

the philosophical baby and socratic orality

antonio cosentino¹

centro di ricerca sull'indagine filosofica - crif, italia

orcid id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3511-0341>

abstract

Matthew Lipman's Philosophy for Children curriculum was the outcome of a harmonious and fruitful partnership between philosophy and pedagogy, but over time, it has come in practice to lead to a split and a reduction: on the one side into the ditch of *pedagogese*, and, on the other, that of *filosofese*. Using the expression "Philosophical Practice of Community" (PPC) instead of "philosophy for children" (P4C) appears preferable, and promises to protect the latter from the risk of being considered, because of its vagueness, both as a sort of toy-philosophy, and as a kind of pedagogical device suitable for all purposes. Set out in terms of PPC, the project of doing philosophy with children becomes part of a broader field of research concerning each of its three components ("philosophical", "practice", and "community") and their relationships. If ideas are not clear about what "philosophical" means, the risk is that philosophy can be assimilated to other approaches and used as a general, empty label. Among the many questions that a PPC puts on the table are 1) Is it necessary to be acquainted with the philosophical cannon in order to practice philosophy with children? 2) Who are the philosophers in question? 3) How can we revitalize the Socratic orality?

keywords: philosophy for children, philosophical practice, socrates.

el bebé filosófico y la oralidad socrática

resumen

El currículum de Lipman de "Filosofía para niños" fue el resultado de una asociación armoniosa y fructífera entre filosofía y pedagogía, pero con el tiempo la práctica muestra el riesgo de una doble caída y reducción: por un lado, en la zanja de el *pedagese* y, por otro lado, en la zanja de el *filosofese*. El uso de la expresión "Práctica filosófica de comunidad" (PFC) en lugar de "Filosofía para niños" (P4C) parece preferible para proteger a este última del riesgo de ser considerada, debido a su vaguedad evocadora, tanto una especie de filosofía juguete como un tipo de dispositivo pedagógico adecuado para todos los fines. Establecido en términos de PFC, el proyecto de hacer filosofía con niños se convierte en parte de un campo de investigación más amplio sobre cada uno de los tres componentes ("filosófico", "práctica" y "comunidad") y sus relaciones. Si las ideas no son claras acerca de lo que significa "filosófico", el riesgo es que la filosofía puede ser asimilada a otros enfoques y usarse como una etiqueta tan general como vacía. Entre las muchas preguntas que una PFC pone sobre la mesa, intentaré enmarcar tres de ellas: 1) ¿Es necesario conocer la tradición filosófica para practicar filosofía con niños? 2) ¿Quiénes son los filósofos? 3) ¿Cómo revitalizar la oralidad socrática?

palabras clave: filosofía para niños; practica filosófica; sócrates.

¹ E-mail: cosentino.ntn@gmail.com

o bebê filosófico e a oralidade socrática

resumo

O currículo de "Filosofia para crianças" de Lipman foi o resultado de uma parceria harmoniosa e frutífera entre filosofia e pedagogia, mas, com o tempo, a prática mostra o risco de uma queda e uma redução duplas: de um lado para o fosso dos pedageses e, por outro, na vala da *filosofese*. Usar a expressão "Prática Filosófica da Comunidade" (PPC) em vez de "Filosofia para crianças" (P4C) parece preferível para proteger esta última do risco de ser considerada, devido à sua imprecisão evocativa, tanto uma espécie de filosofia de brinquedo quanto um tipo de dispositivo pedagógico adequado para todos os fins. Estabelecido em termos de PFC, o projeto de fazer filosofia com crianças torna-se parte de um campo mais amplo de pesquisa sobre cada um dos três componentes ("filosófico", "prática" e "comunidade") e seus relacionamentos. Se as ideias não são claras sobre o que "filosófico" significa, o risco é que a filosofia possa ser assimilada a outras abordagens e usada genericamente como rótulo vazio. Entre as muitas perguntas que uma PFC coloca sobre a mesa, tentarei enquadrar três delas: 1) É necessário conhecer a tradição filosófica para praticar filosofia com crianças? 2) Quem são os filósofos? 3) Como revitalizar a oralidade socrática?

palavras-chave: filosofia para crianças; prática filosófica; sócrates.

the philosophical baby and socratic orality

Lipman's curriculum of "Philosophy for Children" was the outcome of a harmonious and fruitful partnership between philosophy and pedagogy, but the actual practices show how precarious the balance can be between these two components. There is always the risk of a double fall and reduction: on the one side into the ditch of *pedagese*, as Dewey (1929:25) called a bad/poor pedagogy) and, on the other, into the ditch of *philosofese* (as I call a bad/poor philosophy). From the pedagogical point of view the danger is of repeating practices that forget their origin and their meaning, dropping into formalism and procedural constraints, missing improvisation and creativity. In this case, the sessions of philosophy with children may look too much like just the traditional *circle time* or they may tend to blend in with activities such as cooperative learning, debate, and so on. From the philosophical point of view, the danger is of adopting logical and linguistic technicalities used in a formalistic and adult-centered perspective that push philosophical activity more towards sophistry than dialectic (in the sense of Greek *dialeghestai*), or, in some cases, towards the retelling of the traditional history of philosophy (Galimberti, 2019).

With respect to *philosofese*, we would never like to see a philosopher-facilitator asking *his* "philosophical" questions, waiting for children's amazing and entertaining answers and stopping there; nor the case of the philosophical dialogue being carried out without the protection of the "community of inquiry" - resting, therefore, on an asymmetric relation between the child and the facilitator. The latter, following a binary logic, would try to squeeze from the helpless interlocutor merely mechanical answers along a path of thinking strictly managed by the facilitator himself. According to this approach a "philosophical" question might sound like this: "Would you prefer to live once or twice?", or "Is time a circle or a line?". Such puzzles rest on trick questions (or *trap-questions*) that force the interlocutor into a thought pattern already predefined by the facilitator, whose "guidance" is so strict that the control exercised by Socrates with Meno's slave would seem negligent by

comparison. At other times, when the facilitator leaves room to communal discussion, just an endless showcase of opinions takes place.

The risks I have summarized are real, as experience has taught me. About 8 years ago I began to use the expression “Philosophical Practice of Community” (PPC) instead of “Philosophy for children” (P4C) in order to protect the latter from the risk of being considered, because of its evocative vagueness, both a sort of toy-philosophy, and a kind of pedagogical device suitable for all purposes. The territory is the same, but the map is different. From the perspective of PPC, the term “*philosophical*”, more comprehensive than the noun “philosophy”, shows a broad semantic range. The concept of *practice*, in turn, refers to an extensive scope of scientific areas, from sociology to organizational sciences (Bourdieu, 1980; Gherardi, 2000; Polanyi, 1966; Lave-Wenger, 1991). Finally, with regard to *community* several readings are at stake, including the recent philosophical studies on community.²

So, the first question is what “philosophical” means according to PPC’s point of view. Let me go on with a consideration concerning the title of a recent book: *The Philosophical Baby: What Children’s Minds Tell Us about Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life* (Gopnik, 2010). Surprisingly, the author of this book is not a philosopher, but a respected American cognitive psychologist, who declares that she knows nothing about the various programs of philosophy with children. In her book, Gopnik claims that children as young as 3-4 years develop very complex and refined mental skills, such as the construction of alternative worlds, the creation of imaginary friends, the use of statistical methods and other experimental procedures to give order to the world. From these findings the conclusion is drawn that children are philosophers as much as adults are, if not even more so.

Now, what is happening here? Could the “philosophical” include some areas of psychology? Rather, the suspicion is that the final result of this book leads to an assimilation of philosophy to psychology. If this is the case, I’m wondering, more

² Beyond the sociological classic work by Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) and others as *Tracce di comunità* (Bagasco, 1999), I’m especially referring to most recent philosophical studies on community (Schülter-Clausen, 1990). A new image of community compared and contrasted with that coming from the political philosophy of modernity (Hobbes, Locke, Kant), is shaped by authors like Maurice Blanchot (1983), Jean-Luc Nancy (1986), Roberto Esposito (1998), Giorgio Agamben (2001).

generally, whether philosophy, when shared with children, is running the risk to lose its own distinctive features, becoming, in this way, a sort of general, rather meaningless label to be affixed to many different practices.

Is it sufficient the occurrence of cognitive and meta-cognitive operations or some clues of discursive and reflective thinking to maintain that we are doing philosophy? From the communicative point of view, can it be enough to participate in any verbal interaction generically dialogical, (including listening to each other, waiting for the turn to speak, respecting others' opinions, etc.) to affirm that we are philosophizing? If so, then any peaceful conversation, any friendly discussion, any open and constructive debate, could be called philosophy (Bohm, 2004; Yankelovich, 2004).

A commonplace widely used to endorse philosophy with children involves appealing to the condition of "wonder", considered an almost natural state in childhood. We have heard about a sort of ontological philosophical attitude attributed to the child, which consists, above all, in asking questions about everything, very often "illegitimate" questions, such as we are used to hearing from the philosophers (at least from many of them). Does this mean that the child is a born philosopher? To conceive of philosophy as a "natural" activity (Tassinari, 2019) - that seems to me a contradiction in terms - is the best way to promote its vanishing.

I believe that there is no baby or child *philosophical* by nature.³ It seems to me that the criticism a "philosophy of childhood" (Haynes, 2002; Cassidy, 2009; Kohan, 2006) expresses against Cartesian rationality has to do a lot with a "philosophy of common sense" together with its implications, as, for example, qualitative thought, embodied and pre-reflective thinking, and so on.⁴ The largest proportion of adult life does not involve acting or thinking according to Cartesian/scientific logic,

³ Stefano Oliverio (2014) makes a useful distinction between the Gopnik's *baby* and the *child*, the latter being assumed more generally as the figure of an ontological condition to whom is associated a "philosophy of childhood".

⁴ Concerning a "Philosophy of common sense", cfr. Reid, 1764; Moore, 1924. Reid's legacy has been taken up by classic pragmatists, especially by Peirce, who named his "pragmatism" also "Critical common-sensism" (Peirce, 1905; Dewey, 1932). Similarities between Reid and Wittgenstein are remarked by Risiew (2017).

nonetheless this doesn't mean that really we are all still "children". To be capable of thinking, children are expected to internalize the patterns of common sense they discover around them. Both Lipman's P4C and PPC closely focus on common sense, as the main source of beliefs to confront as an object of puzzlement and reflection. So, it seems to me that it would be very fruitful to deepen this topic.

The remarks introduced above seem to raise some fundamental problems concerning the general idea of doing philosophy with children. I'll try to frame three of them, adding a comment that reflects my personal point of view.

1. is it necessary to have acquaintance of the philosophical tradition in order to practice philosophy with children?

Answering "no" to this question is a big gamble. Yet, this is the trend we generally find among the practices of P4C. Lipman was a philosopher, and not a philosopher of education. At the time when he decided to follow up on his project of bringing philosophy into education as a contribute to the reform of the whole American school system, he didn't hide the first, great difficulty: how could in-service teachers become facilitators of philosophical practice? They simply could not, with a few exceptions. If Lipman went on with his project, it was because he believed that the solution to the problem of pedagogical mediation could have stemmed from his stories, which, for this purpose, would also have served as direct modelling for pupils of the kind of practice he intended to spread in schools (Lipman, 2008).

Such a strategy, nonetheless, has proved insufficient, because over time the intermediation of the class teacher appeared inescapable. That is why a teacher training program was arranged, which became the pattern for all the P4C developments all over the world. The aim of such a training is to weaken the consolidated and routine professional posture of teachers, and to expose them, at the same time, to a reflective challenge in order to achieve the innovative pedagogical approach centered on the "community of inquiry". Actually, this training model can mostly meet the pedagogical aim of cultivating the "community of inquiry" environment (Cosentino-Oliverio, 2011), which provides valuable

educational results concerning active citizenship, the advancement of a dialogical attitude, and the improvement of group dynamics where it helps to cope with conflict and bullying situations, and the like.

What about philosophy in this framework? We should not forget that Lipman himself had in mind a clear distinction between “community of inquiry” and “*philosophical* community of inquiry”. As he puts it:

I have chosen to use as an illustration a *philosophical* community of inquiry, not only because that is the kind I am most familiar with, but also because I think it provides a valuable prototype. It remains to be seen whether communities of inquiry in other disciplines will be successful only to the extent that this prototype is approximated (Lipman, 1991:241).

Lipman’s distinction leads to further considerations. The first is about “communities of inquiry in other disciplines”. Twenty-eight years later, this possibility still “remains to be seen”. I cannot but underline how suggestive this remark sounds, with all its hidden potentialities. Could you imagine all the disciplines in every school taught and learned according to the main guidelines of a “pedagogy of the community of inquiry”?

The whole story of P4C puts in the foreground the “*philosophical* community of inquiry,” underestimating the fact that its background is the general environment of the basic “community of inquiry”. In other words, I think that, inside the real practice, the “community of inquiry” comes first and a “*philosophical* community of inquiry” represents only a prospective development of it. So, what seems very important is to hold the distinction clear without blending “inquiry” with “*philosophical* inquiry”, otherwise we may find ourselves in the following dilemma. Either we admit that the semantic range of “*philosophical*” embraces all the potential contents of a “community of inquiry”, or philosophy tends to disappear. Once again, an assimilation is at stake, namely, of *philosophical* inquiry to inquiry generally understood according with the pragmatist tradition (Peirce, 1877; Dewey, 1933).

Keeping the distinction between “community of inquiry” and “*philosophical* community of inquiry”, helps us to work around the dilemma and to avoid any risk of assimilation. Nevertheless, distinction is not separation. This means that a

“community of inquiry” constitutes the first step along the way that can lead towards the “philosophical community of inquiry”. Looking at the whole course from a dynamic-evolutionary view, the starting point will be caring for the development of the sense of community (Sharp, 1991), the internalization of the ethics of dialogue and the logic of inquiry. These ends foreshadow the main tasks of the “pedagogy of the community of inquiry”, with the addition of its commitment to the radical transformation of the classroom practices, as an articulated project for the overall educational setting. It includes among its fundamental elements:

1. The transformation of the spontaneous class-dynamics into a communitarian net of interactions and transactions;
 2. The primacy of orality equally distributed within the community;
 3. The primacy of the social and constructive dimension of learning processes;
 4. The shift of attention from products to processes;
 5. The repositioning of the teacher figure in the task of “facilitation”.
- Such a shift implies the choice to: a) give priority to listening to; b) act as “scaffolding” in an indirect way on the influential factors of the context and not by direct instructions; c) orient learning by examples and modelling actions, styles of thought, attitudes; d) avoid direct evaluations.

After the class-group is turned in a “community of inquiry”, attention can be paid to the philosophical style of the *logos* and, finally, to the dialogue with the philosophers of tradition. The subsequent stages show a possible development, more precisely the path along which a “community of inquiry” approaches the philosophical purview and operates as a “philosophical community of inquiry”, when acquiring a philosophical style recognizable in the light of the tradition. This is where a philosopher-facilitator plays out his role, knowing how to formulate the kind of questions which arouse “wonder”, questions which provoke that cognitive puzzlement requiring philosophical reflection and inquiry.

Both the child and the philosopher like to ask questions. The child poses his/her embarrassing questions because he/she comes from the standpoint where “everything is still possible” and all the frameworks are still to be learned. The philosopher, in turn, by profession is able to deactivate his beliefs about the world and “do things with brackets” - disturbing any reductive position which asserts: “Only this is possible” (Cosentino, 2017). In such a situation, the philosopher’s role is to recognize and to suspend intentionally such restrictive frameworks, even those that are most hidden, and to deal with them in an openminded and reflective way. Critical reflection about the frameworks (Plato would say recognizing the cave in which we always are) is the protection that the philosopher can offer against conformism and passivity, and the stagnation of thinking.

With reference to the pedagogical strategies, knowledge related to the philosophical tradition helps the philosopher-facilitator to operate with *ends-in-view* (Dewey, 1939). An *end-in-view* must be understood, in our case, as an educational objective unscheduled in advance, but thought *in* and suggested *by* the context of the dialogue. The teacher-facilitator who pays attention to how the inquiry progresses inside the community will be particularly careful regarding the balance between phases of conformism and stalemate, and phases of creativity and growth that follow each other along the way. When repetitiveness and conformism prevail, he will help to restart the process of growth. This task will have to be done by provoking targeted and effective questions. How will the facilitator find the right ones if not from the archives of philosophical thought?

2. *who are the philosophers?*

Recently Peter Sloterdijk has connected Plato’s numerous statements defining the philosopher’s proper condition, to the “absences” into which Socrates sometimes happened to fall (Laërtius, 2013; Plato, 2008). The Platonic Academy was the creation of a space suitable to accommodate the “absences” of the philosopher, to favor his condition of “apparent death”, of permanent *epoché*, as Sloterdijk (2010) maintains.

There is no doubt that those who are concerned with philosophical practice with children have distanced themselves from such definitions of the philosopher. According to Marx's most famous words that philosophers must change the world,⁵ we can say that, actually, many philosophers during the twentieth century have stated the practical and transformative value of philosophy, and many of them have been committed to a kind of philosophy which is neither an "apparent death" nor it is made up of "absences".

But it might be understood that the real turning point of philosophical practice consists, rather, in its purpose to relaunch two essential components of Socratic philosophizing: not the irony, not the maieutic, not the *elenchos* nor the "*Ti esti*", but, 1) the wish to extend the practice of philosophical inquiry to non-philosophers as lead actors and not as mere spectators; 2) the belief that orality is the best way to work with philosophical practice. It is one thing to claim that the philosopher must deal with questions concerning the field of ordinary experience and, therefore, must play his practical role; it is another thing to say that everyone has the potential and should have the opportunity to philosophize.

The true revolution of philosophical practices lies in relaunching and reconstructing in an updated form these two aspects of Socratic philosophizing. For Lipman it was not only a matter of recognizing in the abstract the "right to philosophy", and of acknowledging that children too could have it, but it was also the commitment to arrange the tools and methods for implementing an educational project - to move on, then, to action. Neither children nor adults spontaneously devote themselves to philosophy, even when they have fully recognized such a right.

In my view, beyond the "pedagogy of the community of inquiry", it is the philosopher-facilitator who has the role of bringing his interlocutors to the field of philosophy, of stimulating and orchestrating the philosophical dialogue. In this case, we must therefore expect the facilitator to be "philosophical" enough to help

⁵ "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it". It is the eleventh thesis of *Theses on Feuerbach* (Marx, 1845).

non-philosophers help themselves to get out of the cave. Anyway, while in Plato's *Dialogues* it is clear who is the philosopher and who is not, in the "community of philosophical inquiry", the distinction is much less pronounced, although not completely dissolved.

If we conceive of the community as a condition of being-with, as a "macro subject" characterized by a myriad of transactions and not as a sum of individuals held together by external interactions, then the distinction between philosopher-facilitator and community of non-philosophers has just a functional and strategic value. What merges such a community, from the beginning to the end, is the practice of co-philosophizing, the global field of inquiry in which the transactional processes interweave, into a transformative relationship, both the products of naive (common sense) thinking and the competences deriving from the knowledge of the philosophical thought. The end result is not the transfer of knowledge from the philosopher to non-philosophers, but the progress in the critical, creative and caring thinking of the whole community.

Philosophy for all (including children) cannot mean the same philosophy for each one, neither in the sense of a passivity with respect to a unique tradition, nor in the sense of a presumed "natural philosophy". In my view, "philosophy for all" should mean that the exercise of everyone's thinking would gain a lot by acquiring a philosophical *style*; and what I call "style" can be achieved only through the example of great philosophers with the mediation of the philosopher-facilitator. If you want to deal with philosophizing, you need to know what it consists of, and only philosophers may show us exactly what they do (Fabbrichesi, 2017).

The learning of philosophy and philosophizing has always had to deal with the issue as to how to put pupils in touch with the figures consecrated by the tradition as the masters of philosophical thought. To solve this problem by believing that children are born philosophers and, indeed, that they are somehow themselves teaching adults, is quite naive. The radicalization of the issues concerning the adult-child relationship showing how the childhood tends very often to appear as a construction of the adult's power is a welcome endeavor to get out the "banking

education". Nevertheless, a relation shaped as "childlike education" or "philosophy of childhood" (Kennedy-Brock, 2017; Kohan, 2017) seems to hint at a sort of ontology of childhood that depicts it as the most graceful way of being, completely forgetting, at least, any warning about destructive and antisocial impulses of children. I just believe, instead, that children, with their inherent psychological, historical and cultural specificities, are simply a part of the group of non-philosophers and, as such, they can be called to experience philosophy when it is shaped as a practice of shared inquiry.

3. how to revitalize the socratic orality?

Why has traditional philosophy always been kept away from children? The most accredited explanation is Plato's misinterpreted justification (Plato, 1888). But, from a pedagogical point of view, a more pragmatic but crucial reason has been and still is this very stumbling block: the fact that the philosophy we know is written, and, in addition, in books not easily accessible because of their language. This is, in my opinion, the main barrier between children and philosophy.

Children grow up in the medium of orality (nowadays complicated by the mixture of many communication technologies and codes). They learn literacy at school, and it is a long and difficult process to the extent that it is not the simple instrumentality of writing at stake but its syntax, and, more generally, the alphabetical logic (Havelock, 1963; Olson-Torrance, 1991). Therefore, inviting children to philosophy is not so much a matter of rewriting the allegory of the cave as a fairy tale. Instead, the challenge consists in reviving Socratic orality. In this view, Socrates should be considered more like a myth than a model. This is because there is an unbridgeable gap between Socrates and us.

We can suppose that a Socrates resurrected would ask, as the first question: "What is philosophy?"; and the probable answer today would be enclosed in a written handbook. On the one hand, then, we have the myth of an original practice of live, face-to-face dialogue of great social and political impact, and on the other, an orderly collection of products of philosophical activity. And yet, if the dialogue between the resurrected Socrates and a student of philosophy was to move forward,

it would inevitably have in mind the contents of that handbook, since it couldn't bypass the amount of philosophical thought worked out after Socrates and, in some way, rooted in him.

Socratic orality becomes philosophical inquiry by means of dialogue, but the Socratic dialogue we know is a written text which has lost its real life. After Plato, many philosophers adopted the literary genre of dialogue to display their ideas,⁶ and the practice of live dialogue as tool of philosophical common inquiry was completely abandoned (Cosentino, 2017). Furthermore, Plato's *Dialogues* are, as we know, a very controversial source, where we can find different models of dialogical practice⁷. So, as stated above, we cannot just assume Socrates as a methodological model.

Actually, the kind of philosophical dialogue that PPC promotes is not inspired by the scheme of Greek *dialoghestai*, mostly governed by an agonistic attitude (Serra, 2016). The dialogue in a "philosophical community of inquiry" never focuses on one-to-one interactions but takes place as a "polyphonic" event growing in the public *agorá* of communication. The unpredictable fullness of a distributed and common *logos* emerges from the communicative flow, from exchanges, links and mixing, properly from the reticular "*dia*" (*between*) which keeps together and, at the same time, distinguishes each participant's singularity.

The dialogue, which was for Socrates the form and substance of his philosophizing, cannot but remain also for PPC the central pillar, the irreplaceable communicative modality, provided that it is rethought as more "conversational" and less managed by the philosopher, which, when engaged in this task, is no longer the platonic philosopher-king; rather he looks like the "Socratic intermediary" called forth by Richard Rorty. As he puts it:

The [role] is that of the informed dilettante, the polypragmatic, Socratic intermediary between various discourses. In his salon, so

⁶ It is recognized that the so-called "Socratic dialogue" was a manner of presentation of the philosophical reflection very common in Plato's time (Aristotle, 1902). For an interesting comparison between the "reasons" of the dialogue in Plato and other authors such as Leibniz, Hume and others, cfr. Trabattini, 2012.

⁷ In this regard, it is enough to compare, for example, *Laches* with *Meno*. Among the great amount of studies cfr. Vlastos, 1991.

to speak, hermetic thinkers are charmed out of their self-enclosed practices. Disagreements between disciplines and discourses are compromised or transcended in the course of the conversation (Rorty, 1979:317).

A polyphonic dialogue has to do with the epistemological and communicative framework in which the post-Socratic gadfly steers his elenctic strength and his maieutics, not against the *doxa* of each interlocutor one at a time, but towards the common *logos* that looms when the many *doxai* meet and rub each other so that the “community of inquiry” moves towards conceptual and sense horizons still unexplored.

concluding remarks

In conclusion, one single conclusion is not at hand about the questions I tried to set up. They can be useful if they help keeping research alive. I would just like to add that my contribution is dictated by the fear that philosophy will lose itself when it is trumpeted everywhere and used as a fashionable label. Faced with the risks of the Hegelian “black night in which all cows are black”, the tradition of P4C is, in the field of education, a reliable beacon that requires to be treasured and protected among the countless proposals of doing philosophy with children now circulating more and more and rapidly multiplying on the market. A good “pedagogy of community of inquiry” is infinitely precious for educational innovation. But, the community of inquiry becomes *philosophical* to the extent that it rests on recognizable and distinct skills. In terms of my theme, what is at issue is keeping open the question “What the philosophical dimension of practice consists of?”. As much as it can be of importance whether the “philosophy of childhood” can legitimately carve out a space in the landscape of philosophical disciplines, from the point of view of a “philosophical practice of community”, the question is, rather, whether philosophy can resume life as “social practice” disseminated in terms of commitment towards thinking together as the most important task before us.

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