



*review 1*  
reviewer: sijin yan

## what we almost said on the lost conversations in the digital era

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Thematically, the manuscript is a strong fit for the journal. It places children's experience, dialogic presence, and recognition at the center, doing so through an explicitly philosophical frame informed by Levinasian thought and the P4C tradition. The topic is also timely: the author addresses digital childhood, the thinning of spaces for genuine encounter, and the strain this places on attention, presence, and intergenerational connection. These concerns resonate widely across education and childhood studies today. The abstract looks strong as well.

Regarding argument structure and coherence, the manuscript adopts a lyrical, essayistic style. The prose has undeniable literary strength, but at times it feels somewhat loose for a peer-reviewed article. The frequent use of sentence fragments and rhetorical questions disrupts the argumentative flow and occasionally leaves key claims underdeveloped.

In particular, references to other philosophers—especially Levinas and Lipman—are suggestive but not always accompanied by sufficient explanation of the concepts or works invoked. For example, in the section “dinner and the conversation that did not take place”, the author writes: “And sometimes children treasure the absence of adults. Pixie’s jubilant cry—‘We’re free! [...] The house belongs to us!’ (Lipman, 1981, p. 63)—carries the thrill of autonomy.” Matthew Lipman authored several philosophical novels, and Pixie is among his most well-known works. However, readers may not be familiar with this text, so the reference can appear abrupt. A brief introduction situating Pixie within Lipman’s broader body of work would help orient readers and strengthen accessibility.

It may also be worth clarifying whether the lowercase subtitles are an intentional stylistic choice. For instance, one subtitle, “shared solitude and the”, appears incomplete as it stands.

The reference to Lévinas likewise comes across as too casual for the standards of a philosophy journal. While the prose captures the evocative power of his ideas, the treatment leans more rhetorical than analytical. For example, “Lévinas (1981) wrote that the face of the other interrupts us. He reminds us that it is the face that can reveal all these things...” is followed by a series of rhetorical questions that risk diluting conceptual clarity. I would encourage the author to ground this discussion more firmly in Lévinas’s terminology and arguments—for

instance, by explicating the notion of the face-to-face encounter in his oeuvre and clarifying how it supports the manuscript's broader claims.

Finally, the arguments of the article seem to rest largely on personal vignettes and observations. For instance, the author generalizes about family life, schedules, and priorities—suggesting that families are so focused on digital life and school-related activities that evenings at home become devoted to unwinding and rest, leaving little space for deeper listening or presence. While this framing is compelling, it also seems to presume at-least a middle-class lifestyle. Sociological research, such as Annette Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods* (2003), highlights how social class shapes family life in markedly different ways. From this perspective, some families may be navigating more immediate struggles—such as multiple jobs and survival—rather than primarily negotiating the pressures of schoolwork and digital distraction.

That said, this point is less central to my review than the broader concern about argumentation. My main recommendation would be to strengthen the article by increasing its analytic scaffolding and incorporating more citations to support its claims.

#### Editing Suggestions:

- 1) A modest increase in analytic scaffolding—such as clearer definitions, explicit argumentative moves, and more targeted citations—would preserve the distinctive voice while better aligning with journal expectations. Brief orienting remarks about Levinas's key concepts and Lipman's novel and about the P4C tradition would also support readers who are less familiar with these sources.
- 2) Reduce the use of fragmented or incomplete sentences and ensure that citations and references follow the journal's style.