

**UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE**

**HUSITSKÁ TEOLOGICKÁ FAKULTA**

**Filozofie pro děti a její dopad na dospělý život  
dítěte**

**The Philosophy for Children and Its Effect on  
Child's Adult Life**

Diplomová práce

Vedoucí práce:

Mgr. Gerald Robert Ostdiek,

BA, M.A., Ph.D.

Autor:

Bc. Terezie Vašíčková

Praha 2015

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to thank Mgr. Gerald Robert Ostdiek, BA, M.A., Ph.D. and prof. PhDr. Anna Hogenová, CSc. for their energy that they gave to introduce me in philosophy.

**Prohlášení**

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Terezie Vašíčková

## **Anotace**

Práce uvádí do systému pragmatické pedagogiky a filozofie pro děti jako její následovnice. Zabývá se jejich principy, které lze použít jako výukovou metodu. Rozebírá způsoby, jakými lze nejen koncepci pragmatické pedagogiky, ale i koncepci filozofie pro děti použít v českém školství. Zároveň s tím je spojeno postavení člověka v současné české společnosti, jeho cíle a možnosti. Práce přistupuje k pedagogickým metodám z filozofického hlediska.

## **Annotation**

The work introduces in system of Pragmatic Pedagogy and Philosophy for Children as her follower. It concerns with their principles which are able to use as educational methods. It analyses ways by which pragmatic pedagogy and philosophy for children can be able to use in the Czech school system. Together with it the position of (wo)man in current Czech society, her/his targets and possibilities are connected. The work approaches to pedagogic methods from philosophical standpoint.

## **Klíčová slova**

Filozofie, pragmatismus, filozofie pro děti, výchova, člověk, společnost

## **Keywords**

Philosophy, Pragmatism, Philosophy for Children, Education, (wo)man, society

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## **List of abbreviations**

IAPC - Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children

P4C - Philosophy for Children

## **INTRODUCTION**

I decided to write a thesis to introduce the reader to issue of pragmatic pedagogy and her follower, philosophy for children. This branch interests me, because she approaches (wo)man from a perspective different from what I am used to in our country. Although it needs not seem so at first, she stands in opposition to our educational system. Despite this, I intend not to write an ode to philosophy for children, nor do I condemn it. I am interested in the opportunities that arise of it, and what can help in the revitalization of our educational institutions.

This system arose in reaction to conditions of past society and her requirements. I think our society needs a new reaction to her new conditions and to her new requirements. We can learn from this model, its achievements and mistakes. To this target, it is necessary to analyze society and (wo)man both as part of her and of their own self. We must have an idea about ourselves if we want to seek any solution to our situations.

I wish this text would be an enumeration of our next opportunities, which are opening in front of us. And I wish it will open more gates than close.

# 1 PRAGMATIC PEDAGOGY AS FOUNDATION

## 1.1 The Roots of Dewey's Cognition Theory

The roots of the educational concept that I want to consider began deeply in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. At this time Francis Bacon described the method of cognition could be used in science. This empiric theory of cognition went through many variations, but some of Bacon's idea carries through to Dewey's time.

Empiricism is based on experimentation with things. Whereas Bacon used experimentation as a manner by which we are able to explore new natural relations, for American philosophers experimentation encourages the rearrangement of human minds. The volume of findings increased which has a consequence that Bacon's theory had to be extended and adjusted. Bacon looked for a method to ensure objective scientific knowledge. But because the element of subjectivity appears, the empirical philosophers transformed the method in the following centuries. They found out it is impossible to "fix" objective knowledge in a way that would stay without change forever.

This shows that in spite of Bacon's supposition, it is not so easy with objective knowledge. The process of experience works only in an individual's mind. Despite or even because of the role that inter-subjectivity plays, the experience of subjectivity works alone, individually, without any connections between other subjects. Two subjects may discover absolutely different results and both results are supported by a genuine series of experiments. Bacon wanted to discover a method to ensure definite knowledge, but his method describes psychological processes in human minds.

Why is classical empiricism considered a psychological cognition theory? A (wo)man perceives some stimuli, the



stimuli are transformed in her/his head. Some results stay there and these results are placed into memory. When the mind encounters the same or similar stimulus, the previous experience automatically appears. Accordingly to the outcome of the previous event, the mind reacts by the same way, or on the contrary, it chooses a different mode of reaction - based on the success or failure of the previous reaction. The mind works with the previous experiences and it tries not to repeat mistakes.

Radical empiricism builds on this. An utterly legendary example is James's story of a child and fire<sup>1</sup>. The child is interested in the light of the fire and he gets the idea to touch the light. Of course, he is burnt. The pain of the burning is saved in his memory, and the next time he looks at the fire, he will not touch it.

From a psychological explanation of radical empiricism, the interest is paramount. A (wo)man has a lot of stimuli around her/himself, but only that which interests her/him can engage to generate reactions. For the child, the fire will either not make any interest or he will be captivated so deeply that he will start to "research" fire - reach towards it, and learn something of flame, materials which burn etc.

Particular experiences are bound together and they make an endless chain of subsequent episodes, which continuously reassess the previous results of previous individual experimentation. Because a (wo)man makes ceaselessly new experiences, they adjust the older ones; it is difficult to stay in constant and stable certitude. In accordance with the rules of this concept, a (wo)man can maintain her/his certitudes only by incessant confrontation with new experiences and these certitudes must be able to manage

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<sup>1</sup> JAMES, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931. Vol I. American Science Series - Advanced Course.  
<<http://www.ulozto.sk/xiznVcb/the-principles-of-psychology-vol-i-w-james-1890-pdf>>. Page 24

defense. If they do not manage it, they are replaced or rearranged by fresh experiences.

The theory of radical empiricism is not built on hard premises as are many diverse concepts. Its building blocks are not transcendental values such as, for example, Truth or Love. Naturally, truth and love have their place in this theory, but they are only elements, their meanings and moral values are concretely individual. Radical empiricism is standing on *the process* - on the process of continual transformation and progress. It lives movement by movement forward.

This philosophy, which developed at least in part from Bacon's conception, was not alien to, but neither did it extend to Continental Europe. Empirical thinkers and those from the continent influenced each other, the influence impacted on their crystallization of attitudes and penetration of individual conceptions. Maybe the most common example is Kant's reaction on Hume.

Anglo-American philosophy specifies her emphasis on practice. Hardly any conception built on empirical premises can miss practical character or fall outside practical use. These concepts were not born simply because the philosophers wanted to explain the real world, but because they wanted them to be of use in the real world. They came out from real life and they wished to come back to real life. Briefly, Anglo-American philosophical conceptions do not seek elemental Truth, but they describe the system or function of the world and our role in, so as to better live within it. They are contented only by this.

In the U.S., similarly as with all originally colonial countries, this approach, naturally, deals with questions of identity<sup>2</sup>. By the sense of Bacon's methods and without strain

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<sup>2</sup> This opinion comes from SINGULE, František. *Americká pragmatická pedagogika: John Dewey a jeho američtí následovníci*. 1.vydání. Praha: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1990. 197 s. Z dějin pedagogiky, sv. 35. ISBN 80-04-20715-4.

of European philosophical heritage (even though they took some concepts for inspiration), they began to solve their actual issues. De facto, opportunities, which nobody had had before, were opened to them.

They started in a new area where they had not had their own philosophical tradition. They fully founded the new society - the new state entity; moreover it was multicultural. They had to discover the unifying elements. I think, we cannot assume that a leading position by another philosophical stream than practical one. There was no time to mull about transcendental truths, they had to found institutions and establish laws. And Americans benefited from this. They could take the best things Europeans had made.

After this rapid establishing of the state and cultural systems, there was time for a reconciling with the European heritage. The state organization, legislation, social norms - these all came with Europeans to the New World. The results of long-standing discussions became the foundation stones of a new society. Now there was a moment for a determination of the intellectual means by which this society was to make progress. Philosophy had its own foundation, pillars and maybe walls that yet stood, but there was no keystone that could wedge the components of a vault.

The building of a house has the same need as philosophy - people to work on it. American thinking became original thanks the new, previously unsolved, questions of the human mind. One of the most important representatives of this new American intelligence was William James. I observe in his work, that he adopted the English empiric system and transformed the empiric method to psychology. He abolished the dualism of mind and body and established both as impulses for experiences.

James and Charles Sanders Pierce made the philosophical concept named Pragmatism, which became more or less the

national philosophical stream. And we will see onward, it deeply influenced the intellectual development of this society. James's theory tries to differentiate from other philosophical concepts working "common sense" in the practical sphere. Common sense can have a more central interest in the practical world than in that of abstracts. The abstracts, of course, are important too, but they are only tools of the mind.

A (wo)man is in a cruel fight with the world and the mind is his weapon. James transfers Darwin's evolutionary theory to the human mind and he claims that the (wo)man survives in the world by help of abstract theories. From this, the rules of Pragmatism comes out. The pragmatic concept of truth argues that everything that is useful in the world, is true<sup>3</sup>. But when the situation changes, the thing already cannot be true. This works in the resort of material things as well as in the resort of abstract theories. If some theory of cognition, for example, is used and it gives valid outcomes, it is true (enough). I think that C. S. Peirce formulated the best definition of the pragmatic method: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, we can say that cognition stays with the problems of a practical life in one flow and the abstract form of cognition fully helps a person deal with life's unusual problems. The intelligible sphere is solved by the experiences of practical life. This approach cancels presuppositional debates of philosophical issues, such as, for example, the God's emanations, because it is impossible to support them by any

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<sup>3</sup> See JAMES, William. *A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*.  
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5116/5116-h/5116-h.htm>>. *Lecture II*

<sup>4</sup> PEIRCE, Ch.S. How to Make Our Ideas Clear. *Popular Science Monthly*.  
January 1878, 12, 286-302. DEWEY, John. The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology.  
*Psychological Review*. 1896, 3, 357-370.  
<<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Dewey/reflex.htm>>.

experience of real life and they are not applicable in a real life.

If we stay in the field of pragmatic epistemology, the idea of God's emanation is marked as nonsense. But if we look at the same concept of God's emanations by the pragmatic standpoint of belief, an outcome is different. If we believe in something and this belief is useful in our practical life, the something is true (enough). So, if we believe in sequential emanations of the Divine from One to human beings etc. and, by the belief, we have made our personal classification of the world, the concept of God's emanations will be true (enough) for our purposes. But it will be true only for the person who believes in it. Somebody else can believe in another concept and he can have different experiences for it. His truth is also proved. It follows from this example that if we declare something is True, the bigger group of people has to agree with. In the scientific field, people concur thanks to the objective results of experiments; in the religious field they come to agreement thanks to so-called "live experience". The inception of it lies on the decision to believe the same premises as others and thus share experiences with them. A (wo)man must be convinced that the premises are true - in their own living. It is important to note that in both scientific and religious spheres, truth is a deal between people. Scientists come to an agreement that outcomes of experiments, which are done according to appointed criteria, will be considered as the objective true. Representatives of various churches come to an agreement in meetings where they chase down and identify those premises they hold to be true. According to this premises, they educate their children (and, of course, they have been educated), they have some live experiences with the premises they hold.

The method of pragmatism says that the value of a thing

is in the giving of good results in practice. If any concept gives good results constantly or is at least useful in the giving, there is no reason to replace it. But if the concept misses these qualities, it is necessary to seek new one or to reconstruct previous one. The pragmatic method works by this manner. I hope it is seen clearly that the method comes of the empiric theory of permanent replacement of experience by experience and reassessment of attitudes. The pragmatic method is the practical tool of radical empiricism.

I think it is symptomatic that this stream of empiricism extended much in America. Because American culture hasn't a long tradition in which they could continue, the shot to the dark comes. But in this, there is a continual reassessment, the direction of shot can be regulated according to light of cognition that comes with the shot.

## **1.2 The Cognition Theory according to Dewey**

John Dewey reconstructed the psychological approach to cognition of William James. He made the Conception of Reflexive Arc; though it works within James's cognitive approach, it is more developed and specified. And Dewey established his own terminology.

Dewey's Reflex Arc Concept may be described as a continual process that is motion inside of our minds<sup>5</sup>. Dewey characterizes its's Newtonian precedent thusly "the reflex arc [classically conceived] is not a comprehensive, or organic unity, but a patchwork of disjointed parts, a mechanical conjunction of unallied processes."<sup>6</sup> Although the parts are random, they are unallied only from one point of view, a

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5 It is complicated to describe it, but its idea is quite simple.

6 DEWEY, John. The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology. *Psychological Review*. 1896, 3, 357-370. <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Dewey/reflex.htm>>.

failed view; from Dewey's view they are connected within and as a singular *coordination*.

Dewey distinguished idea, sensation and movement as three aspects of a single arc. They change an actual position within the arc, but all three are represented simultaneously within every act. The balance between them is guaranteed by coordination between them. Naturally, it is not any outside element that goes inside the arc, but it is an attribute that constitutes the process.

The arc is continuing, incessantly changing; it is in process when an idea moves to movement, the movement goes to sensation etc. There is no possibility to establish which phase the mind is in at any given moment. We can only describe the outcomes of arc and its relations of idea, movement and sensation. But a description can be taken merely from the certain point of view. We are not able to say the objective concrete definition of any arc. We know which parts the arc has, how the relationships of particular parts are connected, we can make some interpretation of past part of arc, but we are not able to say what is happened now and what will happen next.

"As to the latter, failing to see unity of activity, no matter how much it may prate of unity, it still leaves us with sensation or peripheral stimulus; idea, or central process (the equivalent of attention); and motor response, or act, as three disconnected existences, having to be somehow adjusted to each other, whether through the intervention of an extraexperimental soul, or by mechanical push and pull."<sup>7</sup> To understanding the system better, we can use James's example of a child who is burned by flame. At the moment when a child sees the flame, he has visual sensation. Simultaneously he has an impulse to touch the flame and he makes a motion by his

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7 DEWEY, John. The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology

hand. The motion burns him. It makes the sensation of pain as a response. The process is accompanied by idea of withdrawal of hand from fire: by this, a mental evaluation of situation is made. It prepares the prototype of future reaction of the same or similar stimulus.

Though Dewey does not emphasize it in his Reflex Arc Concept, the idea of *interest* has its own place his conceptions (which naturally are connected with cognition theory). Interest determines which of the many stimuli around a (wo)man will begin an act. If we go back to our example, there are a lot of stimuli around a child, such as food, mother, favorite toy, pet, and etc. but why does he choose the flame? Why is he so interested by it? This stimulus is stronger than others - because of its novelty, and because of the problems this novelty poses. The intensity of a stimulus is settled by preceding experiences. They make prototypes of next experiences. They place our interest within the spheres with which we somehow relate. A car mechanic recognizes the type of car according to its sound, he is able to find its condition, and he ascertains its malfunction. Another (wo)man does not perceive the sound of cars on the street at all. (S)he leaves these audial disturbances out of her/his head.

A child focuses on the finding of new possibilities learns to use his eyesight. His interest is adjusted by the searching of distinct things with which he has not yet met. The flame falls into this pigeonhole. It has a visual difference from other child's known things. However, does the flame differ by touch too? The following experience will confirm the supposition. If the child was hungry, for example, he would not be so open to exploring new things, but will more likely be open to searching for a meal. The flame would wait for a better time and maybe he is never burned. The experience of a burn can close this developmental way or, in the



contrary, provoke a lifelong fascination. Interest is important for us because it maintains our attention in certain empirical chains. We "evolve" psychologically because of and based on our interest.

It follows from Dewey's conception that the mind does not cognize alone, but the whole human organism does. So, we discover that movement is important part of cognition. Idea, sensation and movement, which are balanced by coordination, make a bridging between mind and body or between external or internal space. Actually dualism is destroyed.

### **1.3 The Application of Pragmatic Principles in Pedagogical Practice**

John Dewey transforms empiricism to practical educational conceptions, which become known as Pragmatic Pedagogy. One of the fundamental constituent on which the conception stands the *experimentation is*. A (wo)man tries new possibilities, variations not merely to open new horizons and ways, but to check his previously acquired knowledge, and thence to experience them. If we have only volumes of encyclopedic information but no practical way of checking, they disappear little by little. Because we are trying to use them and we put them to contexts, we make new connections, and we better understand the situations about which fragmentary messages refer.

Because we do not fear to abandon common tracks, we gain fresher and fresher experiences. I do not speak merely about experiences with the external world. We can have experience in our mind. We can define, for example, the construction of experience, which makes the best mode of (wo)man's learning to every exam - it could be vocal reading, silent reading,

redrawing, making visual conceptions, or making numeral patterns etc.

A (wo)man makes pictures and theories in her/his mind that (s)he then checks by experiment. The space for experience is not only in material world, but also in pure mind.

Knowledge that comes from experiences increases our intelligence, but, in the first line, it helps us orient within life's situations. According to pragmatism, knowledge has to have practical value. As I understand it: a (wo)man achieves the practical knowledge from some situation, for example, if (s)he separates two fighting dogs at a street. (S)he mentally transforms her/himself - (s)he rethink her/his present knowledge about social behavior of dogs. (S)he can use the acquired knowledge in similar situations in different streets, but not only with dogs, with people too.<sup>8</sup> We can acquire knowledge both physically by using our body, and mentally by thinking. There is the reconstruction of previous findings in both examples<sup>9</sup>.

We can ask, when does a (wo)man be adult? When is (s)he "finished" learning? The response is NEVER. In the whole of a (wo)man's life, we have situations when we are in discomfiture. We do not know how we shall react, what we have to do, or what we shall think about situations. Yes, according to legislation, we are adult when we are 18. Physic development finishes, according to doctors, when we achieve 20. And mental? Yes, psychologists have established the stabilization of personality between 25 and 30 years old. But

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<sup>8</sup> If a (wo)man accepts theories of Comparative Psychology, (s)he can work with behavior of dog's pack and its similarities in human social manners.

<sup>9</sup> Somebody could say an objection that there are people who ignore two yelling dogs. Of course, it is possible to live without reconstruction previous experiences, without acceptance new ones. It is possible to live in stereotype. This kind of (wo)man does not go forward, but, I can say from my personal experience, (s)he is moving backward. By accepting and considering new facts, we train our bodies and minds. People who live by stereotyping lay behind others step by step. It is the same situation as with a wooden pole thrust in the middle of a river. With the time water washes away the pole or it decays. Not in every case is going forward necessary. But longtime standing in place means death.

this does not necessary mean that its development is finished. Do we claim that we are completed at some point of our life?

The differing phases of human life determine us to mental development. If we overcome childhood, we have to procure ourselves. It brings new experiences. Next parenthood comes. A (wo)man discovers that she necessary has to solve more than her own needs, (s)he learns to be an example and an authority. At the moment when her children are coming of age, she has to get into the next phase. Now it is not about example and authority, but equal partnership. And there are her/his parents. (S)he has changed an approach to them by that time, and they too.

Even though a (wo)man can ignore one of the phases, pressure from her surroundings forces her/him to make attitudinal adjustments in some period of life. (S)he has to reconstruct her/his life. If we take the cycle into consideration, how can we claim a (wo)man is ever completed? And how may childhood be preparation for adulthood? When is this preparation and when is this life? Is this not just life? Is not this all life all the time - in childhood, teens, adulthood, in old age?

Dewey claims it exactly. The process of education, which is going in childhood, is a real life for a child. A child lives in school. A teacher lives with children in a classroom together. A (wo)man lives in her/his work. A parent lives by care for her/his family. A life is going in its full intensity ceaselessly. The experiences, which a child goes thorough at school, are equal intensive as the experiences that he goes through as an adult. The fact that his body is not physically fully developed does not relate with her/his mind. Of course, he impresses sillier than an older person, but the reason for this is that he does not have much experience in comparison with a teacher or his parents. The difference is in time. A

(wo)man goes through all the phases of life, but not any of it does not disparage or "puts airs" on her/him.

Not only is a (wo)man changing during her/his life, but all people are changing. This means that the whole society changes. Because it is in constant development, we cannot know how it will look after 5 or 10 years. So too, the goals of education cannot be static. They change according to the conditions of society. At least, pragmatic pedagogues have this idea. It is necessary to lay a question, who will grow up from education with absolutely flexible goals? Which kind of personality will (s)he be? I think this adjusting of goals for the profit of society is excessive, even undesirable. It is clear from the developmental standpoint of pragmatic pedagogy, there were necessary to modify the varied ethnic characteristics to one that had made itself simultaneously with applying the education in the time of arising of pragmatic pedagogy. This requirement has stayed in pragmatic pedagogy to these days. I think it is better to modify surroundings for benefit of (wo)man, than modify (wo)man for benefit of surroundings. The requirement of flexible goals looks silly, if it is uttered as a premise. It looks sillier, when we imagine, for example, that in a few years we teach children to get everything by their rhetoric, and in the next years we will teach them to be quick, quiet, effective workers full of discipline (because the requirements of society changes: for instance, big industry begins, the society will need many obedient people who silently work in their pigeonholes). How will such education have influence? It makes a broken people. Some of them will be obedient in their worker's track, while the second part will revolt meaninglessly against nothing. And all of them together will seek ecstasy<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> I am aware of the depressive, slightly apocalyptic and surrealistic impression of this example. I only want to expose the enormity of chaos that flexible goals can produce.

I stand by my opinion that a successful education needs stable goals. And the society must not commission the goals. The stable goals of every single student must come from his own conscience. And the goals of education should wake up the seeking of moral values in ever child by that way he will live his life in harmony with himself. It may be only one commission of society; others are not relevant, as I see it, because society changes incessantly.

Ethic principles do not secure survival. A (wo)man, as an individual, must be able to survive in the jungle of society. For this, (s)he must understand it, (s)he must be enough flexible and quick-witted, communicative, disciplined, responsible etc. If (s)he has developed all these characteristics, (s)he may influence her/his surroundings. The goals of education are not in the sliding interest of a child, but in building his life targets. And it needs an individual approach, which can seem sliding.

Naturally, the influence on (and of) one's surroundings is not only positive. A (wo)man can also change society negatively. Somebody has extended drug use among young people for his enrichment; somebody has solved his personal problems with a gun and a group of unfamiliar people etc. These events change society as strongly as the modernizing of hospital furnishings in one town. These events are made by people; and people drive themselves in accordance with their moral rules.

And now, there is a question - how does a (wo)man gain health moral rules (I mean rules which are constructive for society, not destructive) that will drive her/his conscience in the future? (S)he does not gain it by tradition or by faith at first, but (s)he can get it if (s)he has no fear to discover information about the world, if (s)he evaluates the information by her own mind and experience. If a (wo)man gets some space to learn every-time and everywhere, (s)he can work

on her/his health conscience.

The one fact is to realize that a child lives a real live in school; the second one is to realize that a school serves to provide a training place where the child can exercise his skills. Even pragmatic pedagogy presents the child with some artificial problems and artificial projects. Nobody can claim to me that childish-made clothes will be fine, usable, saleable goods that somebody will buy if he does not know the children has made it. There is no point in complying norms of quality as adults; the point is that they go through situations and meet with certain stuff. On the contrary, in sewing, for instance, the goals are not in the results of work, but they are in experiences for future. School work aims to try theoretical information in practice and to experient with materials. The first experience from school can evolve latter, when the goals will really be the goods. It is a game for a child. But a useful game.

The interest. In accordance with tendencies of pragmatic pedagogy, a child has to be taught what he interests in. His interest gives the targets of curriculum. Dewey declares that it is nice idea, but a teacher shall direct a child in his interests. A reason is, a child alone does maintain a single direction; he has not concentration yet. His interest has to be encouraged and developed.

My view is that if a student is interested in something, a teacher helps him to discover more about this matter, a teacher engages in the matter with a student, they extend and deepen information and experiences together. But what student has no interest in anything?

Nowadays there is a lot of stimuli around children that try to occupy their attention. I am not able to say if they resist the stimuli if they consider their *work*- as a result, there is a division of children who have problems being

interested in anything<sup>11</sup>. Practically, we cannot want interest in everything from everybody all the time. Everybody has the right to solve nothing sometimes and just exist. But this is only a temporary condition of (wo)man. Now I am solving the case when a child is not interest in anything for a long time. How can we wake up his interest if he does not react to any offered incentive, if he is - in brief - lazy? I have found only one solution - to let him be bored. Everybody is bored sometimes. If a deficiency of activities increases to upper limit, he starts to seek incentives by himself. He starts to learn.

How well does this method works depends on every single (wo)man. Pragmatic pedagogy does not have one measure for all, but tries to work with everybody such as with special distinctive entity, who (s)he is. Everybody has his/her own experiences and her/his own development, which need not, nor must not, comply with common measures.

As I mentioned, the important point is practical experience. A child achieves it by "problem solving". Because thinking about problems is allowed to a child, because he can analyze, he looks for causes and solutions, he learns how to put things together. He connects islands in his mind to the system of world. According to Dewey, the first education is practical and the next theoretical. Children adopt the elemental knowledge of their "material" experience; next they better understand theoretical systematic issues.

A class is based on democratic foundations. A teacher does not play a role of infallible authority, but he is a member of "community of inquiry"<sup>12</sup>. Together with students he

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11 I observe this problem mainly on children who use entertainment electronics often. As a rule their approach to problems that are not connected with their games is a duty that steals their time. Their interest would be good if it deepens, for example, to learn how to create PC game, how to fix computers etc. But ever deepening in those areas also belongs to their *duties*. This is precisely the argument of classical Pragmatism.

12 Look in MATTHEWS, Gareth B. *The Philosophy of Childhood*. Cambridge (Mass.) ; London : Harvard University Press, 1994. Pages 136. Includes bibliographical

learns and gets new experiences, at the same time he is the source of information and experiences for others. He is both leader and equal partner.

In an ideal case, there is no hierarchy between students. The goal of a student is cognition, an entertainment, because they help each other, discuss problems together, etc. But Dewey does not refuse a natural competitiveness between children. If a teacher sees that it would be good for the progress of concrete individuals, competitiveness should be supported.

A (wo)man achieves self-realization at school as well as in life. This is the top goal of pragmatic pedagogy. The shape of self-realization depends on each individual. This is similar to the theory of education of moral values. It is not substantial in this theory if a (wo)man's principles are positive or negative for others, but without any moral principles a (wo)man cannot achieve any self-realization, I think. A (wo)man needs the strong frame of her/his character that can make foundations of her/his progress.

As I said above, Dewey used these methods for younger children, partly for children in nursery school. Older students who have had experience with practical schooling and who know how to explore, study logically organized issues. The followers of Dewey used his pedagogic principles for older students at high schools.

These principles are universal and, I believe, they apply to all age categories. Because the principles come from democracy, they are usable in any democratic community, even though (I argue) education needs more than only them.<sup>13</sup>

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references and index. ISBN 0-674-66480-9. Page 83nn  
13 I adopted the division of principles of pragmatic pedagogy from SINGULE, František. *Americká pragmatická pedagogika: John Dewey a jeho američtí následovníci.*



## **2. THE INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN**

### **2.1 The History of Pragmatic Education and Inception of Philosophy for Children**

John Dewey founded The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools in 1896. It was a place where he tried the theoretical concepts of Pragmatism with children. The principles of pragmatic pedagogy began to arise. Dewey continued at this work at Columbia University's Teachers College.

Pragmatic pedagogy came into popularity after World War I and was a major educational method in USA and, thanks Dewey's external tours and foreign students in American universities, it was extended to the whole world. At this time it corresponded with a political course. When World War II started, pragmatic pedagogy was enlarged to most primary schools in USA.

After World War II Dewey's pedagogical system was criticized sharply. Critics existed before, but they were a minority in comparison with pragmatic pedagogy. The deficiencies of this educational concept come out clearer, because society changed. At this time, children of golden age of pragmatic pedagogy grew up, but they were not prepares for another society. Nobody was prepared for situation after World War II. In contrast with Europe, American students did not achieve particularly high knowledge scores. The transition of society was very quick. In the 40s and 50s a period of wild re-evaluation of education was in motion. Pragmatic pedagogy lost its popularity.

In the 60s the reconstruction of situation arrived

clearly. It was the time of analysis of temporal educational methods, their advantages and disadvantages in comparison with time before and other world<sup>14</sup>.

In the turn of 60s and 70s Matthew Lipman and Gareth Matthews found a new stream named Philosophy for Children. Lipman published the first philosophical novel "Harry Scottlemeier's Discovery". In the mid 70s, the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) was established. It was formally placed in Montclair State College.

Lipman's approach to matter of philosophy for children (P4C) comes from teaching of thinking skills. He tries to train students in their thinking skills as a preparation for adult life. Matthews understands P4C as a dialog between a child and an adult when a child helps to adult in situations, in which an adult uses his stereotypes excessively. Their followers focus on the adaptation of single (wo)man in society.

Lipman and Ann Margaret Sharp began to teach P4C as masters degree program in the 1970s and a doctoral program in the 1990s at Montclair State University.

IAPC supports the schooling of teachers in method of P4C, publishes philosophical novels and manuals and tries to extend P4C to whole world; the growth of P4C is very fast<sup>15</sup>.

## **2.2 What is Philosophy for Children?**

The main idea of P4C is that children think. In P4C, an adult ought not disrupt their thinking flow. An adult does not foist his ideas and preconceptions, but conversely he supports the imagination and logical thinking in the child's mind. The

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14 I took this information from SINGULE, František. *Americká pragmatická pedagogika: John Dewey a jeho američtí následovníci*.

15 This information was taken from - P4C in transition, Stanford's encyclopedia of Philosophy, P4C.com

whole conception of P4C works in various modes, but dialogue or discussion stay in her foundations. An adult (for example a teacher) *participates* in discussion, but he is more of a passive part of group than the authority who gives directions.

P4C is reminiscent of Socratic dialogues. During the dialogue, the consensus of the true is given birth. For P4C to work, children cannot be fearful of giving their opinion. For recapitulation, Socrates's method did not lie in the explanation of his statements, but in the questioning of discussion partners and giving a place to consider the problematic matter. The consensus of the true emerges from these surroundings. The goal of Socrates is not placed in victory within the dispute, as other sophist did. He wanted to reach the consensus of the true by (and with) his partner. He wanted his partner to undertake his own endeavor to come to consensus, to think about the problem him/herself, and not to merely adopt the opinion of somebody else. After all, if we look at Socrates's dialogues in Plato's works, the first gambit was to let the partner realize that his opinion on general value was not correct in all cases. Socrates showed his partner that it was necessary to look at the problem from another point of view.

There is an enigma for me in Socrates's dialogues. Did Socrates know the consensus he wants to arrive at in the beginning of the dialogue? Or was the result of conversation also a surprise for Socrates? I have not found any evidence that could corroborate the first or second variant. I think this question can be important especially for P4C. Because if a teacher (or an adult) is in the position of Socrates and a child plays the partner in dialogue, shall he have some idea of dialogue's result? Is not the freedom of the child's opinion limit by it? Is not the child's cognition deprive by it? In the case of P4C, I am inclined to the variation that an

adult does not have a concrete intention in conversation and he shall flows with it. But this fact does not testify that Socrates did not know the result of his dialogue.

We can also suppose that Socrates used the partnered conversation merely for the inception of his own theories. And that he needed the other to feed him common statements, someone to give him the matter of his thought. Maybe he was not able to think alone about the moral or philosophical conceptions. Maybe he needed the mouth of somebody else to say his ideas. In this case, he could not know where the dialogue went. I do not consider this approach appropriate for P4C. If an adult needs the help in his philosophizing only, the child will play the second violin; this is not what P4C wants.

These speculations about Socrates's intentions are not so important for this topic. They would be important if P4C adopts his method, but it does not. P4C assumes the Socratic dialectic method in its manner of questioning as an instigation to thinking, seeking centers of problem and their solutions. P4C supposes an adult instigates a discussion, but he does not put forward dogmas and he does not manipulate the opinion of child into agreement with him. Of course, he can have motives other than educational, but they should not, in my understanding, interrupt the philosophizing of the child.

If P4C had adopted Socrates's method, reduced to absurdity, the main theme would be ethic principles. Yes, they are one of the topics. The fact is, in the first place, children discover society. They distinguish good behavior from bad. If they think (and ask) about it, they inquire (like Socrates) about fairness, good etc. But this is not a single topic. They also inquire how the world works - they discover mechanisms, weather, medicine, social relations... And they use "naive" philosophical questioning to do so. They use their knowledge of things and of language to discovery new

knowledge. From an adult's view, it can seem dull, primitive. It is not on a philosophical stage, neither is it on a scientific stage. But how have temporary science and philosophy come out?

For example, many people have the idea about philosophy that it is very complicated and a normal mortal has no chance to understand it; others think that it is both complicated and nonsensical, because science solves everything important. Science is complicated too, but unlike philosophy (it is said), science is able to make (effective) results. Briefly, philosophy is complicated. A lot of philosophers think philosophy is tangled and special, and they spend their time trying to penetrate "real" philosophy. They believe philosophy needs a big effort to understand. Some of these philosophers have decided "to open" philosophy for common people, for children, for instance - but only for older children, because younger ones do not understand them. They try them. At this moment, we are at the cusp of the matter: what is philosophy? I see the question as quite cardinal for understanding P4C. I perceive two blocs: one represented by philosophers described above. They apprehend philosophy as equal to science, or more than science, because philosophy founded science. The second bloc does not see philosophy. They see the huge stuff of knowledge that includes all scientific resort as well as that of philosophy. But philosophy in this sense is not the foundation of science or a science itself; rather, philosophy is all thinking which does not concern a specifically scientific resort. Philosophy is all thinking in transition, philosophy is thinking in general of all resorts. This philosophy is just thinking. It covers a specialized jargon in all its stages. Including that of children.

Naturally, the first bloc cannot accept P4C as a philosophical discipline: though maybe it can pass as

pedagogical. And this bloc is commonly accepted. I want to say that philosophy is understood as something special in this way, but it is not.

Let's go back to P4C's association with the Socratic method. There is no reason to push children into traditional philosophical topics in philosophical language. What is important is to train them in thinking about problems. If they will have an interest they will come to classic philosophical topics too.

The dialectical method can be used both in the dialogue of one adult and one child (or a child and a child) and in a group. Lipman applies the term "a community of inquiry" (drawn from C. S. Peirce) to any group - where children discuss together. They make a circle, which goes through various problems. The atmosphere in the group shall be, according to Lipman, inclusive (all members of the community are equal) and participative (all members of community can participate in the discussion). Members share their thoughts about subjects. A member presents her/his opinion to concrete individuals who (s)he knows, (s)he learns to understand the nonverbal reactions of other persons. Because members are usually of a similar age, they have the similar amount of knowledge, they have not any problem to speak openly; they have not any problem to speak their speculations. Children make strong friendships in community if their teacher permits them. If the community of inquiry is in good working order, we can observe the deliberation and impartiality of its members. "In a healthy community of inquiry, students learn to build on each other's idea, although not necessarily with identical architecture."<sup>1617</sup>

P4C does not accept the notion of an age-based border of

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16 LIPMAN, Matthew. *Thinking in Education*. 2nd ed. New York : Cambridge University Press, 2003. Available Ebray, Inc. ISBN 0-521-81282-8. Page 97.

17 LIPMAN, Matthew. *Thinking in Education*. Pages 95-97.

capability of thinking. Because philosophy is the manner in which a (wo)man deals with the world, it is impossible to put any border. According to P4C, a new-born child can think and comprehend things around him. Ever though he has not a completely developed sense of sight, touch or locomotion, he processes his experiences by thinking. A child grows up this way. Of course, a dialectical conversation is not possible with an infant (if we expect active verbal engagement). And yet we can philosophize with children who have not yet begun to speak. Naturally, we cannot expect any polished conceptions, but their ideas respond to their cognition of the world. What is important is that in this response, even very young children think "rationally", that they use (a kind of) logic in argumentation to try to understand and solve problems. P4C works with the fact the different age children are able to think in different levels. The methodology counts with it.

That children work on their level of cognition does not mean that they are not able to think about ontology, epistemology and so on. Practically, they can think about everything equal well as adults. The limit is their language. I am acquainted with the conception that claims that thought is not possible without language, but P4C stands in opposition to this statement, and I agree with it. There is no point of age of (wo)man where he/she has no thought. Always (s)he is capable of equal partnership in dialogue (as the interaction of living beings). This idea comes from pragmatic pedagogy directly.

According to Lipman, P4C has a positive influence for a (wo)man - especially in thinking skills. The central concerns are questioning and critical thinking. P4C uses tools of logic and argumentation, which can be useful in the future of the (wo)man. P4C improves language skills - the purity of language

and thinking. Philosophy brings to children a possibility to get things better into connection - mainly in the resorts of concepts and practical information. Philosophy helps children better realize causes and effects - they can realize the impacts of human acts lively. A philosophical dialogue improves the social skills of (wo)man, it increases her/his ability of imagination, and individual thinking in within a group<sup>18</sup>. Lipman understands P4C as a pedagogical method that helps individuals assert themselves in the world. P4C should teach a (wo)man how to become an autonomous being and respect others as individuals.

Gareth Matthews sees P4C from a slightly different point of view. He has collected a lot of evidence that children have the capabilities of philosophizing. For him, P4C is not primarily a pedagogic method, because the child is an equal partner to the adult and he helps improve the adult's ideas. A child is not overloaded by stereotypes as adults very often are. He can see connections where an adult cannot. He pays attention to things that an adult does not, because an adult lives in routine much more than a child. A child is not afraid to point out these things. And if an adult has an open mind, the child and adult can together co-evolve brilliant living conceptions. The methodology of dialogue is more or less similar in both Lipman and Matthews, but Matthews places a much larger accent on the equality of the child and the adult. On the basis of his attitude, he presumes to change the original name from "Philosophy for Children" to "Philosophy with Children", because it better characterizes his approach. This is a very different understanding of authority than what we are used to meet within conservative concepts of education. With Matthews's approach, this contrast is highlighted much more than with Lipman's.

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18 Source: [p4c.com/about/p4c/history](http://p4c.com/about/p4c/history)



## 2.3 The Participation of Philosophy in Child's Life

If P4C is used, especially as Lipman describes it in his presentation of a community of inquiry,<sup>19</sup> a text is read. The text is a source of information in Lipman's conception of the community of inquiry. A group conveys its interpretation of a text. Practically, it need not to be a philosophical text, it can be a lecture on the Battle of Austerlitz, life cycle of a protozoan, a travelogue or belles-lettres. The whole of the group need not read the text. It can be any book that one reads, and he starts with its content.

The reading of texts is the fundamental source of information. It is not desirable to adopt all statements of the text immediately. To the contrary, P4C waits for a (wo)man to think critically about the text, test its content in experimentation, and discuss it with somebody else. Briefly, P4C awaits a (wo)man to confront the text with his/her own experiences. The discussion of the text is important for Lipman. It forces students to reflect the content, and simultaneously confront the statements of other members of the group. The text is chosen, naturally, in accordance with the age of the students. If we hold to Lipman's conception of the community of inquiry and we want to make an inquiry with children, of course, we can use any type of text. But there is a quantum of explanatory texts that tell us "how things are". I think it is desirable to use the explanatory texts more with older children, because, if they have open mind, they are better able to argue with the text, even though the text is made as presumption, they are able to approach the information it offers critically. In contrast, younger children are not as

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19 LIPMAN, Matthew. *Thinking in Education*. Page 83nn

experienced with the language of explanatory text, and it bores them. Also, they are not likely to understand the structure of these texts. The explanatory text can be helpful for their teacher, not for them. When the teacher must retell its content, the text is not appropriate for the group of children. As I explained in a previous chapter, it is necessary to adjust the language of a text to the age of the children, but not the content.

If we set Lipman's educative conception aside for a while, we see common story-telling. People from the youngest to oldest read, watch, and solve stories in books and on television; they tell stories about what happened their acquaintances. Children are fascinated by stories, and sooner or later their stories become part of their lives. Which parts? Traditionally, fairy tales are read to young children. Older children read children books, fantasy, sci-fi, detective stories, romances. If they do not read books, they watch movies and series - why is this more popular than the bare explanation of facts? Why are stories so important for (wo)man? Maybe the answer to this question can lie in imitation learning. A (wo)man likes stories because (s)he learns from them how to react within life situations. (S)he can gain experiences with various problems by stories. (S)he explores the large quantity of variations of life situations through stories. A (wo)man discovers through stories (naturally not only through them, also through their own life) how the relationships between people work (for example between parents or neighbours, a teacher and a fireman, and between children in class). (S)he finds characters in stories, with whom (s)he identifies. (S)he finds not only her/his heroes, but also protagonists with whom (s)he does not definitely identify.

Imitation learning is more psychological explanation.

From a philosophical view, P4C offers comprehension of this: stories are profitable for people, if they deliberate on their grounds. Stories are valuable for (wo)man if they think about the behavior of the characters, why they do what they did, whether it is usual to have a fear or to overcome it, and etc. A story is a good foundation for philosophical questioning and analyses of situations.

I presume to claim that there are two aspects at work here. The first is a rational questioning of why this or that happened in the story; if I behave in the same way or differently, how would I feel in that situation etc. The second is the issue of behavioral models. When we ask rationally and we analyze a story, we stay in self-conscious mode. Despite, or without it, we adopt behavioral models subconsciously and not always figure it out. Or we infer them after we have used them. Or we never realize them.

Behavioral models are not adopted only from stories, but from older brothers or sisters, from classmates, parents, teachers, friends, colleagues in work, briefly from our surrounding. And - we prefer them to models from our idols-heroes, which are not only the characters of a favorite story. They can be musicians, actors, eminent scientists, etc. The idols have an influence on (wo)man's development, whether or not (s)he admits it and (s)he confess to it openly. Such idols are a part of the experience of the world.

Now we meet a problem, what do we think of when we speak of (wo)man? Who is (s)he exactly? This question is important, because it is not a good idea to mix together discontinuous approaches to (wo)man and not know which object of which we speak. We still speak about methods of education in pragmatic pedagogy. We must solve this question: what attributes does a (wo)man have and shall have, what must (s)he be able to assert in order to survive first in a natural wilderness and now in

the wilderness of civilization. But what is the surviving?  
This question is far too complex to consider it in its fullest  
scope. I want only to point that every philosophy derives from  
a diverse vision of (wo)man.

We know that a (wo)man goes through some mental progress  
which is not dependent upon physical development. I think we  
can say that mental progress lies in self-reflection. If we  
disregard all ancient, medieval and modern definitions of  
(wo)man, this seems to work well enough in our conception. The  
ability of self-reflection has been provable, as I see it, at  
least in some individuals for several thousand years. It is  
not possible to claim every human individual is able to self-  
reflect<sup>20</sup>. But at any rate, some individuals are able to do it  
and this makes our civilization. The ability of self-  
reflection makes science, culture, philosophy - and this  
thesis. My self-reflection makes this reflective essay on  
(wo)man; it is a part of my personality, an extension of it;  
and it identifies me as a human being.

A (wo)man is in most cases able to evaluate her/his acts  
and ideas and (s)he is able to infer from them conclusion or  
next steps. By this (s)he can make huge building projects, act  
tactically in battles, describe and systematize nature,  
transform natural sources, create religious cults and  
speculate about thinking. We can deduce from this that a  
(wo)man is the thinking in certain manner. This is not  
anything new. But as I see it, this is not the complete  
definition of (wo)man. It describes only one attribute,  
although it characterizes the largest part, it does not  
describe the whole of her/him. I do not have any intention to  
seek a right definition of (wo)man, I want only to point out  
that if we think about a sound education of a child, we must  
see in him the adult he become, and then we must have an idea

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<sup>20</sup> We have no evidence as to whether or not animals or plants are able to  
self-reflect; if they are, we have no means to access it.

of what an adult is, and we must realize that everybody has a various idea about it. There is no judge who says which idea is right, if any idea can actually be right. Generally, what we can surely say about a (wo)man (about an adult and a child too), is that (s)he thinks and evolves - this implies that (s)he is able to self-reflect. With this premise we can enter our next considerations.

When I thought why the story is so important for (wo)man, I remembered Henri Bergson and his approach to stories in society. Bergson's idea of society is divided on intellect and instinct. A human (wo)man becomes different from the rest of nature by her/his intellect. Instinct and intellect are two principles in nature. Instinct guarantees cohesiveness and the survival of species in advanced societies such as bees and ants. We are not able to ascertain if animals and plants have any intellect too, but people have plenty of it. Intellect leads a (wo)man to egoism. (S)he cares about her/himself only. Intellect takes up all positions. It is the reason why people could develop themselves to their current appearance - to civilization. But there too, instinct has had to stay in some sense; because it keeps humankind alive as a whole.

Pragmatic philosophers solve the similar double problem - how can we ensure the blossoming of society and self-realization of individual at the same time? They try to find effective solutions for both parts, as if these two principles were placed on weigh-bowls to seek their balance.

If we go back to the previous question: what is a (wo)man, Bergson says, "

mankind always presents two essential characteristics, intelligenece and sociability."<sup>21</sup> This definition points out

21 BERGSON, Henri. *Dva zdroje morálky a náboženství*. 1. vydání. Praha: Vyšehrad, 2007. 267 s. Edice Reflexe. ISBN 978-80-7021-792-4. Page 85, the translation from French to English is adopted from:<<https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora033499>

that by necessity the (wo)man's instinct expresses to maintain communities. According to Bergson, intellect replaced instinct wherever it could. But Bergson's instinct had to ensure the survival of the species by some way. It was necessary to ensure the balance in society, hence the instinct serves intellect as the so-called "fabulation function". What is the fabulation function? According to Bergson, it is some kind of self-preservation. Briefly, Bergson characterizes it as an "intentional hallucination"<sup>22</sup>. It is the ability by which a (wo)man can make visions, superstitions, cults and religions. Bergson leaves aside chronology and lays the biggest emphasis on the ability that makes religions. This ability has made superstitions, likened to religious thought, next there arose secular stories - tales, novels or films in the manner which we know nowadays. But let's go back to the religion for a while. How does instinct get us to religion? " Religion is that element which, in beings endowed with reason, is called upon to make good any deficiency of attachment to life.." <sup>23</sup> Instinct has to ensure the balance with intellect by some way. Intellect does not incline to unity; it concerns the benefits of individual. It functions only by serving some content, which deadens its tendencies and keeps somehow or other keeps it busy. As Bergson explains it, if I understand it rightly, intellect makes a fake experience - an idea which a (wo)man can stop every time and by this trains the thinker to deal with reality; intellect fortifies the thinker for the potential real experience, or it does not survive. This explains superstition - and subsequently religion, as a

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22 BERGSON, Henri. *Dva zdroje morálky a náboženství*. Page 141, the translation from French to English is adopted from:<[https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp_djvu.txt)>

23 BERGSON, Henri. *Dva zdroje morálky a náboženství*. Page 152, the translation from French to English is adopted from:<[https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp_djvu.txt)>

protective factor towards reality. From this it follows that instinct/fabulation function/religion quickly, clearly and simply explains to a (wo)man the problem/obstacle which confronts her/him. On the contrary, an intellectual approach analyzes the problem by dividing it into separate parts - until the problem is absolutely lost in its complicatedness. Bergson likes to give Zenon's arrow as an illustration of this concept.

What is important for us is that a (wo)man is able to think in illusions and the illusions are matter of survival. What is important is that, thanks the illusions, a (wo)man is able to understand the problem suddenly - focally without any rational breakdown, (s)he understands it intuitively. Furthermore, it is important for us to know that the ability of fabulation is the foundation of superstition, but it has evolved into a different types of fantasy.

Superstition. What is this? What explanation does it have in Bergson's line? Superstition is what people have thought about natural phenomena. It is what has come from observation. A nice example can be found in weather sayings that explain which weather will arrive according to natural hints; they determine our faith in what will happen and support our imagination. By a similar way - as explanation, natural descriptions began of lightning (why the lightning struck *this* tree especially), springs (why the water rises at this place, why one goes dry etc.), and etc. This has moved on - character was added to lightning, the natural phenomena has been personified - why? Because (wo)men have had the feeling that it could not exist by coincidence. Lightning, for example, has to have been a decision of something (or somebody) with a mind. (Wo)men were not able to imagine that there has been another mind very close to human one. And so gods, demigods, nymphs etcetera have arisen. It is clear that they, as

conscious beings, began to make relations. And the myths are here. Myths - and story-telling and poems of secular character. This infusion of character and natural phenomena been necessary because people have known relationships between themselves, they understand them more instinctively than intellectually, even though they have been able to analyze relationships between themselves naturally. Thanks to personification, they began to understand (or make) novel relations with surrounding world, or nature. Thus, they first took into understanding the relationships between the characters of nature , and then from these stories they learned to understand themselves and their relationships. Narratives have become textbooks of lives.

Bergson elevated one aspect from this simple story-telling - the hero. In his conception, a hero is the center of (wo)man's interest. According to him, a (wo)man's attention is primarily placed on the hero with whom the (wo)man identifies. A hero is a substitute (wo)man. Through stories, the hero teaches her/him to function in world. Every (wo)man makes her/his own hero inside her/himself. He may be a factual individual from real life, a specific character from a favorite story or a figure combined from diverse characters. A hero is important for (wo)man, because (s)he compares her/himself with him. (S)he confronts her/his behavior with the behavior of the hero. He represents an ideal for the (wo)man (s)he wants to be in reality. But various circumstances impede her/him. A hero is not a static element. He is something that changes with as a (wo)man changes, in reaction to her/his development. A hero is a (wo)man's ideal. If a (wo)man's goals change , her/his hero changes with her/him (for example if (s)he works on making money for all her/his life and, after 20 years (s)he has enough, (s)he changes her/his hero from a successful banker to an



adventurer). If a (wo)man does not want to work, but wants to live in luxury, her/his hero is a manipulator or thief. If, on the contrary, (s)he wants to improve the place where (s)he lives, her/his hero is a successful statesman. If (s)he wants to achieve an enlightenment, her/his hero is a Buddha. If (s)he wants to be alone, her/his hero is a hermit. A personal hero is exactly what a (wo)man wants to be but is not. A hero is her/his paragon to who (s)he admires.

In contrast to Bergson's conception, P4C's story-telling hero does not have any extra special function. Yes, he is here, he is important, but he is important in the same way as other characters. P4C's story-telling is not about one character and his interaction with world, in P4C's story-telling the whole system of relationships and situations are the point. It might or may not concentrate on only one character. It focuses on the whole from which then it chooses component to analysis. The components may relate to one character or be compounded from various situations of various characters. Naturally, if we have a story about one main character, it is clear our interest lies with him. The difference between Bergson's conception and P4C's story-telling consists in the approach to this one hero.

P4C does not work with the idea that one (wo)man has one hero who stays with her/him and evolves her/him. It is possible a hero will become a paragon, but a (wo)man is not fixated to him, a hero does not stay for all her/his life (usually), a hero is just an example, not an ideal paragon. A (wo)man need not to make an internal relationship to him.

Bergson shifts the hero from the field of story and fabulation to the real world. Everybody makes their own paragon, their own hero. But (s)he need not to remain in an imaginary world: the paragon is from family, friends, teachers, neighbors etc. A real source is slightly more

important for Bergson. When he considered who represents a real hero for other people, he meets persons who are called "mystics".

Mystics, according to Bergson, are people who can fascinate intention out of surroundings by force of their personality without any specially endeavor. These personalities become paragons not only for their current surroundings, but they are those who enter stories; exactly put, they become the heroes of the next generations. What do they differ from others? Mystics work in communion with divine principle in all cultures. It does not matter what they call the process, what is important is that they participate in it. These efforts add characteristics to their individuality which do not occur in the common (wo)man. It can seem it is much better for a community to condemn these people and not to cling to them. Certain people can say: „they are some freaks who consider themselves assimilated with the gods, but how curious they are, are they not?“ This approach is suitable for the purposes of certain people, but two things put a resistance to them. First, mystics are not closed to themselves and, in spite of their preoccupation with ecstasy, their interest is in their surroundings. They can be "the great men of action"<sup>24</sup> when the appropriate opportunity arrives. Second, mystics have a need to teach their cognition. This is why society knows of them and why she looks up them; they share their experiences with people who really do not engage in this resort. Mystics are admired by these people and become heroes, because they make big acts, which the other people fear. In this, they are not responsible to authority as others see themselves. So others want to be responsible for them. And now an important moment arrive; from what causation

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24 BERGSON, Henri. *Dva zdroje morálky a náboženství*. Page 73, the translation from French to English is adopted from:<[https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/twosourcesofmora033499mbp/twosourcesofmora03349mbp_djvu.txt)>

do people cling to them? Do they do it from rational analysis? No. From fear? No. They do it from love. The mystic alone by his contemplation arrives to the emotion of universal love to all humankind and if he does something for it, he does it just because he loves it. He encourages people to this way by his apprenticeship and this is the attractive on him so much.

Does the mystic occur in P4C? Not if we understand him as an extraordinary individual to admire. P4C assumes a positive attitude to hero, but by no amount of fairy-tale (magic) is a hero not still seen as a simple human being. A hero seen with human characteristics serves for better understanding. P4C is not opened to something that can intervene outside a (wo)man's perception without any explanation. More or less, everybody understands a story, somehow; in P4C, something that does not need to be possible to explain is not allowed to exist. But a mystic is there for other people - he is the something that is not comprehensible by intellect. He is something that a (wo)man shall rather fear. And many people do this. Provided that they overstep the borders of fear, he attracts them transcendently. P4C does not deny it. Practically, she does not solve this issue; she does not put on airs. This issue is explained and analyzed as whichever other problem. P4C does not have a need to go to this depth in general. This approach could damage her reputation of unbiased method.

P4C focuses on the concrete (wo)man more than on paragon. Bergson has an interest in "how" and "by what" a (wo)man is modeled. Because a mystic/hero can have certain character attributes, but a specific (wo)man can have an interest a little bit elsewhere or (s)he is not able to follow a mystic/hero so much as (s)he wants. (S)he stays somewhere out of mystic's scope of activity or (s)he goes by her own way. Which way and where (s)he will go is the interest of P4C.

Model behavior is more suitable for P4C. Within it a

(wo)man takes patterns of behavior from her/his surroundings. It can be from stories, family, school, friends etc. The adopting of pattern happens both unconsciously and consciously. The patterns can be gestures, facial expressions, one-liners, but also reactions on specific situations, manners of thinking etcetera. The adopting of patterns is a natural thing. P4C concerns itself with the analyses of stories because she wants students come to realize the process and take over their patterns *consciously*. The smaller the child, the more emotional adopting is in motion. But this does not mean that a child ever comes back to the story to analyze it. And such concept works with models too. A child can take over a model, he can realize he is taking the manner of problem solving from a favorite figure, and it is all right. However, for example, the main figure of his favorite book denies being bullied by boy from neighborhood. But the child permits it from his sibling. Even though he and his figure/hero have a lot in common (including a friend names Agnes), our child gets into conflict with himself. He wants to take over a model behavior from his figure/hero, but he has not yet adopted it. He wants to face his sibling, but he has not yet been able to do it, even though he has gained his position in class as his figure/hero. So where is the problem? And this is the moment P4C wants to achieve with a child. This is the moment of solving inner conflict - and not mere blind adopting of models; this is the moment of considering. A child must think in what ways are he and his figure/hero different. He has copied every thing that they share, but why cannot he copy this? Why does it not work in this case? Maybe because the figure/hero had a problem with a stranger, while a sibling saddles the boy; he loves his brother who loves him too, although they struggle. So it is not possible for our child to merely copy this model behavior. What does it mean? His

figure/hero will not be so powerful as before. Simply, each is in a diverse place.

A question occurred to me: how much of adopting models is self-conscious? When I observe sundry people around me, it seems to me the unconscious adopting of models predominates. It goes on automatically. Usually people do not think if they want to copy this or that from their neighbors. Rather, they like a behavior, they admire it, and they want to belong to the specific group, so they start to imitate the members of the group unconsciously.

I observe that people in philosophical communities are trained to analyze matter rationally. We are trained to think about problems around us, about problems inside us. The psychologists' work is mutual, although their points are slightly different. They also analyze rationally. The snag lies in that a common (wo)man has little need to analyze her/his behavior, (s)he does not reflect, (s)he does not ruminate, and this is a natural thing for her/him. I do not want to claim that (s)he does not think, of course, (s)he does. (S)he solves her/his vocational issues, (s)he solves what (s)he will eat for dinner, how (s)he will spend a weekend and how to prepare her/his bike for Saturday. (S)he can solve whether or not (s)he will permit her/his children a trip to the mountains, even though they have poor marks, or (s)he will forbid it as a penalty. (S)he can figure out if the penalty is strong enough to start them learning more. But (s)he does not question this pattern of behavior she took from her/his parents unconsciously or that (s)he is used to hate this types of penalty when (s)he was a child. (S)he forgets that (s)he used to think these penalties are meaningless. In contrast of our presumptions otherwise, most people do not think about their certain sphere.

It is quite impossible to analyze everything. Whether we

want to or not, we cannot assess our every step. However we try, we act on many thing unconsciously; for example, the expression on our faces when we look at unpleasant things. But we take over this expression from surroundings too. The point is not in the analyzing of everything, the point is that if we think patterns over we discover many have been adopted unconsciously. It is about fear. P4C teaches us not to fear to think on issue that used to worry us, which we are not used to think about. We gain courage to ask.

The simple adopting model is Bergson's conception of hero. We take over things from our hero that we admire on him, that for which he is the hero. These things we primarily adopt unconsciously, but if we realize it and we do not have a fear to think about it, we can adopt them consciously as well.

What influence does P4C have on the unconscious adoption of models? The answer puts itself forward. If we adopt most of models unconsciously and we want to control our own behavior, we must realize the adoption first and begin to work with it rationally. P4C works to train people to analyze things around them, they do not worry to ask and they do not worry to answer. Because P4C help to realize unconscious processes in a different way, she enables us to work with our own minds. By this, a (wo)man can orient within her/himself and surroundings. A (wo)man cannot influence unconscious processes, but (s)he can count with them and adapt her/his behavior to their presence in manner that her/his self stay in her/his driving.

We may summarize our situation. We know a (wo)man takes her/his behavior, reactions, opinions from her/his surroundings, whether they are family, friends, teachers, newspaper articles, TV programs, movies, the Net, books... Their influence does not work only by conscious rational comparison, as philosophy may wish in an ideal case, but it

works more by unconscious copying of patterns that we like. This is closer to Bergson's conception of the hero. Bergson inclines to the opinion that a hero is only one in (wo)man's mind and his characteristics are such as a (wo)man makes. In contrast, the opinion stands that there may be more paragons and they need not to be connected between themselves definitely.

One (wo)man can admire Ladislav Klíma for his ability of imagination and expression of decadence, (s)he may try to see the world by the same eyes, but (s)he need not to identify with his lifestyle. On the other hand, (s)he likes a good working community, so (s)he engages a local Scout Group and (s)he feels like Antonín Benjamin Svojšík. They are two diametrical positions, two absolutely different patterns. A (wo)man may take from these only something small or nearly all; but then, how does a (wo)man put it together? According to Bergson, a (wo)man takes the elements from both personalities and (s)he makes her own hero to admire. But if (s)he has made a hero by this manner, why does not (s)he become this one herself? Does (s)he need a paragon? In the case of Klíma and Svojšík, the (wo)man must find a balance/solution. (S)he must discover both how to make a functional being and what that being wants to achieve. If (s)he fails at this, (s)he will live in contradiction because (s)he will achieve not one quality of either of her/his heroes. And maybe that is it. People make heroes by compilation of diverse examples, but they are not able to fulfill their ideals, because their paragons are contradictory in real life. Then they experience fear and are confused. They make a chasm between what they want to be and what they really are. And they want to get over the chasm.

Bergson offers the mystic, the one who overcomes the differences between a common (wo)man's fears and deficiency of

his/her hero. Even though a mystic becomes a hero, always there is something attractive that forces a (wo)man to forget that the mystic is unattainable. The mystic wakes this qualities in every (wo)man by his teaching. It is only the question of fear if a (wo)man turns back to him or (s)he is enchanted.

The idea of the mystic is interesting in itself, let alone if we want to use it from P4C's standpoints. Actually, is it possible? Pragmatism takes more or less a positive stand to spiritual movements and tolerates them. It claims that if a faith influences a (wo)man's development positively, it is profitable and deserves approval. This is from standpoint of mystic. It is natural; mysticism has as a good effect on the mystic as on other individuals. However, there is a question what effect does mysticism have on others? If we agree with Bergson, the mystic's influence is important, because it rouses people to be better, to transcend their boundaries. He rouses them to overcome the boundaries of what they know. A mystic helps them to get over own fear and he teaches them to love the humankind as a whole. We can agree with it. It can seem that pragmatic pedagogy may agree with this conception too, but a snag stays in a spiritual aspect of teaching. Pragmatic pedagogy may bother that the training is not going to be unbiased and that there is taught some doctrine. Not to mention, Bergson's conception does not give any answer on method, nor can it, because it is not its content.

I am interesting in another question. To what extent must a paragon be a mystic? And can a usual guy suffice? Is any difference in their influence? Does a (wo)man get along with mysticism? Whoever may have an effect on individual: partly. A mystic affects the moral aspect of (wo)man: mostly. He does not care how to solve concrete situations, but he tries to solve where a (wo)man shall mature by situations. A method



stays on individual - more precisely, a mystic gives the maximum of space to self-realization. Actually, a mystic does not force a (wo)man to do anything, he does not bind anybody by requirements.<sup>25</sup> A mystic gives a destination, but not the journey to (wo)man. A (wo)man must figure that out alone.

But how? Here, the paragons of non-mystic apply. A (wo)man, if (s)he wants to achieve goals given by a mystic, naturally adopts what (s)he sees in her/his mystic<sup>26</sup>. What (s)he does not see, (s)he has to create somehow. Thus (s)he finds inspiration in her/his surrounds. At this moment, (s)he mulls, analyzes, assesses if her/his adopting model is the right one to achieve the goal (given by mystic). This can go on mostly instinctively. In this case, the mystic is a distant paragon while the other guy is an imminent paragon.

But how does it look like when a (wo)man does not meet a mystic or (s)he does not incline to these movements? Naturally, (s)he takes over her/his behavior, goals etcetera from her surrounding - from non-mystics. And does not it lack to her/him? Does a (wo)man need a mystic to lead? I have written yet, a mystic makes or more indicates the chasm of unattainable between him and common people. When a (wo)man meets a mystic, (s)he realize her/his chasm, (s)he discovers that (s)he can be somewhere else, but (s)he is not. At this moment (s)he has two possibilities, either (s)he attempts the leap - with the mystic's teaching to help, or (s)he gives up

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25 This point could be debatable if we think of mystics as medieval clerical Fathers who have extended their teachings in accordance of church dogmas, and we assess them from the current multicultural view. We have to realize these clerics lived in society with a singular belief and they had no need to imagine perspectives other than Christian. I do not want to make this a religious analysis; nevertheless, when we study the important mystics of sundry cultures, not one of them has given concrete commands which has been fulfilled by concrete (wo)man. Their requirements have not been commands, but either recommendation or advice or they have been assigned after voluntary agreement of an apprentice and in accord with his wish. A mystic does not claim any entitlement to govern others.

26 I think religious rituals arise thusly - people adopt model behavior from their paragon, but what sense had been there, has disappeared. And so they repeat the steps mechanically with little meaning, or else they give to them a new dimension and new meaning.

this fight and sees what (s)he will never achieve - and can only admire the mystic. In the case where (s)he never meets a mystic, (s)he need not discover the goals of the mystic and (s)he lives in other areas. According to Bergson, (s)he orients on her/his intellect and own (probably material) benefits. But even though (s)he has never met a mystic, (s)he wants to deal with her/his spiritual development, (s)he tries somehow but (s)he does not know the mystic destination. This type of person, which the mystic puts into depression, will not experience depressions without mystic. This might seem better, but this type of person will not self-stimulus to make improvement. Probably, they will not make any improvement with a mystic, but they will not even know that they can make it. They will live in their monotonous stereotypes without any stress. And now, again, it can seem the better to live without any notion about mystic. The joke is that nobody can know what type of person he is. The division between those who want to live in stereotype and those who want to make progress is not clear in a new born baby. It is not clear in a child; maybe it is not clear in adult too. Moreover, the division does not work universally. We can want to be in stereotype in some resort while in another we want to make an improvement. We want to make a progress, but for it, we need a minimum of certitude on which to rely. People who do not have the need of progress condemn mystics and drive out them from the community. Perhaps, there are slightly more of these types than others, but mystics are found everywhere and all the time.

Where do mystics come from? What pressures a (wo)man to become somebody such as a mystic? If we move to from a position of society back to that of the individual, these questions lie in front of us. Now it is not about "shall I behave like this strange (wo)man?", but it is "shall I stand

up so far?" Whosoever wants to become a mystic might first have some paragon, but (s)he has to cut off him sooner or later; (s)he has to discover her next steps alone. This is the difference between a new mystic and a mystic's follower. If somebody wants to go by this way, (s)he has to be convinced at all, naturally, and at the same time (s)he cannot afraid to experiment, make steps to the unknown. (S)he must cut herself off from prejudices of her surroundings and focus on her own mind, her own intuition. The (wo)man has to be open to new imaginations and processes. (S)he has to act according to her/his opinion, in spite of however many others think (s)he is absolutely mad. And (s)he cannot afraid to speak of her/his efforts.

How similar is this description to the characterization of the ideal (wo)man according to pragmatic pedagogy? An ideal (wo)man must also have the courage to make steps into the unknown. (S)he does not worry about cancelling old non-functional systems, (s)he experiments, argues, and discusses her/his standpoints with others, (s)he is opened to new ways and processes. A (wo)man trained in P4C can be actually a mystic if (s)he chooses this way according to Bergson's specification. A P4C's (wo)man can be a strong individual not only in spiritual area, (s)he can be an ideal in every resort where (s)he will have followers. Of course, this position is not for everybody, even though (s)he is or is not trained in P4C, but P4C directs people to this target.

We discovered P4C is permeable with Bergson theory. Bergson can cooperate in frame of P4C, although PC4 works less well within Bergson's frame. Bergson gives spiritual, universal proportions in issues, whereas P4C's story-telling keeps itself down, and remains an explanatory theory. Story-telling does not focus so much on metaphysical outcomes and consequences of such conceptions, but on the deliberation of a

self. For Bergson, the deliberation is a natural thing. What does this imply? That society has moved and thinking for goals is not so important because it is so far removed from life. If somebody wants to get to Bergson's level of metaphysics and concern themselves with the same issues, first he must go through a training process - how think and why think. It is necessary to inculcate into (wo)man as soon as possible, because children are naturally opened to new findings. When they learn to think early, they can get further than when they waste their time. Their perceptions primarily go through their emotions instinctively and this is best worked by stories. If they come to the phase where they are able to define their feelings verbally and rationally, they can train it. And this is what P4C's story-telling is about. It is about recognizing the world from stories and about analyzing their findings.

My next question is connected with the previous themes: what imagination is. Imagination as itself is joined with the fabulation function: fabulation function is part of imagination. This is clear. And imagination is linked with thinking. We can say the ability of imagination is in ever (wo)man. Nevertheless, we come across people who have a big problem to imagine absolutely common things. And on the other hand, we cannot be able to imagine a thing that is clear for others until we will see it by "our own eyes". Imagination is addicted on experience. Definitely, a (wo)man is born with the ability to imagine. (S)he has this opportunity but (s)he doesn't need to evolve it. It remains only a lost opportunity so long as (s)he does not practice it. The same rules work in this ability as in others - we can practice it in specific resort only, or in none of them, or in all of them. A mathematician has a great ability to imagine abstract functions in numbers, but, simultaneously, he cannot imagine a

taste that arises by cinnamon in roasted meat, for example. The matter that we will research by imagination depends on our interest. On this, the rules of interest work.

Imagination is present in apparently all aspects of a (wo)man's thinking; she is needed for the process of mentioned self-reflection. Maybe we can say that she is essential for it. By which other way could we think about ourselves, if we cannot perceive ourselves objectively, than by imagination? When we screen a passing situation, when we feel the emotions of other (wo)men in conversation, when we think about the future, we imagine something. We can control our imagination by experimentation, when we ask somebody who was present in event of our memories, when we ask other (wo)man how she feels in conversation, or when we wait on results of our plans. But we can distort by imagination too - we can distort our memories according to our future experiences. A partner in conversation need not avow his feelings openly and plans might not come off definitely. And so, imagination can help us perceive these things - and all our surroundings deeper. On the other hand, she can lead us to delusions. It suffices as an example, if we remember the fact of psychoneurosis: for those who suffer it, imagination is far too vigorous and restrict than helps. (This is not meant as a comprehensive view: imagination alone is not to blame for neurosis.) It follows that it is useful to approach imagination as a metric of health.

There is a kind of people who need get their fantasies out. For this, a lot of artistic creations, including literature and story telling, come to existence. One of the reasons why a writer can write is because by so doing he cleans his head of his visions. But on the contrary, so too in his writing, his fantasies can rise up and he can fill an empty place in his mind. Or he can write, because he wants to

give rise to something that will impress in some way, and that is the reason why he writes. At this moment, it is not important for us to distinguish the geneses of literary works (and those of other artistic forms). What is important is that literature gives rise to the writer's imagination as it wakes "false" experiences. Because thanks them, according to Bergson, we survive in world - and according to P4C, by this we orient better in our lives.

Considering our theme, I must put a question, if differences exist between the child's imagination and that of the adult. A possible indicator may be found in books. Fairy-tales are read to little children and as children grow, step by step, they choose genres which they like. The genres are "for children" firstly, and when older they begin to read "adult" books. We can deduce from this that the children's imagination evolves from the simplest to more complex forms. But for it the problem is that the fairy-tales were originally stories for adults. Formerly, the fairy-tales were said to children and adult together. Today, public libraries are divided into two parts - for children and for adults. The original fairy-tales were far too "brutal" - the children could have nightmares, so they were simplified and softened. Brutality is still served to children but only when they are older, and in far larger portions.

We cannot observe the development of imagination in the structure of belles-lettres, but we can observe the development of society. I am not able to judge if it is better for children to meet the "reality of life" immediately, or if the current situation is better, when they have more time for "being a child". It is necessary to point out that adults did not have much more tangled stories hundreds year ago. They were just tales. On the other hand, small children appear to dislike contemporary adult stories. They do not understand

their structures.

This evidence we can point out: stories for children and stories for adults differ. And they differ the most in recent time. We cannot infer that they had differ all the time. The difference lies in the intricacy and intensity of action. If the story goes by facts which a child does not know from his world, and solves relationships by a manner unknown to a child; it is clear, that he does not understand its content. Naturally, he makes his vision of the story; but the question remains as to whether the story impresses on child at least some of what author intended. In the case of belles-lettres, we have to take language into consideration, we have to question if a child is able to read and understand the sentences. And we are back in imagination again. A (wo)man has to train her/his imagination. A child trains himself. He adds new components step by step. He puts them into the facts the he knows. In time he imagines more and more complex things. The imagination of child and adult can differ only by the degree of their individual development.

Can a (wo)man philosophize if her/his imagination is not trained? Naturally, (s)he can. But there is the question of the quality his philosophizing. Imagination is important especially for abstract thinking, because she is drawing the child in level with the real (physical) world. She makes system in the (wo)man's mind, rules, theories etc., which (s)he can verify in practice. It does not matter whether we solve it inductively or deductively, we need imagination in all cases to get things together. Imagination in philosophy follows rules of logic. Lipman aims on training of children's imagination in communities of inquiry. Imagination is inseparable from philosophy. We need her whether we muse about something inane or when we read philosophical texts: without imagining their conceptions we cannot understand them.

In closing this chapter, we can clarify how philosophy pervades the life of (wo)man. She is present in ever her/his every step. But (s)he has to realize her. (S)he has to realize that life is not composed from stereotypic operations and (s)he is not a machine who does them. As a (wo)man becomes more aware, (s)he can diverge from predetermined norms, (s)he need not fear it, and, in sort, (s)he can think about them. Then her/his life is connected with philosophy.

## **2.4 The Practice of Philosophy for Children**

I would like to concern the using of P4C in this chapter. In the previous text I addressed this topic theoretically. But after all it is more the method of teaching, or rather of cognition, than a mere summary of claims. If we want to use P4C in a group and make use of Lipman's community of inquiry, we have to make a certain atmosphere. It consists in absolutely unaffected, unforced relationships between members of the group, which includes the teacher. Children have to trust their teacher in the sense that they are not afraid of punishment for brazen-faced opinion. And above all, they have to have time for inquiry. Ever (wo)man must have time to think independently on her/his engagement; (s)he must have time for contemplation about her/himself. This applies for children too. Although they are boisterous, always in action, and incapable to stay in one place, still they have to have space for thinking. It is very easy to say this, but the realization of the point can be a little difficult. The same conditions that apply for the group also apply to individual conversation between two people. The atmosphere has to be informal.



Practically, Socrates's method of dialogue is copied in discussion.

I think it is important to mention some more concrete example in this work. But I do not want to list one or two or three particular conversations. This is not my intention. Every conversation is deeply individual and attached to its participants and their experiences. I used one text<sup>27</sup>, which I analyzed either in small group or with one partner. My partners were differently aged<sup>28</sup>. This is why I do not want to list concrete dialogues.

Most (wo)man who have spoken with a child or teenager (s)he knows that such conversation has a different character than one among two adults. I use a classic text so simple for children understand and so complex so as not to "offend" adults. I am not interested how children think about the text, but how differently aged people think about the same text, and the contrasts between them. I used the method of P4C, mostly by the Socratic method.

Before I get to the text itself, I want to mention what, perhaps, is clear for a long time. My larger personal theme is ethics. That I solve problems from this standpoint is certainly reflected in the previous text. When I spoke with people about this fable, I automatically came away from ethics. Unconsciously, I took questions directed by this way; actually, I chose a text that considers moral principles.

My first question, after they read or listened to the text and I was sure they really knew what happened in the story, was "what do you think about it?" They usually answered uncertainly and without any interest. So I asked "why?" Whereas the smaller children had a problem to figure some

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27 The Plague among Animals in LA FONTAINE, Jean de. *Bajky*. Transl. E. Hermann. In MKP 1. pub; Praha: Městská knihovna v Praze, 2011. Available WWW:<<http://web2.mlp.cz/koweb/00/03/65/67/66/bajky.pdf>>. The text is enclosed in Supplement.

28 They were children around 10 years old and groups of 13-14, 24-26 and 36 years old. The adults did not have a philosophical education.

answer that could satisfy me according to them, the adults mused deeply and they started to make a response that could satisfy them.

When we look at the text more thoroughly, we can discover that the author counts with certain predetermined rules: for example, the lion is the king of animals, it is possible to cancel a plague by ritual sacrifice, and a monastic meadow is untouchable. These "facts" were absolutely and automatically given for adults (including myself), but for the children they were not. I have a little suspicion that they did not understand clearly how dangerous a plague was in this age; and anyway, the children were more interested in the threat of death of one member than in the threat of plague. Patently, they condemned the killing of the donkey. They disagreed with the killing of lambs too, even though they were willing to give certain powers to lion, they preferred to make a vegetarian of him. Globally, they disagreed with the fox in his opinion about killing lambs. When we came back to the plague, some of them at least discovered that plague was not god's punishment, but an infection that was necessary to fight.

The adults also passed on the plague. But in contrast to the children who understood the animals as one united group, the adults found individual positions in story that corresponded with their personal life situation; and, from this position, they interpreted the story. The adults expressed no thought about the good of all animals, they thought only about the good of the individual with which he identified or compared. An interesting point was discovered by some teenagers: they resolutely claimed that what was most important was to find the truth first - before somebody would be killed. And they absolutely disagreed with self-sacrifice. The adults more or less did not resolve to cancel the plague, but they resolved to avoid the sacrifice. The donkey was

stupid, because he let himself be sacrificed, he let himself be convinced that he should sacrifice himself and he let himself confess to a transgression of "nature's" rules. Anyway, everybody concurred at the point that the donkey needed to admit. Most adults identified with herbivores, which did not want to be connected with anybody deciding about him. Only one top manager expressly thought the donkey should not confess, but was much more he was interested in the lion who, as a leader, was willing to self-sacrifice for the community. He declared about the lion, that: "not all who are strong have to be unfair, but there can hide good among strong too"<sup>29</sup>.

A somewhat different question is the matter of values. One could say that the children accepted the values given in the story as they are laid out, but the contrary was right. Yes, they did not solve why just the donkey had to be sacrificed, but they were very interested in why somebody had to be sacrificed, why especially the lion-murderer had a right to decide something. Finally, they came with interesting issue, by which I later upset the adults- why should the lion be the king of animals? The children said that the king of the animals should be a squirrel. When I asked why, they said because the squirrel needed bodyguards and the lion was able to secure himself alone. In other words, the king did not have to be the strongest and the most fearful, it was enough, that the king was reasonable. Some adults marked this opinion (when they did not know that it was an opinion of children) as a "very modern point of view". And thus, when I asked adults who should be the king of animals, at first they had a serious problem to dispose of the idea of lion, but still they chose the strong animals - crocodiles, wolfs or elephants. It must be said, that they tried to restrict the choice only to African fauna.

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29 Free citation from my notes.

If we come back to the lion and the children, they were very interested in his powers. It seemed not to cross the adults mind even to question it. Could the lion do what he wanted? Could he kill? Or was he subordinate the same rules as the others? Was the killing his natural behavior? What did a king dare to do to others and what was enough? According to what did they recognize a good (wo)man from bad? I cannot write universal answers to these questions, because the results of discussions were very various. Generally, I can only say that the children solved questions of the limit of good and wrong. It was very important for them. In contrast, the adults sought the survival of the individual and did not care about justice.

If I want to make some conclusion from this very rough and inexact results of my inquiries, I observe that a) in the words of my sister (who was a part of experimental group) "children have the ability to cast doubt on anything", b) in comparison with adults, children are more interested in the good of the collective than the good of the individual, c) they endeavor to find superior justice, while adults are more interested in their own prosperity, d) the children did not make their evaluations on the basis of physical strength, but on the basis of character. When I think about this point deeper, I see a conspicuous analogy with Nietzsche's *overpowering*. For adults, it is important to have power, to be more powerful, to be the most powerful - to be successful, to be more successful - to survive. Children did not care about this strength position the equality of rights is more important. Children wanted everybody to be equal; it was absolutely clear to adults that it is not possible for everybody to be equal. On the contrary, what is needed is to ensure that they, as individuals, were in the highest rank of the hierarchy. And now, tell me, where is the promised

democracy?

The results are not obviously world-shaking, they do not saying anything new, and, probably, they will not be corroborated by repetition of experiment. Different samples of people will give different results. If it uses the same people, they will change their opinions in time. I do not intend to make any facts of defense or expert psychological examination, I wanted only to show by example what we could achieve by method of P4C. I would like to note that there is one deficiency of reading text method. These days there is a large propagation of work with the text as the criterion of a student's intelligence. Even though I like this method very much, because everybody can find his matter of interest, not every child is able to work with it adequately. And it does not mean he is not clever; he may, for example, have dyslexia or writing problems that has built a resistance to texts. I worked beside other persons with these people in my experiment. I had to retell the story to them. They were doing in the same quality as those in the next discussion.

If I summarize what I know about Philosophy for Children up to now, she is a method that teaches (wo)man to think. At the earliest, she teaches to children the usual matters of the surrounding world, then in those of school. On the basis of the previous experiment, I came to the attitude that the thinking does not seem to be a natural issue. People do not mull about their tasks, and then, when somebody asks them for some triviality such as who shall be the king of animals according to them, they are shocked by this requirement, and they have a problem with considering and with expressing their opinions. Considering and expressing their own ideas is always usual. Even when The Inquisition and similar establishment ruled, always people considered - and somehow they tell what

they thought. Currently, young people have a problem with it. If we only fleetingly come back to Bergson's conception, this can seem to indicate a decline of intellect, but as a step forwards it seems that an individual would have more interest about the good of whole and this is not going. People do not think, but their personal benefits are more priority for them. In this situation, I see an absolutely natural self-preservation instinct born again in such movements as P4C, which aim to balance this instability. P4C tries to open an active philosophy, not for (wo)man is the passive absorbing of information, but real thinking and problem solving. The priority of P4C, her great endeavor is in concerning (wo)man to begin to think about thinking itself, when (s)he gets to this meta level, when (s)he does philosophy on her/his own and for her/himself such as Aristotle may have imagined it.

### **3. PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN AND A (WO)MAN IN CZECH SOCIETY**

#### **3.1 What Philosophy for Children Brings to (Wo)man?**

At the end of previous chapter I wrote that P4C is a method which teaches people to think. Actually, for this definition, we need not be concerned with this issue of what P4C brings to adults. A (wo)man can begin to think analytically by ways other than P4C. The method can make a place in a school for creative studying, for active creating. If we want to better see the positive outcomes of P4C, we can draw it on a (wo)man, who has come through the full Czech education system (because I know the Czech system better than any other). Our specimen has not any extra gifted qualities about which we will speak in follow text. He finished college and he has a lot of factual knowledge. He may have applied this knowledge in school a little, but only marginally. If he has been a more successful student, he is able to find information and passively absorb it. But he misses the usage of the information in concrete cases. If he has evolved a problem in thinking, he is able to use the information on an abstract level, but he is not in concrete issues. This still awaits him; he is able to devise, design and implement the solutions of problems in his professional resort. These are the abilities of professional with practice. It is clear that fresh alumnus commonly do not have the abilities connected with practice. Here is the advantage of P4C training. Though he does not have any practical experience, with P4C training, he does not have any problem to get the information about usage from older colleagues, because he is used to consult

with others. This information is not taken as fragmentary facts, but by the practice of this method he can modify them for better usage. In P4C, a (wo)man learns to make his opinion corroborate with others and react to actual situation, but also by P4C he learns how to confront negative criticism. I see these precise problems in today's young people. If they try to suggest certain solutions, they are not able to defend their suggestions. It is not important whether their suggestions are good or bad, but the moment somebody opposes their suggestion and makes a negative valuation, our (wo)man retreats, because (s)he gets bad mark and does not fulfill an assignment. We are trained that the right is what the teacher (or chief of a team) thinks, so we learn to recite propositions in the manner a teacher wants to hear. We teach to think how a leader visualizes it. The advantages of P4C is that she takes the various approaches of thinking next to each other and she does not look after the true one, but she learns mutual respect, and to cooperate with each other.

This follows the much larger ability of flexibility and adaptation. If a (wo)man admits that there is not only one holy truth (usually her/his preferred truth) and that all the various ways can only lead to the same end, then (s)he is opened to new variations, (s)he learns better (I mean outside of school), by which, naturally, (s)he better accommodates her/his self to new situations, people etcetera. An alumnus who is not used to work with these issues either has to learn very fast what only talented individuals are able to handle, or they are grounded by it.

The question of virtual world is connected to the ability of adaptation. On the one hand, there is the problem to solve of how the older generation shall be taught to work with P4C as full partners to their younger colleagues; on the other hand, there arises the problem of how to teach the younger



generation to live outside the virtual world. In the competition of adaptation, the older generation wins, because they can think why they accommodate themselves to younger ones. Older people learn to use the new types of electronics to fulfill their labor duties, to communicate with people, to stay in the sight of world. Younger people tend to close themselves into a virtual reality and they cannot see the situation with distance. (Of course, they work with electronics for the same reasons such as older people, but younger people approach electronics from a different standpoint than older people, and the standpoint changes their interest.) They suffer by delusion that what is on web is a real world; they fill all of their mental space with the information of this reality. By it, they dispose of the vitally important action of self-reflection. They miss the natural ability of adaptation in the material and physical social world. Their only one luck is the "level of advancement of our civilization" which permits the surviving of such individuals - even permits them to live comfortably.

If we come back to goods of P4C, these clearly include creativity and a willingness to experiment as well as the training of adaptation. These three attributes are narrowly connected. Each time, a (wo)man comes to new working group, (s)he has to integrate by some manner. (S)he has to discover the manner. (S)he can do it only by the technique of trial and error. If (s)he exhausts all her/his previous experiences without any result, (s)he has to make new procedures and try them.

I should add that P4C is a method without a fixed dogmatic background (that is, she is based only in the pragmatic method) and for this she is permeable into various systems. This implies that people trained in this method have the ability to adapt into various surroundings, and to make

their own system according to which they act. To this point, they need the courage to try new systems, and avoid the fear of applying them over a long period or, as the case may be, perform them in public and face criticism. Simultaneously, it is necessary to be tolerant to other approaches. The question is: why is it so important not to fear to be an innovator? Innovators move the society forwards. Innovators adapt society to changes of environment; innovators ensure the survival of the society. To be an innovator, a (wo)man must have character. But character is shaped by experience. I can recall no example of when a society was destroyed by having a number of innovators. But when there is a dearth of innovators, or when they are overshadowed by a conservative impulse, the society becomes retarded.

Pragmatic pedagogy was made to model people who will live in democratic state. P4C continues to this target. If we look at this globally, democratic establishments are the most popular in the world, at least according to the name. Democracy is cool. But what does it mean? I understand that every citizen has a part in leading the state. Either by direct democracy in the way of ancient Greece, or formally by elected representatives. The direction of state is established thanks to elections and referendums. And in this, the largest part of the citizenry regulates the opinions of the state. This system is profitable for the individual, because he can express and he can actively participate in the governing of the state. The disadvantage of the democratic form is when the largest part of the region's inhabitants is not enough capable of evaluating situations or is manipulated such that every kind of nonsense becomes law. We cannot expect, that every citizen has the ability to analyze problems, but according to the principle of democratic establishment, the larger part of citizens have to orient themselves in the world successfully,

at least so far as to recognize the needs of their state. In inverse cases, the "mob rule" accedes literally. But the mob does not really rule when the state rules by mob. Then, is this still democracy?

Obviously, democracy is a fragile construction that needs certain preconditions to work. If our "advanced" society took over the state establishment from ancient time when citizenship was limited to the free, educated and sufficiently rich such that he did not have to be a slave, and if we want to use this state establishment co-equally, on all people without difference, then we must be able to adapt the democratic system to current society.

### **3.2 Why Do We Need Erudite People?**

What does it mean to be erudite? The term of erudition has changed and moved over time. Long ago, it meant to have knowledge in all directions. An erudite (wo)man was a sage, (s)he discovered the solution to problems, solutions an ordinary (wo)man was not been able to make. At the time of the Sophists, erudition was the desired article. It was not any one science, it was the ability to break through. In the Middle Ages erudition transformed, and scholars sought something more than to be successful in society. They were seeking natural rules by which they could show the system of the world. Erudition then became pursuit of knowledge. Scholars were extraordinary respected by common people, but people did not understand them. Scholars made their own world in monasteries and later in universities. Of course, they interconnected with common life, but they stayed somebody special. During this time, with the amount of knowledge available, specializations have fractioned. A scholar must

choose a specialization and engage it. He has not any space for other resorts, and is thereby engulfed by his resort. His surrounding respects him and his situation. Thanks to compulsory school attendance, the larger population has started to mature. The mainstream is made of educated people, able to read and write and practicing a certain profession. The society is now more educated. The term "science" has followed a similar course. Erudition as something extraordinary has moved to the field of science. There are professionals and scientists. Scientists experiment, seek new ways and recognize new knowledge, and professionals perform their professions in accord with the methods that scientists corroborate. And scholars have stayed in their "dens".

It can seem that this is the actual situation today. But I observe a certain movement. I can share the example of my friends who are computer programmers. Ca. 10 years ago, when a company sought a new programmer, they chose a man who can program "like a god". Today, when a company seeks a new programmer, it prefers guy who, even though is not so excellent in programming, is able to understand what a customer wants, to explain an issue to customer and, the main thing, to cooperate with his colleagues. This is preferred over the programming genius. I conclude from this example and other observations, the term of erudition has moved elsewhere.

Formerly, only the results were important, and intelligence the measure. Nowadays, social consciousness comes to the fore. Communication skills, empathy, humanity - these values have always been important, but a higher and higher emphasis on them has recently begun. One critique of pragmatic pedagogy is that she has been specialized more on social skills than on factual knowledge<sup>30</sup>. In the current situation, we see two desirable components, social ability and factual

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<sup>30</sup> The critique is solved in SINGULE, František. *Americká pragmatická pedagogika: John Dewey a jeho američtí následovníci*.

knowledge. There is an opinion, a slogan used in Czech schools in recent years: "you do not need to know it, but you have to be able to find it". I disagree with this. Yes, a (wo)man should know how to find information, but if (s)he cannot work with it and (s)he does not have any foundation of knowledge in her/his mind, (s)he does not have any ability to use, fill, and confront the new discovered information. As I see it, a certain volume of factual knowledge is the foundation stone for our next development.

If we go back to the issue of democracy, it is clear that the educated population is important. This educated population has the social ability to transfer her findings in a constructive manner. Democracy seems to be the most humane state system. It needs an open and tolerant society to actually fulfill its purpose.

If I think about this issue, I see an association with Plato's Republic.<sup>31</sup> I know that his system was marked by oligarchy, but, in an ideal case, if we had an educated society that elected people with high moral, social and intellectual values, and these people demonstrated these values throughout their time by their actions as representatives, then there would be a clear similarity with Plato's selection of king-philosophers from the guardian's seniors. Yes, an ideal democratic society does not make any caste; but even so, it is natural that a large quantity of people divides itself into fractions. It is a sociological phenomenon corroborated many times over. I believe, if we do the research of our contemporary politicians, we would discover that most come from equal social surroundings. So, Plato's ideal republic is fulfilled even without regulated contribution.

If I think again about an ideal version of a democratic

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<sup>31</sup> Look PLATÓN. *Ústava*. Transl. František Novotný. Praha: OIKOYMENH, 2005. Čtvrté vydání. 427 s. Edice Platónovy dialogy, sv. 18. ISBN 80-7298-142-0.

system, it is desirable that all inhabitants achieve a certain level of education (optimally the highest one which a (wo)man is able to reach). By this manner, truly, anyone from any social surrounding can be involved in the governance of state, if (s)he proves her abilities for it.

Ideal democracy sounds nice. What interests me now is the position of individual. Does the individual have any special preparation to live in democratic society? Does a (wo)man change by snap one's finger. If somebody grew up in a certain society, he needs some time to adapt to new surrounding. Immigrants provide a good example of this. When somebody lives in some society, he is able to keep pace with her change. By this way, we learned to live in our society. A (wo)man who grows up and lives in a democratic democracy is accustomed to democratic principles. A (wo)man who come into such a society learns them. When we all (in the Czech Lands) came into democracy suddenly, did we set her rightly?

The representatives of the state try to govern the society. We will keep an ideal idea that these people govern a state. Their ideals, their moral values determine the course of the state to a certain extent. But their ideals are confronted, at least, by public opinion. We live in a democratic society, do not we? The rulers of the state are not allowed to go beyond the opinion of the masses, obviously. But the mass can be influenced too: and easily. In large quantities, people influence themselves through social networks. The claim has been made that social life has moved into networks. I do not think so. I know a lot of people who refuse every connection with social networks. Fundamentally, they are the irreplaceable members of their communities and they have a big impact on others. By my thinking, two connected worlds are made here. Every (wo)man who exhibits on social networks has to go outside and, for example, buy

something to eat. Whether (s)he wants or not, (s)he is a physical part of human society. But consider this situation: when a (wo)man goes into most Czech pubs or shops, every place where radio or television is on, even in supermarkets, "special" offers cry on us. Posters watch us everywhere. We accept all these passively. Social networks have this advantage, at least, a (wo)man must engage it actively. But we occupy our time so much by the intake of information, so, when do we process it? When do we think about it? It is not difficult to manipulate with such a smashed population. Then, it is needless to ask if our democracy is democratic or if our education system is adequate to needs of society. The society is not able to care; she does not have any space to think about it.

Society needs educated people. But she needs brave educated people who will not fear to rip themselves from their group for the revitalization of it. To be brave, a (wo)man must be confident in herself and her/his position towards the whole. For this, (s)he must think. But (s)he has to be taught it, because (s)he is not able to copy it from society. And we are back in problem of teaching thinking and Bergson's hero.

### **3.3 What Changes in Society?**

I have already mentioned that I observe a certain movement in our society. The development is natural. Continuously, people appear who proclaim that the society has changed and they emphasize some fact that points to this change. As a rule, they add a negative valuation about process - either one of termination or, in a better case, human degeneration. To be fair, sometimes somebody proclaims prosperity. But it is not often heard and repeated. People

like to listen to pessimistic news. Maybe people maintain an inclination rooted from the Christian vision of Apocalypse, however insubstantial now.

I do not want to go in footprints, nor into the one or other branch in my valuation. I do not want to value our society. According to my opinion, it is impossible to judge the condition of our society impartially. In every case, it is the point in the process and we do not know where, how and through what this process will go. At issue: what seems us a negative thing can, in comparison for example to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, be a prelude to something very constructive and fruitful. Briefly, when we are participants of this process, we cannot make the distance to judge the rightness of the change.

From my perspective, I cannot describe the change of any society other than Czech society. I focus on the innovation that my generation brings and differences between contemporary schoolchildren and my school time.

If I look at primary school today and in the time when I was a schoolchild, I must say the tendencies that began when I was a child have culminated today. It is mainly the release of strict rules. Children's interests move to electronics and stay into sports. Scientific groups disappear which, it must be said, was not popular in my era too.

Children's idols shift to physically fit individuals who gain rare powers without any extraordinary endeavor. But they are not so evolved psychologically as physically. Unfortunately, a culture made around these idols does not lead people to have any effort and they are afraid to invest energy into achieving the level of their idols. Idols are so very unattainable that there is no point in trying to reach them. The better and easier is to not try and stay nothing. Children stop trying to reach their own gratification. Recently, it is



also very cool to enroll children in a large number of hobby groups, because parents want versatile educated children. In groups, somebody constantly foists contents onto the children and pushes them to enjoy it. It must be said that children have in nature the engagement by new things, so they are amused in these groups. I want to say that the amusement and the stimuli they get are foisted on them: they are passive. The only amusements and stimuli that they appear to interest themselves in are new applications in tablets and smartphones, but this too can be understood as passive activities. If a child has an interest in something new, his surrounding for privation of own time or ignorance is not able to encourage and evolve his interest appropriately and in time. Then, a child truly skims and run back and froth by his interest such as butterfly.

When I was a schoolchild, the loosening of strict rules began. Today it is usual that, for example, teenage girls use make-up in school or apply nail polish. I remember that one teacher put my classmate under a flowing tap to clean her face. Another sign of the loosening can be the disrespecting of authority of teacher. It is not valid that what a teacher says is holy, and it is not now valid that if (s)he says that this child is stupid, he is considered stupid. Today the balance swings to the second side. From loosening, children are more "impudent" with their teachers. When some problem arises, the child/parents are right and the teacher is stupid. The headmasters of schools do not help this situation. They, very often, do not stand behind their teachers even though the child is a known intruder and vandal, because parents can make a bad valuation of the school. And a school needs children to exist, she fulfill a commission for education. The disadvantage is that parents do not really realize who their child is, because their child is either in school, in groups

or outside and especially in teenage years, the parents see their child only at night. And sometimes, not even at night. Often parents do not know how their children grow up. On the other hand, I can give evidence of a situation when a teacher in a small school decided that a girl was doing badly and did not have study aptitudes. This teacher wanted to get this student into practical school. Thanks her parents who disagreed with the teacher, she finished primary school. Not only did she pass the graduation, but she made a title too, because she was self-studying all the time. Where was the problem? The girl is dyslectic and dyscalculic.

Recently, learning disorders have become highly discussed and elaborated (and I can testify that when I was a schoolchild, schools had just begun to work with this fact but it worked it in scanty measure). I hear the phrase of conservative teachers in my head "before he was just stupid, but today he is dys." Another favorite opinion, one to which I incline, claims that diagnosing improves. Formerly, a child was marked as stupid, but today we are able to identify "disorder" and enable an alternative approach to schooling so that the student can reach the same results as others. Of course, this makes more work for lazy teachers. This fact has a different effect too. By this way, children who would be condemned to low education can develop as others.

What is the impact of allowing the education of more people with various needs and views? This can result in the flattening of society. A bigger toleration can lead to the decrease of classic erudition (its sign can be the coarsening of language use in educated communities). The criteria of erudition are not so high as they used to be. It is not clear who is "erudite" in educated communities now. But this point can make a positive sequel. If we look at the point from the stand of pragmatic pedagogy, horizons will be wider and the

variations of approaches to issues can move further. This problem offers us new perspectives on solutions. Opposed to this optimistic vision, an education problem stands. It was been decided that we need more college-educated people. Thus more departments were opened and more students were registered. But it was very fast. The departments were not prepared for students with learning disorders, for example. On the whole, I think, their conceptions were not prepared for admitting students on such a scale. The result, higher education does not correspond with situation of Czech society.

Briefly, we can say that people who were "stupid" before are classified as able to be educated and there are tendencies to render to them an education in accordance with their wishes.

And how does society react on this? Naturally, she tries to evolve study programs that works with various alternatives. And public opinion reconciles itself with the existence of children with learning disorders, which becomes normal. I think that this approach is supported by the fact that children with these diagnosis are common. The society accepts the fact, but she is still not able to tailor itself to it. The diagnosis is understood only from the negative view: the diagnosis is of a brain disorder, and not the alternative: one which can bring new cognition.

Maybe precisely because a new generation is moving towards a monotonous digital lifestyle, it is better to evolve alternatives. Why do we have to hold to the presumption that erudition is only for people who are able to sit quietly and take on information by reading or listening? We have built erudition on these pillars, which are quite moldered today. Why do we not let natural development work, and move our cognition further?

### 3.4 Contemporary Czech Educational System

I do not want and maybe I cannot deal with construction of our educational system. I will not occupy this thesis with its history, proportions of subjects towards inhabitants, funding and other statistical issues. All this is not the topic of my work nor am I competent to solve it. I want to refer to Czech education from the position of a citizen who thinks about his own level. I can observe it from the position of a (wo)man who lives in Czech society, who has gone thorough all three levels of our educational system, partly participates in it and compares her/himself with others who have or do not have all three levels of education. I focus on the matter from my point of view and I try to add my knowledge of pragmatic pedagogy and P4C. The main point I seek in our educational system is the equality of educational opportunities and development of new cognition.

The question of active or passive cognition is pervasive throughout this text. Before I consider how our education works with this matter, I cannot forget to ask if one is better or worse than another. What does it mean for (wo)man? A (wo)man needs both types certainly. My inner equilibrium commands me to claim that the ratio of these two elements must be balanced in terms of human education/cognition (and thus for all life) from the view of pragmatic pedagogy. Just on the edge, it is quite good to mention the distinction between passive and active cognition. If a (wo)man recognizes something actively, (s)he makes an operation, builds the constructions of her/his cognition in informational or material ways. For better imagination, we apply this to the cognition of nursery age children. These children learn -actively- how, for example, to assemble bricks together to

build a house for dollies. They have a purpose - the house, they have the material - construction set, but they must learn to use combinational thinking, by which they gain new experiences. This is active cognition. Passive cognition happens, in the case of these small children when they sit still and listen to fairy-tales. They accept the information passively and make ideas from them. Of course, from position of radical empiricism, this my distinction is nonsense because the of making ideas is also an active operation. I am aware of this distinction, but, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, my point of view is taken from the position of the common (wo)man who goes through the educational system, not from the position of a radical empiricist.

With the distinction I make between passive and active education clear, we can look at nursery children. Their cognition/education can be equally passive and active, even though the active aspects can prevail, this depends on the individual and their phase of cognition. The turn begins with entrance into primary school. At sometimes during the last year of nursery school, they start to train their cognitive skills to be able to absorb passive information better, to process it mentally and to remember it. Generally, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class is taken as a transition stage for learning and falling in with static passive processing in facts.

This model, naturally, continues throughout the next years, in high schools, colleges and wherever the conservative education of facts applies. Its consequences are not that children become walking encyclopedias with abilities of analysis and seeking solutions of all abstract issues, but that they become used to the lack of psychical movement and learn to switch off perception when somebody speaks. The next problem of this approach is that they are not able to enjoin -actively- gained information, and become limited to phrases

or propositions that they forget immediately after their tests. They miss the construction set, by which they would corroborate their mental construction. As a result, "study types" cannot work with any material either physical or abstract. They miss experiences, because they spend all their study time learning propositions and phases. Not to mention the application of these prepositions on concrete situations.

Why do students fail to understand what they study? A scoundrel teacher is guilty. He explains matters tediously and without any interest. He is not able to enthuse students; he lectures the matter in a manner that nobody understands. But we must accept his difficulties too. He is responsible for student results - for 'making' them capable of passing the comparison exams (which are found on factual knowledge). If some change is required of alumni, there is no change in the requirements of teachers. They have to teach students the aggregate of knowledge and they have to keep discipline in the desks. And their biggest weapon is the mark. She has the sharpest edge and children must accept her threat, if only because their parents accept this threat very clearly (because their parents used to understand this threat quite well). It does not matter how liberated this or that specific teacher may be, marks determine the "measure of stupidity" of child. So, is the teacher the unhappy victim of a bad system or is he a bloodthirsty beast who wants to torture poor children by information?

Another movement we can observe in the students of pedagogic colleges. Formerly, people who taught in primary schools were educated in practical specialization, in application only, not in pedagogics. This has a disadvantage - because they did not have a pedagogic education, it happened that they sometimes could not teach children. On the other hand, often the alumni of pedagogic faculties do not

understand their specializations deeply. They choose it, only because they needed some specialization. My best teacher from primary school, in terms of the amount of knowledge she gave me, was originally an agricultural engineer who had worked in the resorts for a few years before she has started teaching. The most I know about music, a man who had played professionally in an orchestra taught me.

Another thing. I do not remember, maybe I do not have any experience with whether or not people who register with pedagogic colleges really have any relationship with this specialization, or whether or not they really want to work with children and they look forward to it. Sometimes, I meet somebody with these ambitious, but these people register in pedagogy of preschool children, not with pedagogy of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> stage. But after years of studying at pedagogic college these people speak as though their classmates disgusted them.

When we reported to college on the end of high school, pedagogic schools were not the ultimate possibilities. It was more a shame when somebody reported there. I have heard the results of some statistics claiming that people who register with pedagogic college are average and subnormal compared to all students. These results can be misleading, if we consider the quality of primary schooling, but I quite trust them. Then, if we look at the situation this from distance, we must question how can the current alumni cultivate children on a broad spectrum, while also teaching them narrow facts?

All in all, the question is whether or not higher education institutions fulfill their function. I have mentioned that we have a lot of colleges and a lot of departments and a lot of college-educated people. I can be all right. But recently, I meet a lot of people who have an academic title, but their abilities are not even equal to a high school level. Naturally, I was interested why. It

follows, these people study some discipline; they have no idea where their subject is directed, where and how they can use their college knowledge. Actually, they do not know what they shall do with themselves. They study, because a society expects an academic title from them, but they express an interest to cognition similar to the above mentioned high school student. If we move from student to school, and do not validate the argument that professors are pushed to lecture dryly, if the alumni of college had been professionals who integrated into professional work easily, then the students have to have social skills truly. But their manners do not indicate that they are capable of taking responsibility for themselves, let alone for their jobs.

If I hold some (maybe personal) distinction between a highly educated professional and a college educated professional, a highly educated professional solves tasks on a level of craft and mechanics and he has a lower responsibility. Whereas a college educated professional must see into implicit relations and be capable to enjoin facts; for this, he is responsible. Of course, company life shows who is the best for which position. But in ideal cases, alumni are in these higher positions. Developmentally, there are same intentions. First, a (wo)man learns a craft and next, the organization of work. This is all the more puzzling to me in that college alumni often have worse abilities in comparison to secondary educated who have a few years in practice. Then, where do colleges make mistake as she prepares those people?

It is necessary to go back to the question of erudition. If college is to be a center of erudition, is not erudition the ability to incorporate information and work with it over time? I would like to hold to the naive idea that colleges not only combine people who are able to become erudite, but she makes them and sends them to the world sooner. And what do



they send today? It crosses my mind now, in relation to my consideration about the moving meaning of erudition, I must ask, does erudition exist still? Where are erudite people today?

The application of these questions of erudition can better clarify an educative problem in our primary, secondary and higher education. Naturally, a relationship is made between a teacher and her student(s); and in this they influence each other. This much is clear. A (wo)man discovers a new issue if an interest is woken in her/him. This too is clear. By my thinking, a relational ellipse is at work between teacher and student(s). A teacher has an assignment to interest students; he has interest in it and he endeavors. If his students do not care about it and they show him this uncaring, he loses his interest to tell them anything. If a teacher is bored and he shows his disinterest in teaching, his students will not have an interest in the matter. If they had had interest, they have lost it. If neither the teacher nor the students have interest, they exist together without any educational target and merely pretend to meet the fulfillment of their quotas.

And we cannot only blame the teacher; students are also guilty. But students/children are not guilty alone, their parents are - and society. We have made teachers. It is our fault. This is, appropriately, a developmental sequel. The question then is, what will come next.

I have written yet, I do not want to evaluate and or proclaim pessimistic predictions. Up to now I have written of negative aspects that have "lead us clearly to destruction". I want to suggest a certain solution or arrangement which can shift the flowing of process. These are drafts that, of

course, are not entirely supported and maybe will not be working or practicable. But I want to have a clear conscience.

The first big point is how to make teaching active, particularly in primary schools. Yes, there is some endeavor, no doubt about it. If we pass on the notion that teachers are not sufficiently creative to incorporate new aspects into traditional teaching, we still find project methods which are currently tried at schools. The problem lays in their frequency - or lack thereof. There is one project during one school year. This is, in my thinking, insufficient. I think it is important to teach children not only problems in thinking, but to teach them to work with material. I would say, especially in towns, the manual teaching is necessary, but this is not held as true today. In every schools, it is important to evolve manual dexterity, constructive and problem thinking. Yes, there are the working activities as subject in schools. But what can result of two hours each week of some "activity" pulled out of context? I am aware of the criticism that Dewey's focus on project learning,<sup>32</sup> but I have feeling that we need it in our education. We do not need it absolutely, but partly. It is necessary to find a balance in the needs of the children. The balance lays in finding stability between their concentration and relaxation. At this movement a passive education is more effective. At this balance they are able to join facts from both variations. The working activities ought not to stand next to Math, History or Music as subjects; it ought to be a complement of Math, History etc. It ought to be Working Math or Working History. Maybe this seems so much fantasy, but I must testify from my experience from handcraft high school, it is working and very valuable for students. It is not only the blending of practice

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<sup>32</sup> The critique: students glide over the surface of the matter and they are not able to concentrate in so many movements. More in SINGULE, František. *Americká pragmatická pedagogika: John Dewey a jeho američtí následovníci.*

and theory, but it is the changing of types of activity that refreshes the mind and allows it to relax.

Dewey argues that practical education may increase the amount of theoretical matter in higher classes. On the contrary, the older (wo)man is more skillful and (s)he is able to connect her/his theoretical information to practice more precisely and deeply. Naturally, children are time-limited and they are not able to handle as much matter as we have prepared in curriculum recently. So I ask, do they have to go thorough everything what we order? Do they remember even 30%? What about decreasing the general factual requirement and deepening them in certain specialization? For example, if we have a group who is strongly interested in growing plants, why do they have to learn the names of musical scales? Can these students instead engage in genetics and grading up? Today hobby groups procure this, which is good, but it has disadvantages. The hobby groups meet in late afternoon and, honestly, children are too tired from school to engage fully.

Then we come to the question: is it possible to integrate P4C? Of course, and very well. If we make time in this system for discussion and in this time children are not tired or bored from previous lessons, P4C will be a valuable and effective tool to their mental development. Not to mention the fact that she is usable every time in practical and theoretical lessons.

As to the competence of teachers and students of pedagogic faculties, I would cancel lecturing them in their specializations at their faculty and move these lectures to expert faculties. Then future teachers will study with future specialists and they will engage in their specialization together, in the same way and to the same (or similar) depth. So, teachers of Math will study with future nuclear physicists

and IT specialists, Czech language teachers with linguists etc.<sup>33</sup> Pedagogic faculties will procure the pedagogical foundation, but thoroughly, by viewpoints of various alternative streams and experiments. An alumnus will have a clearer approach to his future students and he will be able to choose without any problem between alternatives according to the individual needs of his students. And mainly, he will have a positive relationship to his profession. It is, in fact, part of the same circularity as interest in concept of teacher and students. The good students cannot register on pedagogic faculties if the profession of the teacher is not respected, teachers must make a good promotion and this is possible only for happy people who self-realize in their profession. It is necessary to sink a stone into the ellipse and turn her movement.

And now, we stand before issue of college in general. What all do colleges have to solve? A large number of students. Their new needs and abilities. The evolved requirements of society on alumni. Working with texts is not sufficient. Skills of consideration and expression are not sufficient. Lectures duplicate high school classes. Naturally. They must, because students are used to it. Almost no one has the tendencies to approach it differently. On the other hand, information has to be presented to the students in some manner. Professor should make certitude that students understand. This is the reason of lecturing. By working with text, I do not think that students should read 50 books per semester; this is brain-washing. But I argue that the point is that he is able to take from a text. If a (wo)man is used to reading, when (s)he commences academic studies, usually (s)he reads nothing more than professional literature. It is nothing

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<sup>33</sup> I see a positive influence of this on our faculty at this moment, where theologians, philosophers and teachers all study abreast. Because we discuss between ourselves, our perspectives are much wider.

demeaning. The trouble is that (s)he has to read some amount of professional literature - best immediately. But nobody tells her/him that the professional literature must be read by another way, or that it is necessary to seek other accents than in bestsellers. A student reads it, somehow he passes an exam, but nobody shows him why he was not so successful, nobody explains how to take the content of the text into his mental map. It is simply expected from the student; he can do it; he handles it. A similar problem happens with foreign languages. It is expected at college that a student is able to communicate at least by one foreign language and even that he is able to work with foreign professional literature. But honestly, if a student does not come from rich family and he does not have private language lessons, he is not able to succeed with high school foreign language. This is definitely true if he has learned language by tradition pedagogy.

And what shall such a student do? He just sails through and hopes that he finishes with a title. It is clear that the first year is not easy for everybody. But if the fresh student discovers that every older student just sails through somehow, he does not develop the tendency to improve himself - and he does not know how. If the target of the student is to sail through, he cannot have cognition, much less erudition, as his target.

Naturally, certain subjects have their own needs. But to think of exams as good feedback is naive. Recently, the valuation of subjects at the end of semester has spread. This is a good sign, but it is necessary to note that the measures of students are various, they value from different standpoints (of cognition, sailing through, sympathy to subject or professor) and they cannot evaluate the impact of the subject on the student's next study or professional life.

Another factor of consequence is the building of the

academic community. Yes, she works, somehow; but she is not strongly connected. An academic community works, but academic erudition does not extend out of college. The academic community is elitism in college. Students communicate between themselves by networks. The cause is clear, they have not time to meet themselves and train their social skills, discuss issues, they are engaged by self procuring. They do not have time for self consideration.

I do not have the clear, strict solution of this problem. If the manner of education in primary and secondary schools changes, people with different habits will come to college and they will change its course. But this is a long-term process. And what about trying to apply the community of inquiry as much as possible? Of course, as Lipman developed it, it is a conception primarily intended for children and its elements are included in a lot of subjects automatically, but it can make space in an unexpected place. First, explore the issue, next take it into lecture: this appears a better system than to explain an issue first, and then wait for questions. This can be the first step to improve the situation.

I do not want to proclaim that these problems of education system are real-life or that I understand them right, much less that my suggested solutions can fully remedy them. Let's understand this chapter more as my personal reflection on the situation. I see the enormous problem of privation of the thinking in society. I try to detect it in more specific cases and eliminate it there.

### **3.5 Must Philosophy for Children Be Applied Only in School?**

The condition of our society does not incline to philosophy. The condition of our society does not incline to considering. Our educational system is not creative. We do not learn to think small people.

Pragmatic pedagogy concerns itself with one thing - leading a (wo)man to ability of self-realization. This is its primary target. The self-realization can vary within the population. This aspect is not well established in our country, much less extended strongly. We are a gregarious society of a conservative type. We all want to be happy, but we cannot understand that happiness can arrive by various manners in various people. According to the conviction of our society, we all must have money, an attractive partner, healthy children, a luxury house and travel a lot. If something from the list is missed, a (wo)man cannot be happy according to surrounding. We inseminate the dissatisfaction of incessant measuring self and others. Divergence is not allowable.

How badly this explains that a (wo)man has a different target than those which surround her. People do not reflect their personal targets globally. They want to be satisfied with foisted targets and not think about their mind. They do not want to get higher targets, or they do not have any idea of it. All right. Lets imagine now, that we forced them, for example thanks to P4C, to some self-reflection. What will be next? An emptiness, awkwardness, shame, repugnance - an existential crisis. People do not want to feel these things. Gladly, they run to consumerism and they pretend that they are happy in this manner. Their choice. But because nobody can endanger their game, because they do not want to feel horrible emotions, nobody around them can stand out of line to show them the possibilities of life. They are afraid of these

persons. Thus, they check their surrounding, thus they are intolerant. They terrorize by their stereotype. It is not already the question of their choice, it is oppression: the oppression of obtuseness. I see a reaction on this only by arousing the consciousness of freedom in opportunities, erudition. But not by reciting of propositions, the way is in the learning of thinking.

If very young people learn to think, usually the existential crisis does not open, in contrast, they see the variations of life. The later they stand ahead of themselves, the bigger disappointment and pointlessness they feel. Whoever attempts to introduce adults into self-consideration must face this rigor. With philosophizing, the bravery is connected - and not everybody has it. To be an innovator desires certain bravery. To be a thinker who says what he thinks desires certain bravery. To be a (wo)man who forces people think desires a certain bravery. These all can be the goals of (wo)man's life, of pragmatic pedagogy too. Such is self-realization.

It looks as though it is a close circle which only Bergson's mystic can escape. But what can we do? It is necessary to teach small children to think, it is necessary to teach bigger people to think too. It is complicated with them, but still a (wo)man learns all her/his life.

So yes, people may think in every age. It is important for them and also for the health of society. No, P4C need not stay only in school, but she can be used anywhere anytime as a tool of regeneration of consideration. The principles of P4C are useful in adult education or training of working group.



## CONCLUSION

My thesis covered many divergent problems; of this I am aware. I wanted to find as many connections as possible to the topic. The method of P4C is simple, but the opportunities this method offers opens to me huge perspectives of reflection. I regarded it as necessary to share with them.

I like philosophy that not only points to problems, but which also suggests practical solutions. So I tried to draw an image of the method's usage. Of course, it is my interpretation, but all philosophical texts are interpretations, are they not?

When a (wo)man seeks a solution, (s)he must have targets that accord with the target for which (s)he endeavors. My targets were partly clear - to explain pragmatic pedagogy and philosophy for children; but I followed implicit targets too. At first this was the seeking of thinking in human life and its defense, next I sought equal opportunities for everybody in our society. This is little impossible to realize, but it is possible is to make more chances for more people.

As I check my entire thesis, I must recognize that most of the text is composed of my reflections. Because I wanted to come out from an actual situation, I had to hold to what I see in the surrounding now.

I am aware that my reflections are imperfect and in certain places incorrect. The point is that I am not very experienced in certain areas. In these, I am just beginning.

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## **Summary**

The work defends the application of Pragmatic Pedagogy and Philosophy for Children in Czech education system. But necessary is to regenerate Czech education system itself. The work analyses specific steps which may lead to the target. It concerns with educational methods of Pragmatic Pedagogy and Philosophy for Children and it tries to forecast their impacts on (wo)man not only in general, but in Czech surroundings too.

## Supplement

### Mor mezi zvířaty.

Kdysi přepadl mor říši zvířat; množství jich hynulo každý den, a nikde nekynula naděje v pomoc a úlevu. To když viděl král zvířat lev, svolal rádce své a takto je oslovil: „Strašný mor nás hubí dnem i nocí bez milosti, a všecka naše síla slabá jest proti kruté nemoci. Ba musíme za to míti, že samo nebe sesílá za nepravosti naše na nás trest veliký. Protož myslím, abychom pro utišení hněvu bohů vyhledali mezi sebou vinníka největšího, ten pak ať na smíření za všechny umře. Každý však upřímně se musí vyznati z činu svých, abychom spravedlivě posoudili, kdo z nás nejvíce zavinil. Co mne se týká, přiznávám se vám, přátelé, že mnohé jehně lahůdkou mně bylo. Čím mně ublížilo? ničím. Ba mnohý pastýř pod mocnou tlapou mojí dokrvácel. Obětuji se tedy, bude-li třeba, však dříve i vy se vyznejte podobně, aby zahynul hříšník největší.“

Úlisná liška rychle vpadla: „Ó pane, tys příliš dobrý král; jak jemné máš ty svědomí! což hříchem jest pohltit jehňata, tak hloupá zvířata? Nikoli, tys jim prokázal příliš mnoho cti, žes je rdousil. A co se týče pastýře, zasluhoval trest, neboť náležel k lidem, kteří si osobují vládu nad zvířaty.“

Licoměrný lišák končil, a lichometníci projevíli mu hlučně svůj souhlas.

Vyznával se tygr i medvěd a jiná mocná zvířata, však shromáždění netroufalo si zkoumati jich činy. Všichni dravci rváči až do psa byli polovičními svatými. Bylať to vždy válka, a tu stejné právo na obou stranách, a kdo může za to, že slabší podlehl?

Posléze přistoupil šedivec osel. „Těž já jsem vinníkem,“ vyznával skroušeně. „Pamatuji se, že jsem jednou kráčel přes

klášterní louku. Já měl hlad, příležitost lákala, tučná tráva mne dráždila, a ďábel ponoukal mne ku zlému skutku. Zkrátka bez rozmyšlení jsem spásl trávy asi co by do jeslí se vešlo; vím, že to byla nepravost, mne hryže svědomí, a zajisté již takto se neprohřeším!"

Po těch slovech strhl se hluk veliký mezi zvířaty; vlk, jenž také právu trochu rozuměl, dokazoval, že zločinný osel musí obětován býti, ten bídník, ten ničema, jímž všecko zlo na říši přišlo. Z přečinu jeho stal se zločin, jenž smrt vyžadoval. Žráti trávu jiného! jen smrt může zhladit vinu takovou. A skutečně byl osel odpraven na smíření bohů.

Taškář velký z přízně všech se těší,  
malý jenom na čekán se věší.