



review 2

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philosophy as children: practicing thought beyond the logic of maturity

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This is a very interesting and provoking paper. It challenges adult centrism in its core, even in philosophy for children and other movements that bring philosophy to children without losing some form of hierarchy or asymmetry in the form of reasonableness, democracy or whatever. It proposes a shift from philosophy for or with children to philosophy as children which is promising. I think the journal should definitely publish it. In the following paragraphs I'll offer some thoughts that the author might consider and present a revised version of his paper. Some might even exceed the aim of this paper.

a) My first concern is: why philosophy as children and not "philosophy as childhood"? Or to maintain a more parallel combination, why not "philosophers as children?" or even "philosophizing as childing?" Philosophy as children seem to limit the possibilities the author aims to unfold.

b) The way the author presents its movement is convincing and powerful:

For example: "'As' indicates a different posture entirely. It names a way of philosophizing that takes the perspective of the child not as an object of study or imitation but as an epistemic stance. To think as children is to inhabit a relation to knowledge characterized by curiosity, receptivity, and dependence. These are not deficiencies to be overcome but resources for philosophical renewal." (p. 4)

The movement reaffirms, then, children as legitimate subjects of philosophizing. Nevertheless, the author seems not to take this movement to the end. My hunch is that the author is not as free from adultcentrism as she or he would prefer. For example, consider the last sentence of the abstract:

"Philosophizing as children does not mean infantilizing thought, but recovering its capacity for wonder and its responsibility toward alterity."

Why not? This seems precisely what the author has defended while presenting philosophy as children. Does "infantilizing" have any negative sense for the author? It might have a positive one, not in terms of idealizing childhood, but as movement toward what the author calls children.

Another paragraph:

As long as the adult occupies the position that authors the space, selects the texts, sets the norms, and names the learning, the verbs "for" and "with" will continue to describe hierarchies of epistemic standing that are only mitigated, not

refigured. A method that aims to think as children must confront this structural residue directly. (p. 10)

This is an interesting statement. It's first part seems to challenge any tentative to confront adultism, at least coming from adults, as if only children could affirm a non adult centric perspective. The last sentence is a bit disappointing in that it frames her/his position as a method which is also a very adulcentric category: do children have (need) method? In subsequent sections the author seems to consider that method a phenomenological one, or at least "Phenomenology provides the most precise vocabulary for this reorientation." (p. 11) But... isn't phenomenology adulcentric?

Nevertheless, in the following sentence of that same p. 10 the author seems to be also speaking about her/himself:

It requires a shift in epistemic posture that treats childishness neither as a deficit nor as an ideal to be imitated, but as a set of practices through which inquiry proceeds without adult sovereignty over the measure of rigor and the form of answerability. (p. 10)

Isn't a sovereign adult who is writing this? At this point I wonder whether the distinction child/adult should be shifted into a non-chronological understanding.

And also with a quote a couple of pages after that: "They write that "Childhood is not a phase to be overcome but a condition of being-in-language" (Habowski & Ratto, 2022, p. 6). Philosophizing as children receives this insight as a methodological directive."

On the one side, the author might revise her/his own writing and check her/his on fidelity to this directive. For example, her/his use of the concept of infantilization, rigor, method. On another, if childhood is a condition of being-in-language is it still related to an age, or could this condition be inhabited by chronological adults (as well as not inhabited by chronological children)?

The author seems to deny the need to characterize childhood (and/or children). I wonder if this is the case or if it would be important to make it clear what understanding of childhood is underlying his approach of philosophy as children. I can notice that for the author childhood is: curiosity, receptivity,

independence (p. 4); vulnerability (p. 4); unknowing (p. 7); not-knowing, curiosity, and porous subjectivity (p. 10); intersubjective curiosity (p. 17), etc

The same might be considered in relation to philosophy which is associated to different words all through the paper: dependence, curiosity, and receptivity; responsive practice; affective, embodied, or provisional; precision within responsiveness; wonder, vulnerability, and dependency; partiality and incompleteness; instability and openness; care; ongoingness of thought; ability to remain responsive; renewal of thought, etc...

Isn't important to describe what philosophy would look like in philosophy as children?

I hope this comments inspire the author to give one more curious reading to its one writing and more than that inspire its promising educational and philosophical task.