal state can satisfy its own need for legitimacy in a self-sufficient manner, that is, on the basis of the *cognitive* elements of a stock of arguments that are independent of religious and metaphysical traditions. Even under these presuppositions, however, a *doubt* remains with regard to the question of *motivation*. When we bear in mind the role played by citizens who understand themselves to be the *authors of the law*, we see that the normative presuppositions for the existence of a *democratic* constitutional state make *higher demands* than would be the case if they were merely citizens of the society and "addressees" of the law. All that is expected of those addressed by the law is that they do not transgress the boundaries of the law when they exercise their subjective freedoms (and claims). The *obedience* due to coercive laws concerning people's freedom is one thing; the *motivations* and attitudes expected of citizens in their role as *democratic (co-)legislators* are something else (Habermas, 2006, pp. 29-30; emphasis added).

I take these reflections by Habermas as my starting point for a philosophical inquiry into the present day intercultural public spheres. The thesis I endeavor to support is that the achievement of *inclusive* public spheres (namely, with respect to our European and Western experience, the accomplishment of democracy) largely depends on one's willingness and capacity to foster the appreciation of diversities by first, enhancing policies and forms of cooperation between the citizens' emotional and motivational resources, and then enhancing their cognitive competences. More specifically, my proposal is to understand such an effort from the viewpoint of post-Weberian responsibility, that is of an ethics and politics that overcome the traditional divisions between theory and practice, cognition and emotion, *Verantwortung* (responsibility) and *Gesinnung* (conviction), and therefore succeed in enhancing the citizens' awareness and attitudes as "democratic co-legislators". My argument consists of three steps:

1) A preliminary inquiry into the idea of democracy and its intercultural relevance (§ 2).

2) A philosophical analysis of two core issues proposed by Lipman's P4C: the complexity of thinking and the meaning of community inclusion (§ 3).

3) An inquiry into the notion of responsibility and an attempt to assess its relevance to the debate on democracy, the appreciation of diversities, and the goal of inclusion. Moreover, this inquiry wishes to highlight the relevance of Lipman's P4C for the social practice of responsibility (§ 4).

2. Democracy and diversity

I begin with an inquiry into the idea of democracy. Two fundamental aspects are fulfilled by a democratic environment: first, an aptitude to research distinguished by fallibility and self-criticism, and, second, the recognition of the value assigned to procedures and their respect by citizens. Of course, being is related to the open, undecided and unpredictable character of human liberty, and democracy can never be relieved from a risk, which Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde expresses as follows:

> *the liberal, secularised state is nourished by presuppositions that it cannot itself guarantee.* That is the great gamble it has made for liberty's sake. On the one hand, it can only survive as a liberal state if the liberty it allows its citizens regulates itself from within on the basis of the moral substance of the individual and the homogeneity of society. On the other hand, it cannot attempt to guarantee those inner regulatory forces by its own efforts – that is to say, with the instruments of legal coercion and authoritative command – without abandoning its liberalness and, at a secularised level, lapsing into that pretension to totality out of which it led the way into the denominational civil wars (Böckenförde, 1991, p. 45).

The intrinsic risk of democracy is a continuous challenge for citizens and for institutions. It is something that compels their awareness, along with the burden of a peculiar responsibility: Achieving democratic independence and liberty requires some effort, self-discipline, and education. Indeed, according to John Dewey, democracy is

> more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity (Dewey, 1916, p. 60).

In other words, democracy has essentially to do with what in post-secular terms we refer to as the "appreciation of diversities". This requires the development of the citizens' intercultural competences and translating skills. In this perspective, democracy and education are closely intertwined, since their aim is to give rise to dialogue, self-correction, and inquiry, in order to fight the forces that cause violence, ignorance, injustice, and the spreading of stereotypes and prejudice (see, among others, Jonas, 1994; Grant-Portera, 2011; Nowak, 2013; Nowak *et al.* 2013; Wolters, 2013; Weber, 2013).

Even at a first glance, the past decades have been of extraordinary importance for the comprehension of difficulties related to the accommodation of ethnic and religious diversity, both at the European and at the global level. The public opinion, politicians, and scholars of many countries have levelled criticisms against multiculturalism for being unable to provide satisfactory policies on social cohesion and governance of ethnic and religious diversity (Jura, 2012). Others, however, prefer not to abandon multiculturalism in spite of its faults, and argue for its expansion (Parekh, 2000; Vasta, 2007; Kymlika, 2007; Silj, 2010; Taylor, 2012). To some extent, the alleged ineffectiveness of multiculturalism highlights a deeper problem: Since the 1990s (war in the former Yugoslavia), and especially since the beginning of the new millennium (11 September 2001 in the USA, but also 7 July 2005 and 7 January 2015 in Europe), a growing fear for the so-called "clash of civilizations" spread all over the globe. According to this trend, ethnic and religious diversities and traditions are perceived as menaces for the *status quo* and therefore trigger problematic reactions: First, the social group's enclosure within the defensive barriers of static identities, which are often created *ex nihilo* and manipulated for political purposes, and second, the tendency of the members of a dominant group not to recognize the "other" and his or her equal rights, i.e. a

tendency which in some cases ends in the adoption of assimilationist policies (Greblo, 2013).

In addition, the present day global economic crisis has given people and politicians of several European and Western developed countries the excuse for accomplishing further defensive processes: All those perceived to some extent as "different" or "outsiders" are likely to suffer various forms of discrimination, and are in many ways excluded from the alleged community of the "self", which plans not to give up its privileges for any reason. Therefore, we witness an additional social danger: The "us vs. them" conflict discriminates the weakest and the so-called "minorities within minorities", that is, generally speaking, the women, the young, and the immigrants (see Ambrosini, 2005; Eisenberg-Spinner-Halev, 2005). As a result, our time seems to be affected by a series of problems, such as the spreading of social prejudice and stereotypes, discrimination, an increasing lack of faith in forthcoming opportunities, a generalized breakdown of critical and reflective thinking, and a pervasive mistrust of democracy (Bobbio, 1988; Appadurai, 1996; Galli, 2011; Magatti, 2012; Pulcini, 2013).

3. Complexity of thinking and community inclusion

The intercultural relevance of democracy leads us to the second step, in which I focus on two key issues: a) the complexity of thinking, and b) the meaning of community inclusion.

As suggested by the philosopher Matthew Lipman (the founder of the "Philosophy for Children/Community" – P4C – curriculum), thinking is a synonym for (philosophical) inquiry, and has to be understood as perseverance in self-corrective investigation regarding relevant and problematic questions (Lipman, 1995).

A "Community of (philosophical) Inquiry" (CI) – which provides, by the way, an embodiment of "democracy" – originates from a common desire to participate in a dialogue, whose tangible shape is the circle formed by the participants and whose steps are *reading*, *questioning*, and *discussion* (Lipman, 2003,

pp. 97-100). Participants (no matter if they are children or adults)[2] are reciprocally committed "to reasonableness – that is, to rationality tempered by judgment" (Lipman, 2003, p. 111). In other words, they are committed to undertake a broad research involving the whole thinking project. To some extent, such inquiry is a practical experience into which each member is at a stake with his or her values in order to come to a productive result. The community research works as a device opening the possibility for negotiation, mutual understanding, translation, social inclusion, and, finally, as a practice of reciprocal recognition and respect, self-regulation and reframing of ideas and perspectives – that is the practice of democracy. As a result, the philosophical inquiry fosters the solidity of the community, which becomes "increasingly sensitive to meaningful nuances of contextual differences" (Lipman, 2003, p. 102).

The heart and vehicle of expression of the inquiry is, according to Lipman, philosophical dialogue, which differs from conversation, debate, and mere communication (Lipman, 2003, pp. 87-93). Philosophical dialogue is based on argumentative and "critical" thinking, but gains effectiveness only by putting into practice a "higher-order thinking" (Lipman, 1995, p. 1), by activating at the same time the "creative" and "caring" dimensions of thinking, and by enhancing emotions' contribution to thinking (Lipman, 2003, pp. 127-138)[3]. Thanks to this *multidimensionality* (see especially Lipman, 2003, p. 200), any CI can successfully tackle delicate and complex issues, such as, for instance, recasting individual and social values, and enhancing community inclusion (indeed, "inclusiveness" is the first of the features of communities of enquiries listed by Lipman; Lipman, 2003, p. 95). These achievements are closely related to individual and social competences that are enhanced by the CI, such as the following: Autonomy, reflectivity, self-reflectivity, self-correction, sensitivity to context, ability to use critical and self-

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[2] Indeed, according to Lipman, "The differences, from childhood to old age, are much more a degree than of kind" (Lipman, 2003, p. 178).

[3] States Lipman: "It is this matter of passion that is most controversial in the proposal to explain thinking as a combination of critical, creative, and caring thinking. We tend to identify critical thinking with reasoning and argumentation, with deduction and induction, with form, structure, and composition. We fail to see how profoundly our emotions shape and direct our thoughts, provide them with a framework, with a sense of proportion, with a perspective, or better still, with a number of different perspectives. Without emotion, thinking would be flat and uninteresting" (Lipman, 2003, pp. 261-262). A few pages after (p. 266), Lipman quotes a remarkable excerpt by Martha Nussbaum on this very topic (Nussbaum, 1992). See also Nowak, 2013.

critical thinking, as well as creative and caring thinking, competence to argue and to sustain the reasons of personal choices, actions, values and beliefs (Lipman, 2003, pp. 25-27).

As for the intercultural and democratic issue we are considering, I would like to stress the unique role played by the "caring" thinking:

> To care is to focus on that which we respect, to appreciate its worth, to value its value. Caring thinking involves a double meaning, for on the one hand it means to think solicitously about that which is the subject matter of our thought, and on the other hand it is to be concerned about one's *manner* of thinking (Lipman, 2003, p. 262).

This peculiar dimension of rationality highlights our intense desire for reality, and for the abundance of diversities, which endow reality with worth and value (Lingua, 2013). Moreover, the "caring" thinking appears to be unavoidably entangled in a subtle paradox connected to appraising differences:

> caring is a kind of thinking when it performs such cognitive operations as scanning for alternatives, discovering or inventing relationships, instituting connections among connections, and gauging differences. And yet, it is of the very nature of caring to obliterate distinctions and rankings when they threaten to become invidious and, thereby, outlive their usefulness. Thus, caring parents, recognizing that "being human" is not a matter of degree, just as "being natural" is not a matter of hierarchy, do not attempt to assign rankings to their children; yet at the same time they recognize that there are significant differences of perspective so that things have different proportions in one perspective than they have in another. Those who care, therefore, struggle continually to strike a balance between that ontological parity that sees all beings as standing on the same footing and those perspectival differences of proportion and nuances of perception that flow from our emotional discriminations (Lipman, 2003, p. 264).

Lipman describes the "caring" thinking as being "appreciative" (or "valutational"), "affective", "active", "normative", and "empathic" (Lipman, 1995, pp. 8 ff.; Lipman, 2003, pp. 264-271; Marsal *et al.*, 2009, pp. 411-420). I wish to draw special attention to the latter, which indeed plays a relevant role in the dialogue between diversities. According to Lipman "empathy" has to do "solely with what happens when we put ourselves into another's situation and experience that person's emotions as if they were our own" (Lipman, 2003, p. 269). As a result, "one way of caring is to step out of our own feelings, perspective, and horizon and

imagine ourselves instead as having the feelings, perspective, and horizon of another" (Lipman, 2003, p. 269). Indeed, this step out of ourselves is not only a theoretical one, but a practical activity involving our emotions. According to Lipman:

> Given the important role that our feelings play in our own understanding of our situation, it is not difficult to see that the substitution of someone else's feelings would enable us to understand much better how that other person views his or her situation. Indeed, what often causes a breakdown of understanding is that the parties involved are able to appreciate only the linguistic or the cognitive factors involved in their interaction with one another but fail to achieve that exchange of emotions that would make their mutual understanding a reality […]. It is when we do *not* put ourselves in the other person's place that we are merely playing at being ethical (Lipman, 2003, pp. 269-270).

However, experiencing the other's viewpoint does not mean *ipso facto* that we accept his or her evaluation or that the previous difference is simply erased: "We still have a judgment to make. But now we have better reasons, and the judgment we make can be a stronger one" (Lipman, 2003, p. 270). In the process of reorientation to reasonableness "caring" thinking thus plays a core role and reinforces the "critical" thinking and the latter's capacity to foster sensitivity to context both in terms of appreciating diversities and defeating stereotypes and prejudice:

> Critical thinking is thinking that is sensitive to particularities and uniqueness. It is the very opposite of that kind of casuistry that forces general rules upon individual cases, whether such rules are appropriate or not. It follows that critical thinking is hostile to all stereotyping; and since such stereotyping is the mechanism through which biased thinking operates, to all prejudice (Lipman, 2003, p. 220).

Furthermore, "critical" thinking nurtures another relational skill, namely the capacity to cope with untranslatable diversity. Indeed, on the one hand, Lipman believes that one of the basic thinking skills is translation, i.e. the "process in which what is said in one language is then said, without loss of meaning, in another" (Lipman, 2003, p. 185). On the other hand, however, he is also aware of the "*possibility that some meanings do not translate from one context or domain to another*" (Lipman, 2003, p. 220). And "critical" thinking's context-specific claim is

precisely in charge of eventually enhancing this kind of sensitivity to diversities, along with the capacity to respectfully cope with them (see Marsal *et al.*, 2009, pp. 141-152).

As a result, I believe it is precisely thanks to the combination of mutual respect and philosophical inquiry that the community and its members are able to foster inclusiveness and achieve criteria (gained through the common discussion) by which they increase their sensitivity to context and diversities, their empathy for other people's situations, their ability to recognize and nurture plural viewpoints, their capacity to "build on each other's ideas, although not necessarily with identical architecture" (Lipman, 2003, p. 97) and to evaluate what is relevant and to distinguish it from what is not (Lipman, 2001; Bitting, 1995; Turgeon, 2004, pp. 105-107; Marsal *et al.*, 2009, pp. 89-102; see also Fraser, 1990, pp. 65-70). These, I believe, are the basic features of what Habermas in the opening quotation refers to as the citizen's "motivation for democracy".

4. The need for responsibility and Lipman's CI

Finally, the third step is the role played by responsibility. Since the outcome of community philosophical inquiry is the undertaking of a cooperative "quest for meaning" in which each member of the community takes part (Lipman, 2003, pp. 95-96; Striano, 2005), is this effort likely to generate some durable modification in the life of the community and of its members? And in what sense are these practical modifications to be experienced, understood and investigated?

What I intend to prove is that the issue can be clarified thanks to the idea of responsibility, the meaning of which is indeed double. First, it pertains to the effective consequences of human behavior; however, it also evidences a wider and challenging horizon of sense, within which any concrete human being exists and performs his or her deeds (Jonas, 1984; Benhabib, 1985; Nussbaum, 2010). In this respect, I wish to demonstrate that responsibility helps us, among other things, to better understand the overall meaning of human existence and freedom in terms

of a reflective relationship to otherness and diversity. And I believe that Lipman's P4C provides a practical example of what responsibility means.

In order to achieve this result, I begin with a broad analysis of the human being's constitution and identity (see, among others, Geertz, 1983; Remotti, 1992; Geertz, 2000; Gobbo, 2000, pp. 45 ff.; Friese, 2002; Waldenfels, 2006; Paolicchi, 2007; Fistetti, 2008, pp. 111 ff.; Henry, 2009). I believe its peculiarity is highlighted through the dynamics of "Veranderung" conceived by the philosopher Michael Theunissen (Theunissen, 1977 [1965]). Indeed, *Veranderung* plays a relevant role in undermining the certainties of clear demarcations and fixed identities. The German noun is composed of the prefix *ver-* and the neologism *Anderung*. As explained by Heidrun Friese (Friese, 2013), the prefix *ver-* points to an "entanglement", namely a difficult and embarrassing situation according to which the definition of personal identity cannot be understood in terms of self-reference and self-relation only. "I" does not necessarily indicate a self-evident and autonomous constitution, but is intrinsically time-dependent and interrelated with otherness. Indeed, the German noun *Anderung* (which is not to be confused with *Änderung*, whose meaning is "change" or "transformation") evidences an explicit reference to otherness (*anders* = "other", "different") and highlights a sort of movement of the self "towards or into otherness".

Thus, *Veranderung* highlights the intersubjective constitution of the "I". With reference to Husserl, Theunissen states that the individual encounters a fundamental *duality* in his or her worldly experience: he or she is at the same time an external object (a *Körper*), a thing among others, and a human being – with its living body (*Leib*) – among others. Any individual experiences at the same his or her "becoming-*some-thing*-among-other-things" ("Zu-*etwas*-Anderem-werden") and his or her "becoming-*an-other*-human-being-among-others" ("Zu-*einem*-Anderen-werden") (Theunissen, 1977, p. 84). This fundamental *Veranderung* certainly makes a difference from an ethical point of view: Since the individual undergoes his or her own "being-othered" (*Veranderung*), the pronoun "I" experiences a loss of power (*Depotenzierung*) and decentralization (*Dezentrierung*) (Theunissen, 1977, p. 85). Because of the presence of the other, the "I" loses its

power to establish the world and to be the center of the world. The "I", therefore, discovers being a *partner* in an overall human *community* (Theunissen, 1977, p. 92).

Already several decades before Theunissen, both Martin Heidegger and Helmuth Plessner insisted on the idea that the specificity of human existence could be highlighted in its capacity of exceeding itself and its own horizons and boundaries (Heidegger, 1927; Plessner, 1928). However, Theunissen adds an important feature: The presence of the *other*, by whom the same individual is essentially constituted. This is, indeed, a relevant topic, which I wish to develop further.

From an ethical point of view, the other's existence addresses and calls for my individual freedom. This demand certainly means that the other puts me through a trial, as pointed out by Emmanuel Lévinas (Lévinas, 1961). However, in a more dialogical sense, it can be said that the other's call when addressed towards me activates my capacity of giving him or her a response. I have the *freedom* to answer to his or her request; i.e. the freedom to be *responsible*. As evidenced by Hans Jonas, "my" relationship with the other gives "me" the opportunity to experience the fact that my freedom is structurally related to my responsibility and *vice versa*. Also, the other's call is an event that coincides with a moral "ought" – what I ought become aware of: that is, the duty of responsibility, which involves freely caring for the other (Jonas, 1984; see also Waldenfels, 1961; Waldenfels, 2006).

Thus, neither freedom, nor responsibility alone expresses the specificity of this human experience. Only their twofold relationship is able to produce such a result. And this happens, due to the fact that the human being's dynamic constitution is exemplified with a dual polarity of opposites, such as self-centeredness and being-othered (*Veranderung*), relation-to-the-self and relation-to-the-other, autonomy and heteronomy, assimilation and accommodation, etc. Freedom and responsibility are just another exemplification of the same polarity. Moreover, they seem to gain hermeneutical clarity only thanks to their mutual relationship. Thus, on the one hand, *freedom* can be interpreted as a tendency towards self-realization, the fulfilment of desires, the achievement of goals, the need for relationships with other (human) beings, the active giving shape to the

world, the capacity to design, etc. On the other hand, thanks to *responsibility*, the human being experiences his or her own specific commitment to listen and (freely) answer to a claim coming from otherness (Jonas, 1984; Murphy-Gilligan, 1980; Benhabib, 1985). Responsibility endows with the sensitivity to the pressure of circumstances, with the awareness of the "other's" claims, specificity and difference, along with his or her right to be treated with equal respect and concern.

Therefore, any *responsible* individual evidences the basic twofold possibility/duty to carry out a *critical inquiry into otherness*, in order to clearly recognize, accept, and eventually enhance or criticize the prerogatives of the so called "other" (see, among others, Taylor, 1994; Benhabib, 2002; Beck, 2004; Waldenfels, 2006; Fistetti, 2008, pp. 133 ff.; Rosario del Collado, 2011-12; Taylor, 2012). In other words, responsibility elucidates the following *normative* issue: My relationship with the other is not only feasible, but something I *ought* to foster. I *ought* to build strong and dynamic relationships with the so-called "diversities". I *ought* to dialogue with them, and to take care of them in order to give my contribution to building inclusive communities. However, on the other hand, I have to "resist any simplistic dismissal of differences or uncritical embracing of them" (Turgeon, 2004, p. 107).

I believe that Lipman's CI embodies precisely these claims. How does this occur? In other words, in what sense does a CI provide an remarkable example of how individual reflection and community inquiry, individual values and shared values are not only mutually connected, but can be oriented to inclusion and the enhancement of responsibility as well? A preliminary remark: As stated above, because of the individual's relational and social constitution, consciously or not he or she always ponders, evaluates, and acts within a dialogical and social context. What changes thanks to the community inquiry, is the fact that the individual can decide to proactively and responsibly take part in an effort, that encourages its members to widen their positions and perspectives. In what sense does this occur? First, a CI is a cooperative "quest for meaning" and provides each participant with the opportunity to express his or her opinions in a context of mutual respect and by means of a democratic procedure of rational confrontation. Second, the participants' attitude is basically one of broad (philosophical and existential)

research – that is, characterized by reflectivity, self-correction, critical and self-critical thinking, sensitivity to the complexity and manifoldness of the debated issues (Franzini Tibaldeo, 2009; Franzini Tibaldeo, 2011). As a result, the achievement of these individual attitudes benefits the community research, which generally has to deal with challenging dilemmas and impasses, like the following: How can the legitimacy of the pluralism of values and *Weltanschauungen* be held with the likeliness of the conflict between them? How to cope with the fact that divergent options might not be able to confront each other rationally, reach a reasonable solution and succeed in accommodating existing pluralism? Taking part in a CI provides individuals with the competence to deal effectively with these challenges. Moreover, I believe that this capability is indeed related to responsibility. And this is for the following reasons.

The reasonableness fostered by the community inquiry is very close to responsibility's *responsive* feature and to its relationship with freedom. According to Lipman:

> To be reasonable indicates that one has the capacity to employ rational procedures in a judicious manner […]. But to be reasonable can refer not just to how one acts, but to how one is acted upon: It signifies one's capacity to listen to or be open to reason. Both senses of the term are fundamental for the community of inquirers (Lipman, 2003, p. 97).

Furthermore, also "critical" thinking is characterized by a similar duality, since its enhancement requires, on the one hand, to urge "cognitive accountability" viz. "feeling an obligation to supply reasons for stated opinions" and, on the other hand, to encourage "the development of intellectual autonomy" of the inquirers (Lipman, 2003, p. 214). Again, what is emphasized here is the mutual relationship between freedom and responsibility, along with the peculiar and dual meaning of the latter: First, the "*intellectual responsibility*" (Lipman, 2003, p. 214) of the inquirers is something generated by (free) self-commitment and self-obligation to a community inquiry. Second, responsibility is something inquirers assume (and ought to assume) for themselves: they are invited to "assume responsibility for their own thinking and, in a larger sense, for their own education" (Lipman, 2003, p. 214). Indeed, if providing inquirers

with cognitive skills is a form of empowerment, such increased powers entail increased responsibilities, especially to and for oneself. There are times when we cannot let other people do our thinking for us, and we must think for ourselves. And we must learn to think for ourselves by thinking for ourselves; other people cannot instruct us in how to do it, although they can put us in a community of inquiry where it becomes a relatively easy thing to do (Lipman, 2003, p. 214).

Finally, according to Lipman, the enhancement of the thinking skills through community inquiry is revealed by certain behaviors, which – I believe – highlight core facets of responsibility. For instance, among the behaviors associated with "critical" thinking's (mutual) *self-correction* there are the following: "Students point out errors in each other's thinking" and "Students acknowledge errors in their own thinking" (Lipman, 2003, p. 224). And among the behaviors associated with *sensitivity to context* there are the following: "Students differentiate among nuances of meaning stemming from cultural differences", "Students differentiate among nuances of meaning stemming from differences in personal perspectives or points of view", "Students recognize differences due to language differences, disciplinary differences, and differences of frames of reference" (Lipman, 2003, p. 224). As for "caring" thinking, I believe that its understanding in terms of responsibility is underlined by core features, such as: 1) Its "appreciative" viz. relational nature ("To appreciate is to pay attention to what matters, to what is of importance" – Lipman, 2003, p. 265). 2) "Caring" thinking as "active thinking": What "caring" means here is "taking care of or looking after" (Lipman, 2003, p. 267) and striving to understand "the meanings of acts" both "in their relationship to the projects and scenarios that embody them" and "in their relationships with the consequences that flow from them" (Lipman, 2003, p. 268). 3) "Caring" thinking's *normativity*: "Caring" thinking is a "thinking in tandem that yokes thinking about what is with thinking about what ought to be" (Lipman, 2003, p. 268). "Caring" thinking is intrinsically "normative", since "inquiry into what *is* done should be able to come up with a sketch or blueprint for what *ought to be* done" (Lipman, 2003, p. 269). Or, in other words, "Those who are able to reflect upon who they are need to be able to take into account, as well, the sort of persons they want to be and ought to want to be" (Lipman, 2003, p. 269). Indeed, this

feature highlights the very essence of responsibility, which entails a willingly accepted commitment to someone or something along with the consequences eventually flowing from this decision.

5. Concluding remarks

A few concluding remarks. My concise revision of notions, such as identity, democracy, freedom, and responsibility, aimed at both abandoning substantive models of interpretation and evidencing the "intercultural" structure of those ideas – that is, their intrinsic connection to otherness, difference and diversity. This is particularly true for freedom and responsibility: Their unique brotherhood evidences that they can *only* be understood as co-freedom and co-responsibility. Therefore, freedom and responsibility reveal their deepest meaning, consisting in an intrinsic *being-related-to-otherness*. This means that any specific and concrete manifestation of freedom and responsibility (be it an individual deed or a community inquiry process) entails a reflective process of continuous re-acceptance, re-configuration, re-framing, and negotiation of understandings, meanings, demands, values, etc.

The case study I mentioned – Lipman's P4C – succeeds precisely in showing how this process (which is also an ethical duty) can be practically fulfilled through a public activity focusing on a (philosophical) inquiry. Furthermore, it highlights that this dynamics reinforces individual and social sensitivity to otherness and diversity, gives strength to any attempt of supporting differences, and helps overcoming the dualism between motivation and cognition. As a result, it evidences its fruitfulness for the enhancement of the citizens' post-identitarian awareness and attitude as "democratic co-legislators".

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