



article

a philosophy with children for venezuela

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abstract

In Plato's *Allegory of the Cavern*, the prisoners can only see and know the shadows cast before them. This text is often used to understand Platonic idealism and to illustrate the difficulties a freed prisoner faces as he moves towards the sunlight outside the cave, allowing him to see the reality of a world he could not even imagine. Philosophy is presented as a tool of knowledge and liberation, which helps man to free himself from the chains of ignorance and oppression; but, paradoxically, the benefits of this discipline have been intended for few people; only one prisoner manages to free himself, and if he returns to the cavern to tell everything he lived outside it, the rest of the prisoners could even kill him if he dares to strip them of their chains. Centuries later, in times of modernity, in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), Immanuel Kant limits the scope of philosophy to the domain of specialists working in universities, presenting severe objections to the possibility that this discipline can express itself beyond the walls of these institutions. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has joined the objective of the UNESCO Chair of the University of Nantes to contribute to the development of philosophical practices with children, so this article aims to present how, in a



Latin American country, in the current conditions that Venezuelan society is going through, it is possible to think of forming the civic freedom of the new generations of Venezuelans, completing the Platonic route of leaving the shadow of opinion to the light of Truth. Research aligned with sustainable development goals 10 and 16 for raising the need to reduce inequalities in the field of the study of philosophy and the urgency of training a new generation of citizens committed to peace and participation typical of a sustainable democracy over time.

keywords: philosophy with children; bolivarian republic of venezuela; training for freedom; citizenship.

une philosophie avec les enfants pour le vénézuéla

résumé

Dans *l'Allégorie de la caverne* de Platon, les prisonniers ne peuvent voir et connaître que les ombres projetées devant eux. Ce texte est souvent utilisé pour comprendre l'idéalisme platonique et illustrer les difficultés auxquelles un prisonnier libéré se trouve confronté alors qu'il avance vers la lumière du soleil à l'extérieur de la caverne, lui permettant de voir la réalité d'un monde qu'il n'aurait même pas pu imaginer. La philosophie se présente comme un outil de connaissance et de libération, qui permet à l'homme de se libérer des chaînes de l'ignorance et de l'oppression; mais paradoxalement, les bénéfices de cette discipline ont été pensés pour peu de personnes; seul un prisonnier parvient à se libérer, et s'il retourne dans la caverne pour raconter tout ce qu'il a vécu en dehors de celle-ci, les autres prisonniers pourraient même le tuer, si elle ose les délier de leurs chaînes. Des siècles plus tard, à l'époque de la modernité, dans *Le conflit des*

facultés (1798) Immanuel Kant limite la portée de la philosophie à la maîtrise des spécialistes travaillant dans les universités, En formulant de sérieuses objections à la possibilité que cette discipline puisse s'exprimer au-delà des murs de ces institutions. La République Bolivarienne du Vénézuéla a rejoint l'objectif de la chaire UNESCO de l'Université de Nantes, de contribuer au développement des pratiques philosophiques avec les enfants, donc cet article vise à présenter comment, dans un pays d'Amérique latine, dans les conditions actuelles de la société vénézuélienne, il est possible de penser à former la liberté civique des nouvelles générations de Vénézuéliens, en complétant la route platonique de sortir de l'ombre de l'opinion à la lumière de la vérité. Recherche alignée sur les objectifs de développement durable 10 et 16, pour soulever la nécessité de réduire les inégalités dans le domaine de l'étude de la philosophie et l'urgence de former une nouvelle génération de citoyens engagés pour la paix et la participation typiques d'une démocratie durable.

mots-clés: philosophie avec les enfants; république bolivarienne du vénézuéla; formation à la liberté; citoyenneté.

una filosofía con niños para venezuela

resumen

En *Alegoría de la Caverna* de Platón, los prisioneros sólo pueden ver y conocer las sombras proyectadas ante ellos. Este texto se utiliza frecuentemente para comprender el idealismo platónico e ilustrar las dificultades que enfrenta un prisionero liberado mientras avanza hacia la luz del sol fuera de la caverna, que le permite ver la realidad de un mundo que ni siquiera podía imaginar. La filosofía se presenta como una herramienta de conocimiento y

liberación, que permite al hombre liberarse de las cadenas de la ignorancia y la opresión; pero, paradójicamente, los beneficios de esta disciplina han sido pensados para pocas personas; sólo un prisionero logra liberarse, y si regresa a la caverna para contar todo lo que vivió fuera de ella, el resto de los prisioneros podrían incluso matarlo, si se atreve a despojarlos de sus cadenas. Siglos más tarde, en tiempos de modernidad, en *El conflicto de las facultades* (1798) Immanuel Kant limita el alcance de la filosofía al dominio de los especialistas que trabajan en las universidades, presentando severas objeciones a la posibilidad de que esta disciplina pueda expresarse más allá de los muros de estas instituciones. La República Bolivariana de Venezuela se ha sumado al objetivo de la Cátedra Unesco de la Universidad de Nantes, de contribuir al desarrollo de prácticas filosóficas con niños, por lo que este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar cómo en un país latinoamericano, en las condiciones actuales que atraviesa la sociedad venezolana, es posible pensar en formar la libertad cívica de las nuevas generaciones de venezolanos, completando la ruta platónica de salir de la sombra de la opinión a la luz de la verdad. Investigación alineada con los objetivos de desarrollo sustentable 10 y 16, por plantear la necesidad de reducir las desigualdades en el ámbito del estudio de la filosofía y la urgencia de formar una nueva generación de ciudadanos comprometidos con la paz y participación propias de una democracia sostenible en el tiempo.

palabras claves: filosofía con niños; república bolivariana de venezuela; formación para la libertad; ciudadanía.

uma filosofia com crianças para a venezuela

resumo

Na *Alegoria da caverna* de Platão, os prisioneiros só veem e conhecem as sombras projetadas perante eles. Esse texto é frequentemente utilizado para entender o idealismo platônico e para ilustrar as dificuldades que um prisioneiro liberto enfrenta ao se mover em direção à luz do sol fora da caverna, que o permite ver a realidade de um mundo que ele nem sequer podia imaginar. A Filosofia se apresenta como uma ferramenta de conhecimento e libertação, a qual permite ao homem libertar-se das correntes da ignorância e opressão; mas, paradoxalmente, os benefícios dessa disciplina foram pensados para poucas pessoas; apenas um prisioneiro é capaz de se libertar, e, se ele retorna à caverna para contar tudo que viveu fora dela, os outros prisioneiros podem até matá-lo, caso se atreva a tirá-los de suas correntes. Séculos depois, em tempos de modernidade, n' *O Conflito das Faculdades*, Immanuel Kant (1798) limita o alcance da filosofia ao domínio dos especialistas que trabalham nas universidades, apresentando objeções severas à possibilidade da disciplina ser expressada além dos muros de tais instituições. A República Bolivariana da Venezuela se uniu ao objetivo da Cátedra UNESCO da Universidade de Nantes, visando contribuir ao desenvolvimento de práticas filosóficas com crianças. Então, este artigo busca apresentar como, em um país latino-americano, nas atuais condições atravessadas pela sociedade venezuelana, é possível pensar em formar a liberdade cívica das novas gerações de venezuelanos, completando a rota platônica de sair da sombra da opinião à luz da verdade. Investigação alinhada com os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 10 e 16, por destacar a necessidade de reduzir as

desigualdades no campo de estudo da filosofia e a urgência de formar uma nova geração de cidadãos comprometidos com a paz e a participação, típicas de uma democracia sustentável ao longo do tempo.

palavras- chave: filosofia com crianças; república bolivariana da venezuela; formação para a liberdade; cidadania.

a philosophy with children for venezuela

introduction

The XXVth World Congress of Philosophy, held last August in Rome, brought together various researchers and themes under "Philosophy across Boundaries." The term border implies the delimitation of a territory and the existence of well-defined and protected areas, but doing philosophy across such boundaries may imply the existence of a special zone of encounter and exchange, which favors integration between people and perspectives, as it happened during those days of philosophy in the city of Rome. This article arises from the paper entitled "Philosophie avec les Enfants au Vénézuéla. Des Clefs pour une Nouvelle Citoyenneté", prepared to form part of the Round Table "Peuples exclus de la Philosophie". In this sense, it's the fruit of the fertility of this philosophical terrain, in which the diversity of each country is integrated into the UNESCO call for an Early Teaching of Philosophy; focused on Venezuela, it presents the theoretical and practical experience of Philosophy with Children developed in the city of Caracas, with the awareness and need to overcome the ideas and realities that could exclude the Venezuelan people from this international movement, which is managing to build a strong link between Philosophy and Childhood.

The first section examines the idea of exclusion in two thinkers belonging to different regions and periods, who coincide in the need to prevent the majority of citizens from having contact with philosophy: Plato (Athens, 427 BC–347 BC) and Immanuel Kant (Königsberg 1724-1804). Other philosophers of history could have been selected. However, the ideas that these thinkers managed to develop from their different contexts provide the opportunity to address fundamental elements of a paradigm of knowledge that has been developing since antiquity, reserving the knowledge of philosophy for a select minority. A model of elitism that could continue to direct the philosophical work of universities even today. Subsequently, from this point of view, the proposal of early teaching of philosophy is conceived as an international movement that can contribute to weakening the paradigm of exclusion in order to bring philosophical reflection and dialogue to all the places in the world where human beings want to teach children to live wisely their freedom.

This second part of the article has as input the study of texts on philosophy and childhood, published in indexed and refereed journals between 1990 and 2023, published in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, have been written by researchers from various countries and institutions from the five continents: 96 Europe (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom), 135 from América (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, United States, and Venezuela), 10 from African countries (South Africa and Kenya), 20 Asia (China, Philippines, Iran, and Turkey) and 10 from Oceania (specifically in Australia and New Zealand). This documentary sample comprises 265 texts whose analysis has allowed the pilot experiment carried out in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be built on the knowledge of history and the different tendencies of early teaching of philosophy. The reading, organization, and analysis of this material have constituted a kind of bridge between an incipient pedagogical-philosophical experience and the richness and world effervescence that the alliance between childhood and philosophy generates. It is important to note that the first 210 texts of this sample were organized and analyzed under the tutorship of Dr. José Luis Da Silva, within the framework of the doctoral thesis “Epistemological Foundation of Philosophy for Children” (Rodríguez-Toro, 2022).

Finally, it is shown how, adopting the theoretical platform built from the ideas and experiences of professionals from the five continents, a pilot project of Philosophy with Children has been carried out, which aspires to promote the formation of freedom of a new generation of Venezuelan citizens, who can live and think about the public in a scenario of dialogue, Democracy, and dignity.

the idea of exclusion in plato and kant

The term exclusion is often used to refer to any form of racial, economic, cultural, political, and social discrimination that promotes inequality among human beings and affects the access of specific individuals to existing opportunities for development and action. In the framework of the present article, exclusion is approached as the action of dismissing or ruling out the possibility that some segment of the human population can study or engage in philosophy.

Etymologically conceived as "Love of Wisdom," this discipline could be considered proper to all those people who seek this kind of knowledge for their lives; however, there is a tendency to consider "philosophical" to the processes and results of a way of thinking circumscribed to the sphere of the Academy, to the point that, as Collins maintains when analyzing the University in the Middle Ages, "The development of philosophy in a technical sense depends on the survival of the university" (Collins, 1998, p. 643). In this sense, the craft of philosophizing, and even the activity of systematically studying the thoughts of the authors that make up the history of this discipline, has been restricted to an elite, to a minority that chooses or has the opportunity to adopt philosophy as a field of study and reflection.

It is possible to deepen this idea of the exclusion of philosophy from different authors. However, for this article, we have chosen to do it from what was raised by Plato and Immanuel Kant: two thinkers who, precisely because they considered this discipline of knowledge as a guarantor of Truth and Freedom, explicitly referred to the need for it to be developed only by a particular class of people. They did not deal with exclusion as a theme or concept of their systems. However, it is possible to deduce it from their approaches to the characteristics of the individuals who are or can be in contact with philosophy.

In Book VII of *Republic*, Plato presents the life of a man who, from childhood, lives in a subway cavern, chained by feet, hands, and neck (Plato, 2007, VII, 514a-518d). Since the chains prevent them from turning their necks sideways, they are forced to look in only one direction: towards the area of the cavern in front of them, which casts the shadows of a series of stone and wooden figures, which some subjects pass behind them. Moreover, although this subterranean dwelling has an open entrance, *to its full extent*, its inhabitants do not consider the possibility of leaving; "strangers are these prisoners," as Glaucon affirms.

This *Allegory* is often used to understand the ontological and epistemological dimensions of Platonic idealism because it represents with great mastery the difference between the knowledge that can be attained in the sensible world—limited by the senses and the doxa generated by the projected shadows—and the knowledge that can be attained in the Hyperuranium, through direct knowledge of the reality of ideas. In addition, this text illustrates the difficulties a

freed prisoner may face as he advances from the cave's darkness toward the sun's light, allowing him to see the reality of a world he could not even imagine. When the character Socrates asks Glaucon what would happen if one of the prisoners is freed, a dialogue begins in this play focused on the difficulties that may arise for those who live a process of freedom and enlightenment after spending a life of chains and darkness:

And if he were forcibly dragged down a steep and steep slope, without letting go before reaching the light of the sun, would he not perhaps suffer and be irritated at being dragged and, after reaching the light, would his eyes be full of glare that would prevent him from seeing a single one of the objects that we now say are the true ones? (Plato, 2007, 515e)

At first, the sunlight dazzles him because his eyes have been accustomed to the little illumination given by the torch of the cave. However, his gaze adjusts to the strength of the new illumination, and he begins to see clearly the elements, processes, and phenomena that are part of the reality outside the cave. The epistemology implicit in this story assumes the existence of two types of knowledge: that of the sensible world, in which men are limited to knowing only the shadow of what exists, even to the point of believing that this is what is, and another, the philosophical, which can free human beings from their chains and help them to move from the darkness of ignorance to the light of truth. Plato presents philosophy as an instrument of knowledge and liberation, but paradoxically, only some people have considered this discipline's benefits.

In the *Allegory*, only one prisoner manages to free himself, and if he returns to the cave to tell all that he was able to experience outside it, the rest of the prisoners would possibly not believe him and might even kill him if he dared to try to unchain them and convince them to walk outside; "Would he not be exposed to ridicule and have it said of him that, by having climbed up to the top, he had spoiled his eyes, and that it would not even be worth trying to march upwards? Moreover, if he tried to untie them and lead them into the light, would they not kill him if they could hold him in their hands and kill him?" (Plato, 2007, 517a). In another of his dialogues, *Apology*, Plato manages to recreate this situation masterfully through the experience of Socrates: a philosopher, his Master, who has managed to think beyond the established truths of the *polis* and is dedicated to

making young people think through *maieutics*¹. This work, which coincides with that which the freed prisoner of the *Allegory* could assume, leads Socrates to have problems with Athenian justice; he is accused of corrupting the young and not believing in the city's gods, being considered guilty and condemned to death. *Apology* presents how a just, wise citizen, with the freedom to think beyond the established boundaries, can be destroyed by those who prefer to preserve the stability provided by a particular way of thinking and living.

Following the logic of the *Allegory of the Cave*, it could be affirmed that it is indispensable to prevent men from being immobilized in neck and leg from childhood in order to normalize that they can move freely from their different cultural or personal caverns to broader and more diverse horizons of perception of Truth. From the Platonic perspective, this would imply that philosophy would form a constitutive part of their learning processes before the chains appear or become so strong that they only achieve their goal of making them see and think in one direction. However, the Truth of this situation does not lead Plato to propose that philosophy be learned by all before the prisoners strengthen their ignorance and succeed in legitimizing the way of life produced by it. This philosopher proposes quite the opposite: when in the *Republic*, he presents his ideas on the need to organize the *polis* into three social classes, he postulates that the superior class corresponds to the Perfect Superior Guardians, that is, the elite of philosophers. Unlike the class composed of the citizens in charge of the production of the material life of the *polis* (farmers, tailors, merchants, craftsmen) and the class of the Guardians, in the stratum of the philosophers, the rational element prevails over the concupiscible and the choleric, so that their nature endows them with what is necessary to be moderate, courageous, just and healthy citizens (Plato, 2007, 490c), who advance unstoppably towards the Truth of things: "he does not remain in every multiplicity of things of which he thinks that they are, but advances without faltering or desisting from his love before he reaches the nature of what each thing is, reaching it with the part of the soul that corresponds to this" (Plato, 2007, 490b).

¹ In the words of the Socrates character recreated by Plato in *Theaetetus*, the labor of *maieutics* is explained as follows: "Notice that nothing ever comes from me but from my interlocutor; I know how to do nothing but receive the reasonings of other wise men and put them in order" (Plato, 1987, 161b.202.204).

A group of exemplary citizens who not only have a unique nature but are also entitled to elite training by the *polis* because, in addition to fulfilling the first two cycles of education, typical to the rest of the social classes, they are entitled to participate in a Third Cycle, in which they dedicate themselves to the study of dialectics and prepare for the government of the city (Plato, 2007, 537d). In this sense, by natural endowment and training, philosophers are necessarily a minority: "I think everyone will agree on this point: such a nature, endowed with all that we have just prescribed to one who is to become completely a philosopher, arises rarely among men and in small numbers" (Plato, 2007, 491a). From this perspective, in Plato's proposal, a large part of the citizens of the polis are excluded from the exercise of philosophizing.

A reading of the *Allegory of the Cave* that is politically incompatible with the Platonic proposal of social organization could affirm that if philosophy is a tool of knowledge and freedom, it is imperative to teach it to all the world's citizens. Moreover, to do so from the time they are children so that this discipline begins to form part of their lives before the chains appear or become so strong that they achieve their goal of making them look in only one direction. At present, this not only implies that with philosophy, we aspire to dismantle every mental place of captivity so that men can be as close as possible to the light of Truth but also that this discipline can leave the Academy and coexist with man in the daily life of his personal and civic life. It means guaranteeing the freedom of both men, who from childhood can get used to thinking in an autonomous, critical, and reflective way, and of Philosophy, which in many parts of the world has been deprived of the freedom to live in the streets, as a kind of knowledge known and used by all.

On the other hand, Immanuel Kant would have pronounced himself against this double liberation since, as evidenced in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798), he limits the scope of philosophy to the domain of specialists working in universities, presenting severe objections to the possibility that this discipline can express itself beyond the walls of these institutions. He divides the faculties of knowledge into Superiors and Inferiors, recognizing that this is a classification by the decisions and interests of the government since the Superiors – the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Theology – correspond to knowledge that is the object of public teaching and, as such, susceptible of achieving "a stronger and

more lasting influence on the masses" (Kant, 2004, p. 22), while the Inferior—the Faculty of Philosophy—is not subject to the power of the government:

It is necessary that in the University the public scientific institution possesses another Faculty which, independent of the orders of the government, as far as its doctrines are concerned, has the freedom, if not to give orders, at least to judge all those who are interested in science, that is to say, in truth, and in which reason has the right to speak frankly; because without this freedom truth could not manifest itself (which is to the detriment of government itself), since reason is free by its nature and does not accept orders that impose on it to take this or that thing as accurate (no creed, simply a free creed). (Kant, 2004, p. 23)

By the free nature of its rationality, Philosophy should not have contact with the Higher Faculties because its influence may infringe on the power exercised by the government through Medicine, Law, and Theology, causing undesirable anarchy in society. These faculties must maintain with Philosophy "a respectable distance" (Kant, 2004, p. 28), so that rationality does not manage to weaken the solidity of the theological, legal, and medical statutes that are part of society and define, according to Kant, the natural ends that determine the happiness of man: "the beatitude after death; in the coexistence with men, the goods guaranteed by civil laws: finally, in the physical enjoyment of life itself (i.e., health and longevity)" (Kant, 2004, p. 38). This German thinker considers the freedom given by philosophical rationality as a good that does not ensure man's happiness since, instead of satisfying his needs, it pretends that his natural inclinations are subordinated to the command of reason; and to this, "because it demands a personal effort, the people are not disposed of" (Kant, 2004, p. 39). It is enough for him to achieve the ends proposed by Theology, Medicine, and Law without necessarily possessing the freedom of one who assumes a life organized by the dictates of Reason (Kant, 2004, p. 39).

That is why, in his view, philosophy is forced to remain behind the walls of the universities, developed only by specialists and justifying the distance – not only respectable, as in the case of the higher faculties, but practically absolute – , between it and the people of any nation. Moreover, from the Kantian point of view, this must be done to preserve the order of society and protect the free rationality of philosophy so that this discipline may continue to obey only the principles of rational intelligence.

Both Plato and Kant recognize the potential of philosophy to reach truth and freedom, but both agree that not all human beings should have access to this discipline; however, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) establishes the need for an early teaching of philosophy, it begins to generate an international movement that can contribute to dismantling this rationality of exclusion, favoring the practice of philosophy without distinction of age or place of study. Considering philosophy for children as “necessary and indispensable” (UNESCO, 2007, p. XII) for implying “the exercise of freedom through reflection” (UNESCO, 2007, p. IX), the call of this organization legitimizes the possibility of democratization of the practice of philosophy and safeguarding three of the rights established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989: “To be able to form one’s judgment of the right to express one’s opinion freely and to have one’s opinions taken into account” (Art. 12), “freedom of expression which implies the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds” (Art. 13) and “freedom of thought, conscience and religion” (Art. 14). (UNICEF, 2016, pp. 11-12).

However, why can philosophy serve as an instrument for forming free citizens? What is philosophical knowledge, and why can it become a valuable tool for overcoming chains and attaining truth and freedom?

In Chapter I of his work *The Problems of Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell addresses the distinction between appearance and reality and, as a corollary of the above, the difference between knowledge that he classifies as habitual and philosophical. Starting from the information that the senses can gather from a table, he leads the reader through the relationship that can be established between the data of the senses and the physical object, masterfully breaking down the historical questions about the existence of matter – “the set of all physical objects” (Russell, n.d., p. 7) – and its nature, besides demonstrating that just when we accept that the senses only allow us to know appearances and not realities, begins the rigorous and critical examination that characterizes philosophical knowledge: the only one capable of overcoming the contradictions, vagueness and dogmatism of our daily beliefs; from the *Allegory of the Cave*: the appropriate tool to transit from the darkness, solipsism and unidirectional of limited knowledge, to the light, diversity of the truth.

Philosophy corresponds to a level of thought different from the usual because far from limiting itself to "what appears to be", it vehemently seeks "what is,"; and although at some point it does not achieve direct contact with reality, its path of continuous doubts and questions, "has at least the power of asking questions which increase the interest of the world, and show the strangeness and wonder lying just below the surface even in the commonest things of daily life." (Russell, n.d., p. 5). UNESCO has adopted a position compatible with Russell's point of view by establishing philosophy as a discipline that enables man to combat all kinds of obscurantism, extremism, and indoctrination by leading him to judge based on a thorough, rational analysis of reality and discarding mere opinions (UNESCO, 2007, pp. IX–XII). In the words of Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO:

What can the teaching of philosophy be if not that of freedom and critical reason? Indeed, philosophy implies the exercise of freedom through reflection. It is, therefore, a matter of judging based on reason and not of expressing mere opinions, not only of knowing but also of understanding the meaning and the principles of knowledge, of acting to develop the critical sense, a bulwark par excellence against all forms of doctrinaire passion. (UNESCO, 2007, IX)

Since 1946, this Organization considered philosophical reflection as necessary for peace and consolidation of democracies in the world and its teaching as necessary for the formation of free citizens, so one of the activities assigned by the Preparatory Commission of the first United Nations General Conference of that year was the design of a Philosophy Program that could be taught in all countries of the world (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2). Since then, a series of activities and declarations have been made in favor of philosophy and its teaching, among which is the full support of the Organization for the Philosophical Education of Children, highlighting since the Meeting of Experts in 1998, the experience of the American philosopher Matthew Lipman (UNESCO, 1998, p. 14).

a philosophy for or with children?

With the support of Dr. Ann Sharp and Frederick Oscanyan, Mathew Lipman developed a program for teaching philosophy in which children from 3 to 12 years of age engage in a classroom dialogue on philosophical topics, allowing them to develop critical thinking and create a community of inquiry among themselves. As founders of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for

Children (IAPC) at Montclair State University, these researchers traveled to various cities in the United States and the rest of the world to disseminate their ideas and to advise, accompany and support individuals and institutions that chose to implement Philosophy for Children (P4C). Over the years, several changes have been incorporated into its original proposal, but even after Lipman died in 2010, P4C remains an academic reference in the five continents. In this sense, it is important to highlight that, out of 265 texts of Philosophy for Children examined to develop this proposal in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 256 (96.98%) of its authors refer to Lipman's Philosophy for Children Program² His legacy has served as a starting point and inspiration for designing and implementing different proposals of philosophical pedagogy aimed at school-age children.

Among the categories of analysis used in the study of this sample of texts is "Name of the Proposal," which refers to the name by which each of the proposals for the early teaching of philosophy is distinguished. In the data examined, the presence of three distinct tendencies have been identified, loaded with epistemological implications around the interaction of Teacher-Philosophy-Children. These are: "Philosophy **for** Children," "Philosophy **with** Children," and "Philosophy **of** Children," where the terms "for," "with," and "of" mark the difference between the different processes of generation and transmission of knowledge contemplated in each trend.

² It is important to emphasize that the few articles in the sample examined in which no reference is made to the Lipman Program do not imply ignorance or indifference on the author's part regarding the ideas this thinker put forward. In the case of the British authors Sara Stanley and Sue Lyle, who, as part of SAPERE, Society For the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education of the United Kingdom, are part of an organization that has adopted Mathew Lipman's P4C as inspiration and starting point for its Philosophy for Children (See <https://www.sapere.org.uk/about-us.aspx>). On the other hand, concerning Sergio Andrade of the University of Córdoba (Argentina), that in *Philosophizing in Dangerous Childhood* he does not mention Lipman's Program does not imply that he is unaware of it or has not been influenced by it because in another article of his authorship that is part of the theoretical sample of this study —*Filosofar con niños. Un proyecto para habitar e inquietar el pensamiento*—, does allude to Lipman's P4C. On the other hand, Chilean professors Juan Pablo Álvarez and Juan Redmond (Universidad de Valparaíso) and Paola López Contreras (Universidad de Chile) present articles which they do not allude to this author, although Álvarez performs with significant expertise in another paper of the sample, in which he presents the results of an interview with Walter Kohan, in which both adopt as an obligatory reference of Philosophy for Children the work done by Lipman; ("No one can think for another". Interview with Walter O. Kohan). The case of the Asian continent is not an exception, since although Peter Paul Elicor does not allude to Lipman in *Resisting the "View from Nowhere": Positionality in Philosophy for/with Children research* (Philippines, 2020), he does so in *Philosophical inquiry with Indigenous children: an attempt integral indigenous forms of knowledge in philosophy for/with children*, published during 2019.

Philosophy for Children, typical of Lipman's proposal, is the predominant trend. The name "Philosophy for Children" has been adopted to refer to the Program presented in the United States, Croatia, Finland, Philippines, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, and even translated into other languages: Philosophie **pour** les Enfants (France, Switzerland, Belgium and French province of Canada), Filosofía **para** Niños (Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina), Filosofia **para** Crianças (Portugal, Brazil), in addition to authors who assume the denomination Philosophy for Children, without translating it into the language of the country where they practice their profession; such is the case of proposals coming from Italy, Sweden, China and Iran.

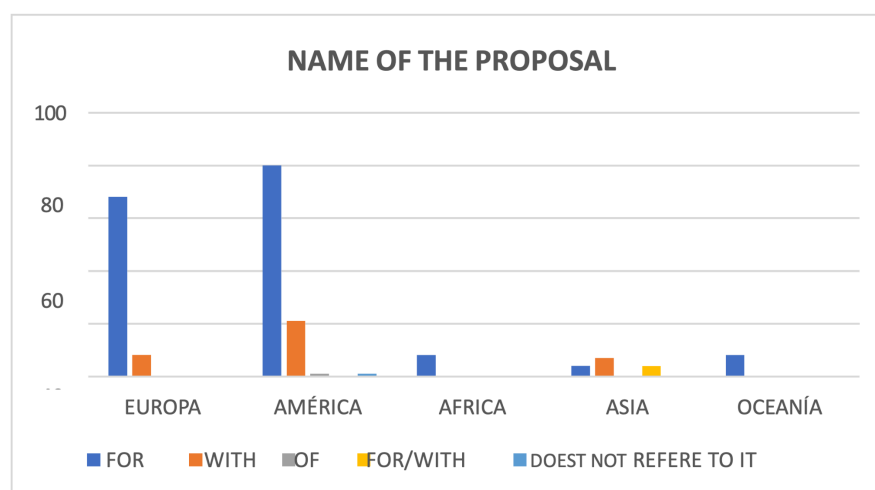


Image 1. Graphical representation of frequency distribution of the denomination of each proposal, according to the continent of origin of the texts studied. Source: Author, 2024.

Both the texts from Africa and Oceania, compared to Europe and America, are recent studies – Africa since 2011 and Oceania since 2017 – retain the original name of the Lipman Program without any indication of another type of trend. However, in Europe, America, and Asia, the name Philosophy with Children has emerged, which is intended to highlight the importance of a horizontal hierarchical structure between the teacher and the children while doing philosophy. It is not a philosophy designed **for** children, but instead done with children: Philosophieren **mit** Kindern und Jugendlichen in Germany, which explicitly includes adolescents; Philosophie avec les enfants, in Belgium and France; Philosophy with Children in Scotland; Filosofia **com** crianças in Portugal

and Filosofía **con** Niños in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela.

In the texts studied, the first publications in which the term “Philosophy with Children” is introduced date from 2005, with two articles: “*Buscando contenidos propios en la filosofía con niños. La construcción de la subjetividad escolar*”, by the Argentine professor Sergio Andrade, and “*La philosophie avec les enfants, entre patience et urgence: du paradoxe au défi*,” by the Belgian researcher Gilles Abel. Abel reflects on the urgency of putting into practice the teaching of philosophy with school children and the need to be patient with the cognitive results generated from it because the impact that this discipline can have on the participants is not detected in a few weeks or months, but in years (Abel, 2005, p. 313), while Andrade reflects on his extensive experience of philosophical pedagogy in classrooms in the city of Cordoba, alluding to how this discipline contributes to the autonomous thinking of children. The terms “avec” and “con” highlight in both texts the horizontality of the teaching-learning relationship that, through philosophical reflection and dialogue, is intended to be established between children and teachers.

In this sense, the category of analysis “Name of the Proposal” is inevitably linked to a third category of analysis: “Link with the History of Philosophy”, in which the relationship between each proposal and the contents of the history of this discipline has been examined. Giles Abel’s article (Abel, 2005) reflects the need to avoid the teaching of this discipline being conceived as the instruction of philosophical contents, which a teacher with knowledge in the area imparts to a group of children; he focuses his teaching process on learning to ask: “c’est en se posant des questions qu’il apprend, entre autre, à s’exprimer et à se faire comprendre, mais aussi à faire des liens entre les choses et entre les idées, et incidemment à mettre de l’ordre dans le réel” (Abel, 2005, p. 317). On the other hand, Sergio Andrade's article, also mentioned as a pioneer text in the use of the term “with,” focuses on the need to build participation scenarios in which it is not the teacher who, with his authority and level of instruction, controls the development of what happens, but the participating children: “the workshop is not the coordinator's property; it is organized around a concrete project whose

execution is the responsibility of the participants at all stages of its realization” (Andrade, 2005, p. 145).

Also, Carolina Dos Santos and Humberto Matheus (2017) (Portugal), Peter Paul Elicor (2016) (Philippines), Walter Kohan and Jan Masschelein (2015) (Brazil), and Claire Cassidy (2012) (Scotland), allude to a Philosophy with Children devoid of content instruction on the authors and systems that make up the History of Philosophy. On the other hand, Christian Tejeda, Marcela Cruzat, Juan Herrera, and Mónica Ávila (2015) (Chile) reject the teaching of philosophical content, comparing it to the teaching style characterized by Paulo Freire as Banking Education³, while Diana Hoyos Valdés (2010) (Colombia) states that the teacher must know the history of philosophy, not to show children what the different philosophers affirmed, but to raise and discuss problems proper to this discipline: “... the purpose is not to give them a lecture on the history of philosophy, but to discuss rationally with them about philosophical problems” (Hoyos Valés, 2010, p. 154). Parallel to this, both professors Jennifer Glasser and Maughn Rollins (2017) allude to the need to focus on the application of the Gadamerian hermeneutic circle in the classroom without alluding to the need to use the ideas of the philosophers that integrate the history of this discipline.

The use of the term “with,” as a link between Philosophy and Children in the naming of the proposal has an epistemological importance that not only implies denying the need to bring to the classroom a philosophy program based on specific contents and perspectives traditionally known as “philosophical,” but also evidences the adoption of didactic resources other than those proposed by Lipman. Among these we can mention *Maria Vinagre e João Roupeiro: das raparigas e dos rapazes* by Alice Santos (Santos, 2017), school texts in Chemistry and Mathematics (Calvert et al.; 2017), Newspapers and short stories (Cassidy, 2012), collages of materials on the same topic (Macías, 2015), the Argentinian TV series

³ For these researchers, the instruction of ideas and systems of the History of Philosophy would entail replicating the type of education in which the teacher behaves as a repository of his knowledge and the students as vessels waiting to be filled: “Narration, whose subject is the educator, leads the learners to the mechanical memorization of the narrated content. Moreover, narration transforms them into ‘vessels,’ into vessels to be ‘filled’ by the educator. The more you fill the vessels with your ‘deposits,’ the better educator you will be. The more they allow themselves to be docilely ‘filled,’ the better educated they will be ... education becomes an act of depositing, in which the learners are the depositors and the educator is the one who deposits” (Freire, 2002, p. 76).

Renata and Nazareno (Andrade, 2017), situations and films of Chilean culture (Gómez, 2015), the poem “Mi niñez” by Joan Manuel Serrat (Gonzáles, 2014), Myths, fables and allegories of Indigenous communities in the Philippines (Elicor, 2019), Individual and collective testimonies about deceased loved ones, published in online sites (Kizel, 2014), the Torah and stories of poverty (Kizel, 2019).

In this sense, it can be deduced that the use of the denomination “Philosophy with Children” is directly proportional to the incorporation of important changes in two elements of the Lipmian proposal: its philosophical novels and manuals for the teacher and the idea of transmitting the thought of philosophers in history. However, it is necessary to highlight two additional trends, which, according to Graph 1, occupy a minority position. In Asia and Latin America, the work of researchers Peter Paul Elicor (2016, 2019) (Philippines), Arie Kizel (2019, 2021) (Israel), and Jenerton Arlan Schütz and Claudia Fuchs (2018) (Brazil) have introduced the option of using “for” and “with” at the same time; however, when the content of their proposals is analyzed, it becomes evident that they do so to refer to a philosophical-educational proposal that, in order to be genuinely proper to children and even liberating in Freire’s style, must have the characteristics so far attributed to a Philosophy with Children. In Kizel’s words:

P4wC contains all these elements, cultivating improvisation within the COI. As members raise questions and choose which to discuss, they embark on a process allowing diverse, creative, philosophical answers. These, in turn, raise new questions and responses – both positive and negative. The whole process allows opening conditions that allow for improvisation as a basis for free thinking and creativity based on imaginative and inventive thinking. (Kizel, 2021, p. 10)

With this, and also in a minority position, a proposal represented by the denomination “Philosophy for Children” is revealed: a term used in a 2015 publication by the Argentine professor and researcher Walter Kohan. As a professor of Philosophy of Education at the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, this author is one of the most prolific theorists and practitioners of Philosophy for Children in Latin America, besides having contributed to the foundation and coordination of international associations and journals around the subject. In several articles, he has supported the name Philosophy with Children, building a Freirean version of the Lipman Program; however, his article “Filosofía e Infancia. La pregunta por sí misma” raises the possibility and need to contribute

to the construction of a non-adult-centric epistemology, which allows access to a genuinely different thinking, raised from and by children.

It will be the children who will construct their philosophies and their ways of producing them. It is not by showing that children can reason like adults that we will revoke the banishment of their voice, the voices of the voiceless, the in-fans ... we should prepare ourselves to listen to different voices as expressions of different philosophies, different reasons, different theories of knowledge, different ethics and different politics: that voice historically silenced by the simple fact of emanating from people stigmatized in the category of children, the non-adults. (Kohan, 2000, p. 20)⁴

This idea is circumscribed in the need for a teaching of philosophy, which is not limited to the transmission of knowledge achieved in the course of the history of this discipline but in the attention and support given to the ideas that come from children. In Kohan's words, the denomination "Philosophy of Children" implies "a movement that, hopefully, will express the voice of children in the different problematic areas that make up a philosophy: an aesthetics, an ethics, a metaphysics, a social and political philosophy today silenced in the dominant discourse" (Kohan, 2000, p. 21). Rather than designing a philosophy to be taught to children, it is a matter of listening to what they are capable of producing and expressing, even going so far as to formulate ideas that, although not derived from the adult world, can generate a philosophical vision of reality proper to childhood. In this sense, as Walter Kohan states, "to generate the conditions for children to paint their watercolor of philosophy and the world is, perhaps, one of the greatest challenges for those of us who share these days this project of bringing together children and philosophy" (Kohan, 2000, p. 22).

This beautiful way of conceiving the philosophical reflection of children is compatible with the paradigmatic tendency of a "Philosophy with Children" examined in the present section; even complementary because it would be the thought resulting from philosophical reflection with children, considering this process of reflection and dialogue the need to take care of their vision of the world and reality.

⁴ "Serán los niños quienes construirán sus filosofías y sus modos de producirla. No es mostrando que los niños pueden razonar como adultos que vamos a revocar el destierro de su voz, las voces de los sin voz, los in-fans ... deberíamos prepararnos para escuchar voces diferentes como expresiones de filosofías diferentes, razones diferentes, teorías del conocimiento diferentes, éticas diferentes y políticas diferentes: aquella voz históricamente silenciada por el simple hecho de emanar de personas estigmatizadas en la categoría de niños, los no adultos" (Translated by the author).

Philosophy with Children represents an emerging paradigm in the History of the Early Teaching of Philosophy, which currently shares protagonism with the initiatives still being taught and proposed by Philosophy for Children. The Chaire UNESCO of the University of Nantes, “Pratiques de la philosophie avec les enfants: une base éducative pour le dialogue interculturel et la transformation sociale,” integrates the fundamental principles of this model of didactics of Philosophy, being a Chair that serves as the epicenter of the international activity around the democratization of philosophy and, therefore, of the truth and freedom that this discipline can provide:

Tragic events around the world alert public authorities to the need to educate from an early age future citizens in critical thinking, humanistic values, equality between men and women, the need for a peaceful and respectful dialogue between all cultures, and to fight against any form of dogmatism. The Chair on the practice of philosophy with children (from 4 to 18 years) aims to help the development of these citizen practices through research, training of actors and actresses in the educational and cultural world, the dissemination of educational tools in schools and the city, dialogue between actors and children around the world.⁵

Directed by professor and researcher Edwige Chirouter, this Chaire is the only Chair dedicated to research, training, and practice of Philosophy with Children. It has brought together institutions from France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, Benin, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Brazil, Canada, the United States, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela around its pedagogical purpose and ethical-political principles.

a philosophy proposal with children for today's Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The exposed ideas have allowed the construction of an adequate theoretical platform to think about the possibility of didactics of philosophy for the children of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a horizon from which to see that can consider the reality and idiosyncrasy of these people without disassociating

⁵ “L'actualité tragique partout dans le monde alerte les autorités publiques sur la nécessité d'éduquer dès le plus jeune âge les futurs citoyens et citoyennes à l'esprit critique, les valeurs humanistes, l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, la nécessité d'un dialogue apaisé et respectueux entre toutes les cultures et de lutter contre toute forme de dogmatisme. La chaire sur la pratique de la philosophie avec les enfants (de 4 à 18 ans) a pour objectif d'aider au développement de ces pratiques citoyennes par la recherche, la formation des acteurs et actrices du monde éducatif et culturel, la diffusion d'outils pédagogiques dans les écoles et la Cité, le dialogue entre les acteurs et les enfants du monde entier” (Translated by the author). Font: <https://chaireunescophiloenfants.univ-nantes.fr/>

themselves from the history and advances of the world movement of an Early Teaching of Philosophy.

This country is located in the north of South America. At other times, it was an obligatory reference in producing and selling hydrocarbons. However, nowadays, it is known in a significant part of the world for moments of profound political, economic, and social crisis. Without official statistics, three institutions of higher education, led by the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, published ENCOVI: *A National Survey of Living Conditions, which quantitatively presents the degree of vulnerability experienced in the country*. In its ninth edition, alarming indexes were exposed regarding Educational Coverage of the population from 3 to 24 years old, school backwardness and risk of educational exclusion, access to medical consultation for the attention of health problems, maternity in adolescence, food, labor market, the vulnerability of housing to natural disasters, inequality, and poverty⁶. Among the results for 2023, it is worth noting that 40% of children and adolescents do not attend school regularly and that, instead of studying, a high percentage of adolescents and young people choose to work. In addition, 89% of Venezuelan households are moderately to severely food insecure (UCAB, 2023).

From this situation of multidimensional vulnerability, it might be challenging to raise the possibility of doing philosophy with children in Venezuela; however, the idea of being part of this global movement for the development of a democratic and citizen culture sustainable over time has managed to seduce the minds and hearts of those who want the intellectual and ethical development of a new generation of Venezuelans. Indeed, work must be done to reduce or attenuate the consequences of the severe economic, political, and social crisis this nation is going through, but parallel to this, it is indispensable to contribute to the development and strengthening of a citizen fabric with a culture of the public, capable of serving as a foundation not only for the solution of problems, but also for the sustainability of Freedom, Justice, and the Common Good, proper of a mature democracy. As stated by the Jesuit priest Francisco Virtuoso:

⁶ For more information, see: <https://www.proyectoencovi.com/>.

Democracy is not only a means of electing representatives through popular suffrage but also the achievement of goals such as individual freedom and the protection of people's rights, the participation of citizens in public affairs, the peaceful resolution of disputes in heterogeneous societies through deliberation and the guarantee of the existence of a consolidated public space for the exercise of rights. In this sense, it's strengthening as a political system, the regime of government, and public culture constitutes a first-order instrument for the construction of a typical horizon and the determination of the means to achieve it in a climate of peace, encounter, and deliberation amid diversity. (Virtuoso, 2021, p. 16)⁷

From this perspective, it becomes evident that while some adults agree on how to solve the causes and consequences of the moments of crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela today, other Venezuelans should focus on training citizens capable of guaranteeing the future existence of a public space for deliberation and freedom. That is why a research project on Philosophy with Children has been designed and implemented by the Department of Political Studies of the Universidad Metropolitana and with the support of the Chaire Unesco of the University of Nantes. It is a proposal aimed at forming the freedom and citizenship of a new generation of Venezuelans, who, from an early age, learn to see and think about reality from different angles and dimensions.

With the idea of creating a proposal inspired by the paradigm of a Philosophy with Children of the Chaire UNESCO of the University of Nantes and the “de” trend presented by Walter Kohan in 2015, we proceeded to design a provisional program of Philosophy with Children, which would integrate the methodology of dialogue, with the study of certain characters of literature and the addition of inviting children to understand and discuss some specific ideas of several philosophers of history; among these, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bertrand Russel and Tocqueville. This linking of this Venezuelan proposal to the ideas of certain representatives of the history of philosophy obeys the need to link the reflection of children with the structure of problems and terms of this

⁷ “... la democracia no es solo un medio para elegir representantes mediante el sufragio popular, sino también la consecución de fines tales como la libertad individual y la protección de derechos de las personas, la participación de los ciudadanos en los asuntos públicos, la resolución pacífica de las controversias propias de sociedades heterogéneas mediante la deliberación y la garantía de existencia de un espacio público consolidado para el ejercicio de derechos. En este sentido, su fortalecimiento como sistema político, régimen de gobierno y cultura pública constituye un instrumento de primer orden para la construcción de un horizonte común y la determinación de los medios para alcanzarlo en un clima de paz, encuentro y deliberación en medio de la diversidad” (Translated by the author).

discipline but under the didactics of horizontality proper to the paradigm of philosophy with children. It is not a question of the facilitator exposing the thoughts of certain philosophers. However, the idea of a particular philosopher is used to open the dialogue with the children.

In this sense, a Didactic Sequence for Learning Philosophy was designed to combine the pre-established and precise programmatic planning of topics and contents with the improvisation and naturalness of a philosophical reflection subject to the experience and convictions of the participating children. With this provisional Program—currently subject to evaluation based on the results obtained in each of the sessions carried out—, during two quarters of 2023 (April-July and September-December), a pilot project of philosophy was carried out, with the participation of twenty children, coming from ten schools of the Petare community: Fe y Alegría “Jesús Maestro,” Instituto “Mano Amiga” de Filas de Mariche, Fe y Alegría “Roca Viva,” Fe y Alegría “Didascalio Nuestra Señora del Encuentro,” Fe y Alegría “María Inmaculada,” Escuela “Sagrado Corazón de Jesús,” Colegio “Don Bosco de Turumo,” Unidad Educativa Parroquial “Corazón de María,” “Colegio María Inmaculada” y Fe y Alegría “Padre Joaquín López”. The management staff of each of the ten participating schools selected two female and one male children in the 5th grade of elementary school.

It is important to note that Petare is a Venezuelan community, considered one of the largest and most dangerous neighborhoods in Latin America (Paredes, 2023). However, it was possible to get in contact with these schools and begin the experience by visiting them to meet the children and their parents, thanks to the support of the Diocese of Petare and the Metropolitan University Foundation (FUNDAMET), who created the list of schools, and designed the different logistic strategies to be able to enter this locality safely. For this reason, special thanks are extended to these institutions for making this contact between the philosophy designed at the University and the twenty children of the Petare Community participating in this pilot experience a reality.

After this visit to the educational units and during the two trimesters in which the philosophy sessions took place, the support of the parents and representatives of the children was fundamental. Working as a team, uncles, grandparents, parents, and older siblings took turns so the children could attend

all sessions, even when there was no water or electricity in their homes or a violent altercation in the streets of their community. Their families' will, resilience, inner strength, and wisdom contributed significantly to making the dream of Philosophy with Children a reality.

Concerning the great protagonists of this whole experience, the twenty children who, during these trimesters, were doing philosophy at the Metropolitan University, it is challenging to select the words that can fully express the joy, originality, wisdom, vision, intelligence, candor and precision with which they welcomed the possibility of learning to think philosophically. They had never heard the word "philosophy" before. However, they quickly made it their own, dialoguing with great seriousness and naturalness around the ideas of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Russel, Kant, Tocqueville, and other philosophers of history. Living with their parents, siblings, neighbors, teachers, and best friends in the classroom, as well as games, homework, cheating, economic problems, and even walking down the street, were situations that began to take on a different meaning for them, in light of Plato's freed prisoner, the possibility of having the ring of Giges or the usefulness of using the Kantian categorical imperative.

97	José	<i>Cerca de mi casa siempre roban a las personas, y no se puede mirar eso. Si yo tuviera el anillo de Giges ayudaría a todos y golpearía a los malos</i> <i>[Near my house people are always being robbed, and you can't look at that. If I had the ring of Giges I would help everybody and I would beat up the bad guys]</i>
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Image 2: Transcript of intervention number 97 during Session 11 of the pilot project. Source: Author, 2023

The participation of “José”⁸, during the dialogue that began with the story presented by Plato in Book II of the *Republic*, is one of the many interventions that show the relationship that the children manage to establish between the philosophical ideas or stories presented at the beginning of the session and the life experience that they manage to connect with the meaning of what was presented. Moreover, it is precise all this empirical material that each child carries with him and that he can activate in the moments that he manages to understand the essentials of a particular philosophy, which allows all Discussion à Visée Philosophique (DVP) to possess the features of reality, culture, and idiosyncrasy, which guarantees that the resulting philosophy belongs to the children because they are ideas that carry printed what Walter Kohan has called “their own watercolor of philosophy and the world” (Kohan, 2000, p. 22).

This valuable experiential material was always present in the philosophy sessions held in Caracas; however, in the analysis of the dialogues, it is also possible to identify another kind of data or material in which the children make abstraction of their own experience to express ideas that correspond to a different level of knowledge, and very similar to what since Russel has been cataloged as “philosophical.”

133	Natalia	<i>Está mal hacer daño a la gente</i> <i>[It's wrong to hurt people]</i>
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Image 3: Transcript of intervention number 113 during Session 11 of the pilot project. Source: Author, 2023.

This type of ideas, although they have as their starting point the experience of each child and the different debates that are generated from it, present a general statement that encompasses various cases and corresponds to a philosophical

⁸ “José” is not the actual name of the participating child. Following the qualitative research protocol, each of the parents must give written consent to make academic use of all relevant information generated in the philosophical dialogue sessions with the children. However, by using ethical elements in this type of research, the anonymity of the participants is maintained. Moscoso and Díaz state, “Confidentiality includes guaranteeing anonymity and the impossibility of identifying research participants in reports, presentations, and other means of disseminating the results” (Moscoso & Díaz, 2018, p. 65).

discourse of a moral nature. In the sessions that made up the pilot project, there were more moments of participation related to one's own experience and opinion than the moments in which these types of statements of a philosophical nature appeared. However, without a doubt, they constitute important milestones in the development of the discussions carried out with children, which are currently being analyzed to elucidate relevant aspects regarding the factors that contributed to reaching the level of philosophical abstraction they represent.

On the other hand, in this pilot practice of philosophy with children, reading and reflection were also carried out on classics of literature, considering what was presented by Edwige Chirouter in *L'enfant, la littérature et la philosophie*, concerning the tremendous potential didactic and philosophical of literary works⁹. In this pilot experience carried out in Caracas, one of the works that was most emblematic, due to the variety and depth of the ideas and debates that were generated from it, was *Le Petit Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The daily life of each of the characters visited by the little prince allowed us to address how strange their decisions were, the purpose of life and the vicious circles into which a person can fall when they believe they are free but really think from a cave. It even allowed understanding and strong debates around Tocqueville's idea of individualism as an enemy of democracy (Rodríguez-Toro, 2024, pp. 13–14)

All the topics, readings, and didactic activities applied during this pilot experience have generated the outline of a Didactic Sequence for the Early Teaching of Philosophy, aiming to present pre-established and precise programmatic planning without violating improvisation and naturalness. That

⁹ Chirouter states that “L'enfance, la littérature et la philosophie se rejoignent alors dans le même souci de saisir, de comprendre et de connaître. Car cette plongée de l'être dans les mondes de la fiction ne répond pas seulement à un désir d'échapper à la réalité. Bien au contraire, comme les adultes, l'enfant cherche aussi dans les histoires des réponses à ses interrogations fondamentales. Il s'évade et s'abandonne dans l'espoir sérieux d'y trouver du sens. La lecture est une quête à la recherche de soi et des autres” (Chirouter, 2015, p. 380). In various articles and magazines, this author highlights the value of the literary text as an ideal pedagogical environment to build a philosophical dialogue with children; but at all times he does so framed within the philosophical competencies established by Tozzi (2005). “L'argumentation (grâce sa “fonction référentielle” qui semble évidente chez les enfants tant leur rapport à la fiction et à l'imaginaire est constitutif de leur condition); -La problématisation (par le dispositif de mise en réseau et le rôle de contreexemple que peut jouer le texte) ; -La conceptualisation (quand la fiction pense et illustre certains attributs du concept travaillé) (Chirouter, 2015, p. 384). Also regarding Conceptualization: “La fiction, parce qu'elle pense et illustre certains attributs du concept, permet d'amorcer chez de jeunes enfants un travail de conceptualisation. Nous avons pu observer un certain nombre de fois dans ces différents scripts que le travail sur l'implicite du texte permet aux élèves d'émettre des idées générales” (Chirouter, 2015, p. 388).

should characterize a philosophical dialogue subject to the experiences and convictions of the participating children. However, the need to extend the experience to other children poses the challenge of reviewing the results obtained in the light of a broader context, which allows the development of didactics of philosophy with the potential to guarantee the adequate transferability of the moments. Philosophically more fruitful, the practice is carried out in favor of training for the freedom and citizenship of today's Venezuelan children

conclusions

The idea of early philosophy teaching has its history, and this must be considered when thinking about new philosophical proposals for childhood education. The documentary research supporting this pilot experience in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has allowed this initiative of doing philosophy with children not to be born in isolation but instead connected to the world of experiences and paradigms created at different times and from various places. Only in this way can each proposal start from what is given and in some way contribute to the history of the epistemological development of didactics of philosophy aimed at children.

In sections 1 and 2 of this article, a referential framework has been presented, which goes from the times of philosophical elitism with Plato and Kant to the UNESCO call for the democratization of philosophy, with all the effervescence of proposals that this gave rise to: from the Lipman's P4C to the present day. In times of crisis as deep as those experienced in this country, a theoretical-practical context like this gives strength to continue and make all the necessary sacrifices to achieve objectives as laudable as strengthening the democratic culture of a nation.

Democracy involves the proper functioning of state institutions, but it also depends on the dialogic, critical, and integrative culture of the citizens who live in a nation. Researchers and educators cannot always directly influence many of the policies of national events, but through the early teaching of philosophy, they can contribute to the development of a democratic culture, which can be developed

and put into practice in the different daily scenarios in which the lives of citizens develop: at home, at school, the community.

Finally, it is important to consider that a country's multidimensional crisis and vulnerability can hinder the dream of doing Philosophy with Children. However, when a group of adults and children work together to achieve Early Teaching of Philosophy, as is happening in Caracas, wisdom can advance and seek its paths until forming a new generation of citizens who, far from the cave of Plato and the walls of the university conceived by Kant, think and live their freedom in constant dialogue, coexistence, and collective well-being.

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