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"PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION" IN THE TEXTS AND PRACTICES OF PETER WORLEY

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ABSTRACT. "Philosophy in Action" in the Texts and Practices of Peter Worley. If philosophy for children (P4C) aims to become a "reconstruction of philosophy" itself (Lipman, 1997:13), the PhiE (Philosophical Enquiry), an approach proposed by Peter Worley, represents a thorough reconstruction of the classical P4C. In my article, I intend to emphasize the differences between Peter Worley's approach and the classical version offered by Matthew Lipman and his followers.

My thesis is that Worley's approach manages both to stimulate to a greater extent children abilities of critical thinking, and to constitute a genuine representation of "doing philosophy" from early ages. In other words, Peter Worley's distinct version of P4C represents both literally and metaphorically "philosophy in action".

***Keywords**: P4C, Community of Inquiry, Philosophical Enquiry, Matthew Lipman, Peter Worley*

RÉSUMÉ . "**La philosophie en action" dans les textes et pratiques de Peter Worley**. Si la philosophie pour les enfants (P4C) vise à devenir elle-même une «reconstruction de la philosophie» (Lipman, 1997: 13), la PhiE (Philosophical Inquiry/ recherche philosophique), approche proposée par Peter Worley, représente une reconstruction approfondie de la P4C classique. Dans mon article, j'ai l'intention de souligner les différences entre l'approche de Peter Worley et la version classique proposée par Matthew Lipman et ses disciples. Ma thèse est que l'approche de Worley parvient à la fois à stimuler davantage les capacités de pensée critique des enfants et à constituer une véritable représentation du «faire de la philosophie» dès le plus jeune âge. En d'autres termes, la version distincte de P4C de Peter Worley représente à la fois littéralement et métaphoriquement la «philosophie en action».

***Mots-clé** : P4C, communauté de recherche, recherche philosophique, Matthew Lipman, Peter Worley*

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Reconstructing philosophy for children

One of the most appreciated founders of the philosophy for children movement, Mathew Lipman, claimed that philosophy for children (P4C) should aim to become a "reconstruction of philosophy" itself: "Philosophy in the traditional understanding is conceived in terms of the comprehensive capacity of adults; it is ill designed for the mental abilities of children[2]. For philosophy to become accessible to the young, it is necessary to tackle philosophy itself and reconstruct it. That said, the program of philosophy for children is precisely a reconstruction of philosophy" (Lipman in Daniel, 1997: 13). Faithful to this approach, Lipman has attempted to reconstruct philosophy and make it available to children of all ages between 6 and 17, through a series of philosophical novels (*Elfie*, *Pixie*, *Harry Stotlemeyer's Discovery*, *Kia and Gus*, *Lisa*, *Suki* and *Mark*).

Lipman's main innovation in the philosophy of education is the notion of "community of inquiry"; a concept that attempts to concentrate the powers of collaborative, critical and caring investigation carried out by the team of students and facilitators. The main pedagogical methods through which the "community of inquiry" continues to be built, replicated and fostered in P4C today is through a series of prescribed steps that are reiterated during each session: children and facilitator are seated in a circle; the facilitator proposes a stimulus; children generate various questions that are assessed according to several criteria; the most popular question (established by vote) is adopted and thoroughly discussed during the remaining of the session.

Although this probably represents the most common form of performing philosophy for children, there have been authors that noted several shortcomings of the method.

Some limitations of the classical P4C approach

The first one, to some extent anecdotal, is provided by Michael Shapiro, who notes after a disastrous attempt to conduct inquiries following Lipman's philosophical novels that nowadays students are sometimes not so eager of generating innumerable lists of questions that might be pondered and pursued in an inquiry (Shapiro 2012:5). According to his experience, children did not come up with deep questions, but asked why was the character so stupid and whether they can exit the room (Shapiro

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2012:5). Therefore, he was constrained to come up with something more appealing: a series of fun activities developed into lesson plans that addressed basic philosophical questions through philosophical games, playful activities and structured conversations.

The second critique, elaborated by Michael Hand, attempts to evaluate the various ways philosophy is being taught to children in schools. In Hand's opinion, there are three ways in which philosophy is included in the educational curricula: philosophy through "The Great Books" (where specific canonic authors are being addressed); "The Circle Time" (where children seated in a circle generate questions, vote and discuss them) and philosophy through philosophical puzzles and thought experiments (as practiced in the sessions of The Philosophical Foundation). The first approach is not deemed suitable for school children; in the second one "the discussion might not be remotely philosophical and usually fails to identify good arguments and questions" and therefore only the last one seems appropriate for sessions that are philosophically sound (Hand in Lightfoot 2011:26).

Putting ideas into action: Peter Worley's approach

In his books and scholarly articles, Peter Worley[3] labels his main concept PhiE (Philosophical Enquiry). While having many aspects in common to the tradition of P4C, his approach represents a reconstruction of the classical P4C. In this article section, I intend to emphasize the differences between Peter Worley's approach and the classical version offered by Matthew Lipman and his followers. My thesis is that Worley's approach manages both to stimulate to a greater extent children abilities of critical thinking, and to constitute a genuine representation of "doing philosophy" from early ages. In other words, Peter Worley's distinct version of P4C represents both literally and metaphorically "philosophy in action". While my presentation of Worley's approach might seem to lack a critical distance, the purpose for this article is to introduce Worley's approach to an audience that is generally unfamiliar with his ideas and methods. I believe these ideas deserve to be known and tested by other P4C facilitators, mainly because children benefit a great deal from them, as my experience shows.

Worley is an adept of the usefulness of philosophy in schools, and is continually providing reasons why philosophy is so necessary in the school curricula. One major reason is connected to the transformative power of philosophy, that is

[3] Peter Worley is director of the foundation *The Philosophy Foundation* (TPF) and practitioner of philosophy for children. TPF is a charity that supports the development of philosophy for children programs.

able to instill the unusual into the core of usual: "I like to think that philosophy has an alchemical power and, just as the alchemists of old believed that one could change base metals into gold, the philosopher has the power to change the banal into something sparkling with interest, revealing a wonder about things towards which wonder may have been lost, even for the teacher too." (If Machine, p. 50)

To Worley's view, to deprive children of philosophy would be tantamount to depriving them of the basic skills they will need as grown ups that regular school subjects fail to provide: "many of the core aspects of our philosophy sessions, such as autonomous thinking; dealing with uncertainty and inconclusiveness; collaborative thinking; making the children's ideas the centre-point for discussions, and assessing one another's arguments, are all aspects the children themselves say they simply do not get in other lessons" (Rick Lewis, 2011, 19).

Because the term "philosophy" is notoriously hard to define, especially given the plethora of definitions provided by various philosophers and scholars, it is essential to understand what Worley means by this term: "Philosophy, done well, should be a rigorous, structured, sequential conversation (with others or oneself) that is both collaborative and oppositional, that attempts to explore, explain and justify the structure and content of our thoughts in response to perceived problems and puzzles about reality, knowledge, value and meaning." (Worley, 40 Lessons, p. VII). One can see from this definition that Worley adheres to an analytic tradition of philosophy, one that postulates the clarifying powers of philosophy in relation to other subjects.

Summing up what makes philosophy a distinctive and valuable approach for everyone, Worley explains: "Philosophy employs a method/process (more often than not ongoing) of reflection, reasoning and re-evaluation, by employing the appropriate intellectual virtues or excellences, in order to make good, though *provisional* judgments about what seems (metaphysically) true, (morally) right, and (logically) coherent… The hope is that, by doing philosophy, we learn to think better, to act more wisely, and thereby help to improve the quality of all our lives". (40 Lessons, p. VII) All these qualities that Worley is enumerating are simultaneously *actions* one can perform in order to increase one's philosophical abilities. These actions are carefully performed and repeated during the encounters with children.

For the practitioners from *The Philosophy Foundation* (especially Peter and Emma Worley), philosophy for children represents a basis for consolidating children' cognitive abilities, through this general approach of "doing philosophy" or "acting it out".

As Steve Williams puts it: "The Philosophy Foundation develops its own materials, often in the form of stories, to stimulate dialogue with young people. Many of the themes covered in the stories are taken from well-known philosophical

puzzles and paradoxes. The foundation's aim is to develop children's 'autonomous learning skills and higher-order thinking skills' with a view to them applying those skills elsewhere." (Williams, p.5)

Consolidating children's autonomy

Similar to Mathew Lipman, Worley also starts from the ideal of developing children' autonomy. The autonomy of children can be supported only when the facilitator resists the temptation of imposing his own ideas as being "the right ones", and, more generally, resists the temptation of transforming the philosophy class into a search for "the right answer" and punishing the "wrong" ones (which is a common topic in all the other disciplines). To quote Worley: "what's need is a forum that allows the children to explore ideas, make mistakes on the way and recognise that mistakes have been made without the facilitator at any point telling them they are ‚wrong'" (Worley, 2011, p. 11).

In order for this to happen, what is needed is that the facilitator contribute to the development of the autonomous thinking of children, and consequently for them to be able to self-evaluate themselves. During the meetings, it is therefore necessary that children develop the ability "*not how to get the right answer,* but *how to identify and evaluate an answer*" (If, p. 13). Put otherwise, what is needed is to double the cognitive abilities cultivated by the rest of the curriculum (finding out the right answers) with meta-cognitive abilities of interrogation and reflection (knowing how to identify and evaluate an answer).

A good example is provided by the following scenario: "A teacher asks two children the answer to this question: ‚What is 2 + 2?' The first child says ‚4". When asked, Why?' he replies, ‚Because it's my lucky number.' The second child says ‚5' and when asked ‚why?' she explains that she counted on her fingers but it turns out that she made an error in calculation. Question: Who has given the best answer and why?" (Worley, 2011, p. 13). If we stop short at the cognitive level (and refrain from asking the control question: ‚Why?') we then declare the first answer as the best one (and in this case the child has offered the right answer only by chance). However, if we ask the meta-cognitive question, we discover that the first child accidentally offered the right answer while the second one has provided a wrong one, but using a method that, if used rightly, could have lead him to the right answer. The metacognitive question also shows us where the children stand in relation to an answer, and what else is needed in order to reach the answer.

According to this approach, a child with autonomous thinking is one that can ask philosophical questions and is able to successfully navigate philosophical conversations with peers. In order to help children consolidate their conceptual abilities, the teacher should step back, and embrace the position of a facilitator, not of an expert. Thus, according to Worley, the facilitator of a meeting should cultivate a delicate balance between presence and absence: to be present to guarantee the progress of the meeting, yet absent – meaning, not imposing one's own ideas and directions[4].

An inspired analogy is the one provided by the familiar image of the "Ariadne thread": "In the Ancient Greek myth *Theseus and the Minotaur*, Ariadne helps Theseus defeat the Minotaur and escape from the maze by leaving him a thread. There are two important features of this metaphor that are relevant to the facilitator's role. First, Ariadne enables him to keep track of where he has come from even though the maze is complex, and second she is not present while he navigates the maze. Though she provides the tools he has to do the rest himself." (Worley, 2011, p. XI)

Concerning the relation that the practitioners of philosophy for children have to have with traditional philosophy, Worley is again closed to Lipman. Firstly, children are not having "philosophy lessons" in these meetings, but learn how to discuss philosophically: "One great thing about philosophy is that children do not need to be familiar with it to be able to do it" (Worley, 2011, p. 3). For those that are skeptical about children's abilities to do philosophy due to their immaturity, Worley replies: "As the philosopher Simon Glendinning once said to me, when teaching children math or music, you don't wait until they're old enough to do it well – you begin teaching them while they are not able to do them well. Inability is not a reason for children not to start learning. However, I have regularly seen children do what could arguably be described as good philosophy. Philosophy can provide children with a kind of mental playground to exercise their thinking skills.." (Rick Lewis, p. 19)

Worley considers that the facilitators themselves do not require a preliminary preparation in the formal study of philosophy, but they need several minimal knowledge that will enable them to perceive the philosophical content inside children conversations and to lead the discussion in that direction. In countless instances, Worley insists that the role of the adult is that of a facilitator, and not of

[4] An elaboration of "the presence and absence principle" can also be found here: "By *presence* I mean those interventions that we might make as facilitators that impact on the discussion, and by *absence* I mean the extent to we remove ourselves or 'step out' of the discussion. A good facilitator aims to get the balance right between these two aims." (Candiotto, 2016)

a teacher: "From this point on, while you are reading this book and doing philosophy with children, you are not a teacher, you are a ‚curious facilitator'. By this I mean that you are interested in the ideas being discussed as the children and will do all you can to help the children explore ideas, but you will not be teaching them as you would in your normal role as ‚teacher' and you will not be expressing your own ideas." (Worley, 2011, p. 4)

However, Worley attempts to supplant the facilitators' possible lack of philosophical sophistication by offering them supplementary resources, where he summarizes the philosophical ideas included in his stories. Moreover, Worley does not refrain from including philosophical myths and ideas in the stories for children. In the end, when one discusses the myth of Gyges, it is only natural to mention its author, namely Plato; and when discussing the ways in which the Gyges ring can be used, to also discuss Plato's idea that the ring should be used for doing good deeds.

Key ideas of Worley's approach

There are several differences between Worley's approach and other practitioners, most notably those who follow Lipman and the P4C strategies. If Lipman's innovation was the *community of inquiry - CoI*, Worley prefers to label his strategy *Philosophical Enquiry PhiE*.

Differently from Lipman, Worley offers detailed plans for PhiE, including stimuli, the task questions that are addressed by the facilitator, some relevant philosophical content (including the concepts and topics), as well as many strategies designed in time that the facilitator should use to maintain in that presence-absence recommended by the author and to maximize children's input and involvement.

Another issue of disagreement concerns the role of the questions. Lipman and his followers put the children in the spotlight, by giving them the prerogative to ask the questions once the stimulus has been used. After that, both the facilitator and the children sort the questions (using most commonly the question quadrant of Philip Cam) and the leading question is decided by vote. However, this approach has some drawbacks that have been criticized in the literature.

In his books and articles, Worley pleads for using a greater variety of questions, and for emphasizing some particular types that are to be purposefully used by the facilitator. Without neglecting children' input, Worley believes that the leading questions have to be asked by facilitators and consistently pursued during the philosophical enquiries. The central kind of questions are the "task questions", around which a philosophical enquiry (PhiE) should be structured. The task question is

usually related to the stimulus and encapsulate a perennial philosophical dilemma. It needs to be clear, simple and must be made accessible to the participant children (therefore it should be written on the board). For example, during the enquiry following the stimulus *The Ship of Theseus*[5], where children are exploring the topic of identity, the task question can be: "Is it the same ship, or is it a different ship?"

Apart from the task questions, Worley describes the following types of questions that are usually discussed during the PhiE process: *start question* (superficial questions, without philosophical depth, but that are nevertheless essential for the subsequent philosophical investigation), *hermeneutic questions* (that usually revolve around finding the meaning of a problematic concept), *nested questions* (questions that are at the basis of the task question), *Socratic questions* (also known as *What is X?-questions*, questions that relate to the core terms or concepts of a particular enquiry) and *emergent questions* (unplanned interesting questions raised by the children, that can become the next task questions in a new PhiE) (Worley, 2015, p. XI). While it is true that these questions might be found in various approaches to P4C, including the one proposed by Lipman, what Worley adds is the systematic and self-aware use of all these questions, by the facilitator. The added benefit of combining and systematically using these questions cannot be overemphasized.

Commenting on these question types, Tim Sprod signals the differences between Worley's approach towards the P4C community: "In the CoI, generally it is the students who supply these questions, and a variety of methods are used to select the one to start with. It seems to me that this is the key difference between PhiE and CoI, and it reflects different ideas about how the discussion ought to be focused. While CoI practitioners believe good work can be done through any philosophical inquiry that arises from the trigger material, Worley wants specific ideas addressed. In practice, though, the differences are usually not too great, as students are liable to pick out the ideas seeded in the trigger material." (Sprod, 2016:83)

Worley believes that the surfacing of the *emergent questions* (that need not be formulated in an interrogative form – and than it is the facilitator's task to identify them and merge them into interrogations) is a way in which one can measure the success of a philosophical enquiry. Namely, that children are able to master the technique of generating new task questions – which is a sign of intellectual maturity and of the consolidation of their respective autonomy (Worley, 2017).

[5] *The Ship of Theseus* is a thought experiment that explores the paradox of identity. It tells the story of the ship of a famous Greek hero, Theseus, that was allegedly in constant need of repairing, each wooden piece being replaced with another piece of wood, diachronically. Once all the pieces have been replaced, is the "ship of Theseus" the same ship or has it become a different one? (*If Machine*, p.?)

One of the methods Worley emphasizes is the hypothetical problemization (*iffing*). It mainly consists in rephrasing the question with an *if* at the beginning. The main merit is that it transforms the speaker position into a possible, hypothetical one: "The method of *iffing* is a kind of **hypothetical thinking**, which asks us to imagine a situation that might not be the case in order to think about what it would mean to us. Hypothetical thinking also highlights that philosophy is as much about imaginative thinking as it is about logical thinking." (p. 10)

In the following example, there is a great difference between the original: "Is it okay to eat meat so why don't we eat our pets?" and the modified one: "*If* it is okay to eat meat *then* why don't we eat our pets?". (Worley, 2011, p. 10) The first one assumes an ideological engagement on behalf of the speaker; the second one is less committed.

Another element that is worth mentioning is the use of "thought experiments" in the stimuli for children. They have often been used in classical philosophy to allow the exploration of philosophical intuitions. Differently from other stimuli (for instance the picture books) the thought experiments are built in such a way that enables the facilitator to directly address a philosophical question, thus giving the whole conversation a distinct philosophical direction.

Worley introduces various strategies to facilitate a philosophical enquiry. "One of the most striking things about this book is its intellectual rigor, its grounding in the work of real philosophers and its implicit belief that children will respond to big and important ideas if they are simply given the opportunity and their discussion is appropriately focused." (Spice 2011: O30). The most original and well-developed part of Worley's books detail and consolidate various strategies for facilitating a philosophical enquiry. Thus, a facilitator should aim to constantly improves his/her techniques and strategies in order to maintain the philosophical-ness of a discussion and to ensure a more democratic participation of most children. A list for facilitating the discussion includes: the ability to ask clarifying questions, the patience to allow children both time and space for thinking, the ability to resonate with what children say, the ability to memorize what each children said, the ability to connect childen's ideas (Worley, 2011, pp. 19-21). In Worley's view, children strengthen their autonomy when they manage to discuss among themselves, and not only with the facilitator. Among the techniques, Worley recommends anchoring (reconnecting answers with the task question), using concept maps in order to register the progress of an enquiry, using the "imaginary disagreer" (when an apparent and artificial consensus is built among answers), insisting on the necessary and sufficient conditions, actively looking for counter-examples (in order to verify coherence), avoiding circular definitions, iffing the questions, questioning the presumptions and

the unsaid assumptions, offering multiple choices, dissolving dichotomies (offering alternatives to either/or questions), testing the implications of ideas, adopting "voices" of philosophers, sympathizing/criticizing the ideas (Worley, 2011, p.29-45).

Testing the hypothesis: Worley's approach as "Philosophy in Action"

While the books and articles written by Peter Worley clearly make the case for the strong points of PhiE, one should always attempt to provide factual support of the benefits of this approach. I intend to offer two kinds of illustrations, departing from the analysis of two independent sources: internal reports of TPF and working reports from the philosophical practice with children from Cluj.

The first source, generously provided by The Philosophy Foundation, were several reports of some P4C sessions conducted with two groups of children: the intervention group (where children were familiarized with PhiE and were exposed to Worley's methods on a regular basis) and the control group (children at their first encounter with these methods). Both groups discussed the same story, "Of Fences"[6] (The Philosophical Shop, p. 249)

While both groups of children were deeply involved with the story and developed many interesting ideas about what constitutes ownership, there were some clear differences in favor of the group of children who were previously involved in the TPF sessions. The first striking difference concerns the development of metacognitive abilities. Thus, at the beginning and at the end of both sessions, the facilitator proposed for discussion a meta-question: "What is the best way of answering the task question?" (the task question being about ownership of the land). The answers provided by the children in the control group were tentative and missed the point of the meta-question – that referred to the conditions of finding a suitable and agreeable answer to a dilemmatic question. Some examples follow:

> "X: Well, basically, his land, he basically owns it because he found it and fenced it off. So, that's basically his own coz he doesn't leave there. Some people might disagree, but that's what my opinion is." (Research transcript, Control group, p. 1)

> "X2: It's a bit like… we… everyone here has a house, well, they live in a house, and like that area around their house…is… it's like theirs but… so, it's theirs but it's not theirs because… I don't know…" (Research transcript, Control group, p. 1)

[6] *Of Fences* depicts a caveman, Og, who is the first prehistorical man that built a fence around trees and bushes in order to harvest all the best nuts and berries all for himself. (The Philosophical Shop, p.) Children are discussing the task question: "Does Og own the land that has fenced off?"

> "X4: If you want to answer that question you need to think of certain circumstances that could happen to Og eventually he will want to mate with another human being and if he's like fenced off the land then nobody will really like him. Then, if he does manage to have children and then… when he dies, they'll inherit the land but they might argue who will get the land." (Research transcript, Control group, p. 2)

While some children (notably X4) do attempt to answer the meta-question, they do mostly circle around it and go back to the more accessible idea of whether Og does or does not own the land.

In comparison, children from the intervention group immediately grasped the nature of the meta-question and started proposing alternatives:

> "AI: We need to say our opinion because your opinion is important" (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 1)

> "Jo: But what if we don't all agree on one?" (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 1)

> "Si: I want to reply to Jo's. Even if we don't all have an opinion that we don't agree on, doesn't mean that one opinion is the right opinion." (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 2)

Here, the discussion was not about Og's problematic decision to fence the land, but whether one's opinion is important and how agreement must be reached in a group, that are undoubtedly related to the meta-question.

During the enquiry that revolved around the questions of ownership, the children from the control group showed numerous signs of their involvement into the discussion, and of some level of argumentation techniques. Thus, they offered connecting responses to the questions of the faculty, such as "I agree with Ga S" (p. 2), "I disagree with Ga S" (p. 3) "I think, is that I agree with Thomas" (p. 8). They also opened up:

> "Ya: No, it can't really be his because if he asked someone, he could have asked a random stranger and say, 'Can I have this?' and they're probably going to say no because they'll probably want the berries and nuts as well as he does. Then, if he asked maybe an animal are they going to understand?" (Research transcript, Control group, p. 6)

Among the possible answers to the task questions, several children did offer nuanced, yes-and-no ones, or they attempted to provide arguments:

> "X9: I kind of agree with Ga S and agree with Ja, because, he did use his own common sense to fence it off, but he didn't ask anyone before doing it, so it kind of is his, because he used common sense, but it isn't because he didn't really ask anyone" (Research transcript, Control group, p. 3).

> "X11: I think that he does own it, but I think that he owns it because how do you get money? You work. And he worked for that land, he built the fence; he used his mind, he worked on that fence. So, basically… he basically bought it, but through hard work" (p. 3)

They landed upon some philosophically rich ideas on how ownership can be assessed (X11 is close to the ideas of Locke).

If one compares this with the children in the intervention group, one will note that the discussion was both more civilized (the faculty did not have to intervene to maintain order or to prevent children from shouting) and more rich in arguments and philosophical concepts. From the very beginning of the discussion, children assumed different positions they attempted to back up with arguments and build up with analogies:

> "Jk: My opinion is… well, I think that Og does own the land as, if you think about the war, if you conquer a territory, if somebody's already owned it, it's yours; you've just placed a flag down or something and it's yours. So, building a fence around that one territory is, technically, you're claiming it as her own." (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 3)

> "Z: Well, no; she doesn't own the land. It's like me going to a really big field and seeing a really nice spot and wanting it to be mine. But it's really not, it's really just a big field that is nature." (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 4)

There were children who made an attempt to use philosophical concepts, such as the "rights":

> "X2: Thinks] If you go to… in the story, she goes to get berries and nuts and she finds a good area where there's lots of berries and nuts, but you can't say that's hers because she doesn't have a right… she doesn't have a right to grow it; she doesn't have a right to claim it as her own because it's actually the Earth's." (Research transcript, Intervention group 1, p. 6)

Children in the intervention group elaborated sophisticated relations among ownership, ruling, labor and earning. They were also eager to recognize the added value of the enquiry to the initial task question, differently from the control group. Where the control group left the discussion confused and not very sure about its value, the intervention group recognized the value of having many different opinions at the end of the day, because more opinions means they managed to cover a greater philosophical terrain. Therefore, exposing children to the PhiE approach does increase the philosophical sophistication of the children, who are able to grasp more fully the relations among concepts and to enjoy their respective company in progressing the analysis.

The second source is represented by the visual maps of the P4C sessions with children that I organized at the local library "Octavian Goga" from Cluj, Romania, during the academic year 2018-2019. I organized monthly meetings with a group of children (aged 8 to 12), where I alternated the stimuli and the methods of conducting the philosophical conversation. In some sessions I have used the classic P4C method of obtaining questions generated by the children after their reading and discussing among themselves of the stimulus; in others I followed more closely the approach of Peter Worley, using his stories, formulating the task questions and constantly anchoring and opening up the question for the children. As the group of children remained the same during the academic year, I could observe the differences between the ways children reacted to the sessions. Although they enjoyed very much the discussions during both types of meetings, the type of arguments and examples they provided was less philosophical during the regular P4C sessions. Moreover, even if the group of children were bright and very articulate, the questions they raised were not all the time open-ended and general, but more often closed and situated ones (see Figure 1[7])

And the subsequent discussion lacked the philosophical substance that was very easy to find during the stories of Worley. Especially during a meeting discussing Worley's story "The Ceebie stories. Friendship" the conversations were organized and registered as a very logic progression of children taking stances, providing arguments, finding counter-arguments, finding counter-counter-arguments, analyzing examples and counter-examples, and making distinctions (see Figure 2[8])

[7] The visual map presents the questions collected during the inquiry of 6 February 2019 at the local library from Mărăști, using the stimulus (book + movie) „The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore". Questions generated by the children were grouped according to Phil Cam's quadrant. In the up-left quadrant (closed questions based on the story) the following questions were grouped: „Since when has Morris started to write? To whom did Morris give books? How old was the girl when she came to the library?". The down-left quadrant (open questions based on life) included the questions: „How many years did Morris live? What was Morris's year of birth?". The right-up quadrant (open questions based on the story) had the most questions, namely: „How come the book of Morris could not fly at the beginning but could fly in the end? Why does Morris leave? How many pages did he write? How did Morris return from the book? How long were the stories read by the little girl? How come was Morris able to get lost in the book? Has the girl also written a story, just like Morris?". The last quadrant (open questions based on life) had the following questions: Why do we read? Why does one have to be a boy/girl and cannot be something in-between?"

[8] The visual map presents the main elements of the conversation from March 12, 2019, on the first Ceebie story written by P. Worley. The story has the following plot: a shy boy receives as a birthday present a robot called Ceebie that he befriends. Tony, his human friend, claims that robots cannot be true friends because they are made of metal, nuts and bolts. Starting from the task question: „Can Ceebie be a true friend?", the following positions have been taken by children: (left) „YES" with

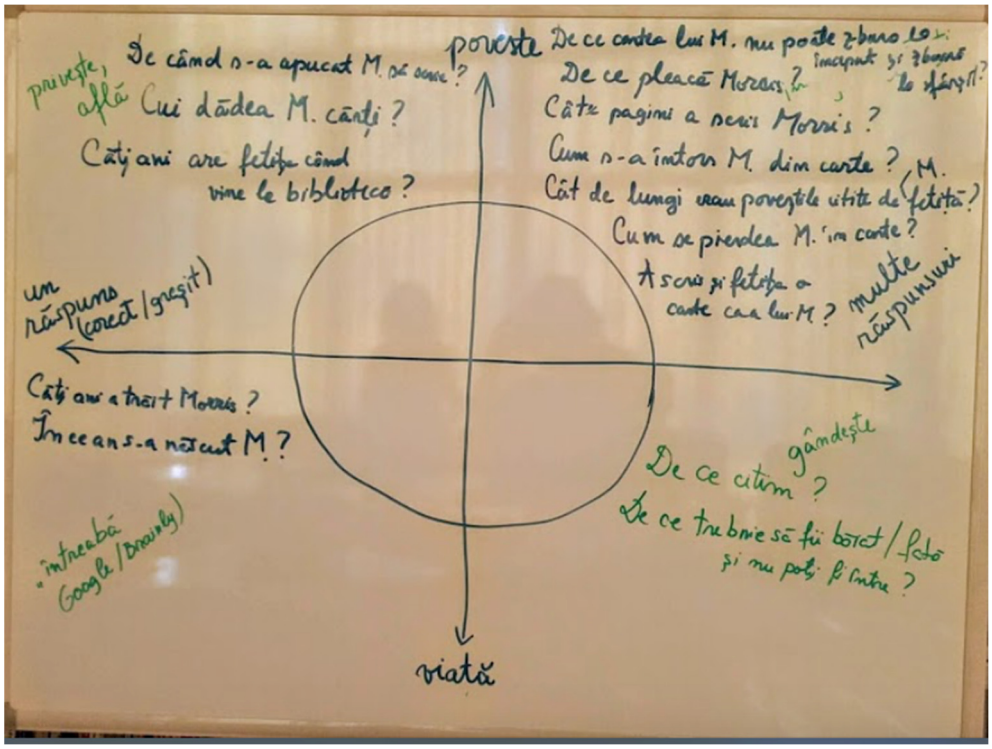

Figure 1: Visual map. Questions collected after the inquiry of 6 February 2019.

the following remarks/arguments: „Y1) he is clever; Y2) humans can befriend animals, why not robots?; Y3) the nuts and bolts do not define robots more than skin and bones define humans; Y4) we are real beings with bodies; Ceebie is real because he can speak; Y5) we do activities (both humans and robots)" (right) „NO" with the following arguments: „N1) only humans can be true friends; N2) robots do not understand feelings and are unable to help; N3) (Ceebie) does not have life and a soul; N4) he cannot think, his settings are from the factory; cannot have his own opinions; N5) you cannot have fun with him (cannot get out of the house, play outside); N6) he is built, not natural". In-between the two sides we grouped mixed, yes-and-no answers, such as „There are human beings having robot members", „we can like robots, they can be useful" and specific counter-arguments to various positions, such as: „animals have feelings while robots don't" (to Y2) „They cannot know you, but they can help you" (to N2) „they have artificial intelligence that compensate their lacks" (to N3), „you can play in other ways than outside" (to N5)

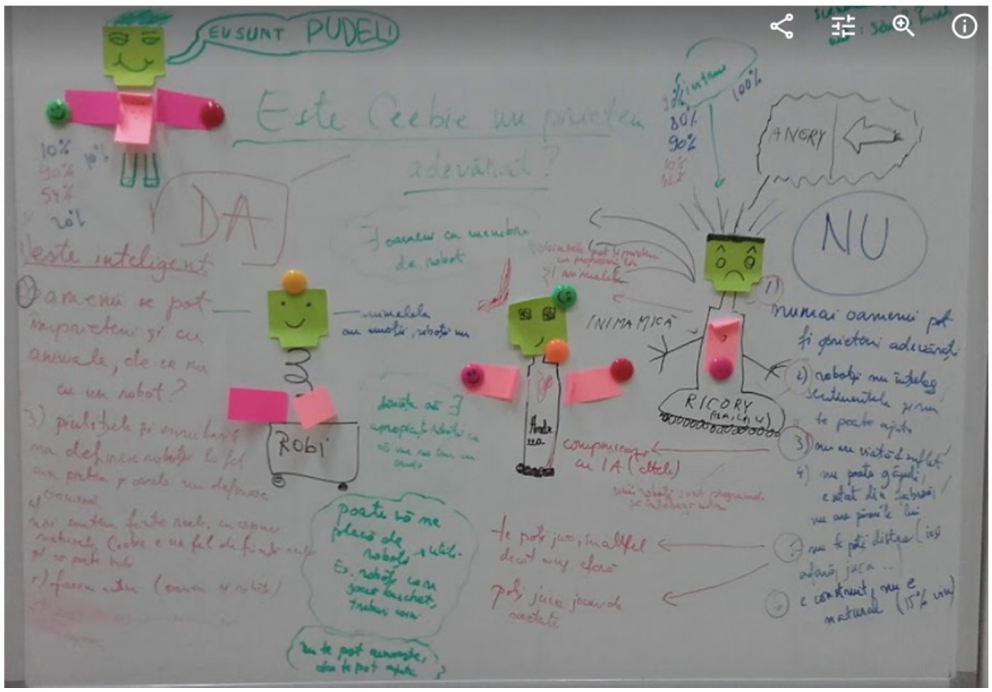

Figure 2: Visual map. Questions and answers collected after the inquiry of March 12, 2019.

While both sessions were enjoyed by the participating children, and their input was in both cases significant and nuanced, the richness and depths of discussions registered in the second visual map is illustrative for the added benefits of Worley's approach. Children are stimulated to engage more directly to the philosophical content and ideas; they find themselves advancing opinions, criticizing other opinions, considering the implications of one's opinions, considering counter-arguments, in other words they find themselves *doing philosophy*.

Conclusions

To the interested practitioners, the advantages of Worley's approach are both the clarity and efficacy of his methods, that are easy to adapt and employ in classroom setting; and the philosophical sophistication of his stories and techniques, that ensure that the "philosophical-ness" of the P4C sessions will be higher than in other settings. To the children that participate to P4C sessions, the benefits are a rapid yet solid familiarization with the tools of critical argumentation and philosophical methods.

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