



## The New Responsibility and Challenge of Education: The Current and Prospective Situation of Philosophy for Children

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**Abstract:** Douglas Martin (an editor) wrote a memoir in *New York Times* about Matthew Lipman, the founder of philosophy for children, today's classic thinker. Lipman's death brought attention again for the philosophy for children's status among professionals. Later one of the most prestigious international educational periodical review, the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* published a special edition – on account of Lipman's death – about the analysis of present and future problems of philosophy for children. Paul Standish, the editor in chief, enhances Lipman's thought in the Introduction, if the ability to think critically was not established in childhood: it would be unlikely later to flourish. Hence, he hit upon the idea of teaching philosophy to children, and the course that he developed spread, in its original or derivative forms, to more than 4,000 schools in the United States and more than sixty foreign countries, its materials translated into forty languages. The question has to be answered: where is the real place, value, function – within philosophy? What is philosophy for children's "differentia specifica"? How to make the application of philosophy for children more effective and more convincing in both research and education?

**Keywords:** childhood, community of inquiry, goodness, research of youth, teaching, youth

### Introduction

*Motto: The „child is... an honesty-Etna”*  
Endre Ady  
(Hungarian poet)

Douglas Martin wrote a memoir in *The New York Times* about Matthew Lipman (died 26.12.2010.), the founder of philosophy for children, today's classic thinker. Lipman's death brought attention again for the philosophy

for children's status among professionals. Later one of the most prestigious international educational periodical review, the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (May, 2011) published a special edition – on account of Lipman's death – about the analysis of present and future problems of philosophy for children. *Paul Standish*, the editor in chief, enhances Lipman's thought in the Introduction, "(...) if the ability to think critically was not established in childhood, it would be unlikely later to flourish. Hence, he hit upon the idea of teaching philosophy to children, and the course that he developed spread, in its original or derivative forms, to more than 4,000 schools in the United States and more than sixty foreign countries, its materials were translated into forty languages" (Standish, 2011). This special edition is a collection of international studies (which was edited by researchers from two different countries' universities) which aims to consider the question "what has been and can reasonably be achieved in philosophy for children" (Standish, 2012). We believe this special edition to be thought-provoking at first sight and feel entitled to assume that "together we take to a new level scholarship in this burgeoning field" (Standish, 2012). Then the question is: philosophy for children – for what purpose?

Anyway, the numbers that Standish mentioned about the development of philosophy for children seem very compelling. The education and research of philosophy for children is becoming increasingly popular beside in the USA, in Great Britain, Sweden, Belgium, Italy and other countries. There was a vivid interest in Hungary at the time of the millennium: many studies and books were published within a few years, and higher education took an interest in this topic, too. Seeing an increasing national popularity, *Demeter* states: "we are generally living in the period of the philosophy for children" (Demeter, 2010).

But despite the promising development, I think that the situation is not very convincing. Even greater popularity cannot dim the rational and self-critical observation, confession that many professional questions have not been cleared till nowadays, at least not in a satisfying way. Furthermore, there are still many uncertainties in the judgment of philosophy for children: sometimes we meet smattering, not adequately valid approaches, even maybe prejudice. For example, there is no unified and obvious statement in that basic question of where is the place of philosophy for children within philosophy. Why philosophy for children is like philosophy at all and how is this philosophical approach connected to childhood? Furthermore, we cannot forget the problem that there were some countries in the end of the last century (e.g. Soviet Union, later Russia) which took all development of philosophy for children suspiciously and did not care about it. There was an ideological reason, which makes one smile nowadays, stating that the philosophy for children is a product of the West that cannot be useful in the so-called state socialism. Maybe it is only worthy handling in a critical way. In Hungary – not hard to recognize – the first kindling eased down but not because of the Russian reaction. It seems like philosophy for children has not taken its real place and value in professional philosophy yet. I think that it is equally the fault of academic philosophy and the small group of researchers, teachers of philosophy for children. The former aristocratic view resulting in alienation towards reforming attempts. And considering the latter: philosophers for children

could do much more themselves than they have done so far. Respect for the exception but it would be expedient to deepen and systematize the research done by national philosophers for children, and to improve the teachers' work to be more convincing and effective.

Seeing the international and national problems of philosophy for children (some of which I have mentioned above), I think it would be more precise and realistic to say that philosophy for children is in its childhood. The real challenges are still ahead. What I am about to analyze further on is the promotion of the theoretical basics. I am going to analyze two questions which – as we are going to see – are very much related to each other. 1. Is it necessary to teach philosophy for children in primary schools? Is it right to introduce and offer university or college courses to deal with this topic? 2. Where is its real place, value, function – within philosophy? What is the “differentia specific” of philosophy for children? To be precise, what makes (can make) philosophy for children philosophical and what gives (can give) philosophy a children's view?

### *Philosophy for children and the teaching*

Let's begin with the study by *Nancy Vansieleghem* and *David Kennedy*. They think that philosophers of children's philosophy have two intentions: “first, to make more familiar an actual educational practice that is not all well known in the field of academic philosophy itself (let me add to this: and not very received – S. K.): and second, to invite a re-thinking of the relationship between philosophy and the child, after Lipman” (Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2012:172-173). In my opinion both objectives are worth considering and are rather exemplary. In addition to this, I see both as a challenge for children's philosophy nowadays. It would be desirable to think together about these two problems and the possible conclusions concerning research and education. I agree with the contention of Claire Cassidy: “It should not be assumed, though, that children know *naturally* (author's italics) how to question and challenge appropriately: some structure or learning needs to take place to facilitate this questioning attitude” (Cassidy, 2012). It seems, there is need for teaching (and researching naturally) the philosophy for children.

Firstly, let me respond to the expression of “educational practice”. It is easy to see that the authors meant the education of philosophy for children here, and its curriculum to be precise. The question arises automatically: What is included in this curriculum? I think the fact is really telling that the actual answer to this question is not given by the authors above, but independently from them, by an Italian researcher. *Susanna Massa*, at the monumental ICE (International Pedagogy) conference (Samos, Greece) in 2012, lectures about philosophy for children, precisely about an empirical research carried out among Italian children. Massa argues: “When we talk about philosophy for children, we think about a curriculum that (...) is based on the children's critical, creative and relentless way of thinking, (...) helps to shape the skill of deeper thinking, improves communication skills and advances the cooperation with others” (Massa, 2012:765).

Massa's explanation is basically related to Lipman's classic statement. Lipman's conception – evidently for professionals – is based on the

tradition of analytic philosophy. According to Lipman, philosophy for children helps in „children’s becoming ’more thoughtful, more reflective, more considerate, and more reasonable individuals’” (White, 2012). I think the above statement is true in general. Even the Massa-research proves that by applying the Lipman-method, children really got better results in the skills of critical and departed thinking (Massa, 2012:771). The “only” question left is whether philosophy for children is truly the best discipline or subject for shaping critical and creative thinking? If it is, then how should we interpret and apply it?

It is well-known for researchers that courses on philosophy for children have been held in the USA from the middle of the 70s, in Great-Britain since the early 90s. Later other countries joined in (some programs were started in Hungary, too). Philosophy for children – we may gladly say – expands the educational offers in universities in many places. Where it is started, it usually becomes popular. There were also some initiatives in primary education to integrate this subject (in some form). Anyway, we can state that philosophy for children is expanding more and more.

Furthermore, it is necessary or at least advisory to see problems about education. I am just referring to – but this is just enough – that there are some opinions which question the teaching of philosophy for children in primary schools. “While I am left sceptical about whether philosophy should be taught in primary schools, there is no hint of doubt apparent in all these authors about whether philosophy for children is a good thing” (White, 2012:454). And then is common to refer to Plato and Aristotle, who think philosophy is not for the young (the youth is “green to philosophy”), most of all, it is unsuitable for children. Furthermore, we cannot forget for a second that children have a scarce and incomplete range of knowledge, little experience, narrow-mind, so for that reason “they are not able to reflect (...) to the abstract world (...). Philosophizing here is not about ‘putting something to the test of logical argument’, but should do with ‘becoming present in the present’ (...). The aim is not to initiate children into academic philosophy, (...). As far as I know, no one has ever provided a continuous description of possible steps by which you can get from the primitive discussions of Year 1 Philosophy for Children sessions to, let’s say, a philosophical work on such things as the nature of knowledge, mind-body relationships, or the justification of morality” (White, 2012:455, 457).

Considering the thoughts above, but declining John White’s conclusion (which would banish bringing in philosophy for children to elementary schools in any level), I think the child understands and can only be taught those concepts which are based on *concrete and direct experience*. This means that professional academic philosophy is not relevant in the childhood period. The abstract world, the dry and almost untraceable language of philosophy does not work in elementary schools. For me it is obvious that we must secede from the paradigm of teaching analytic argument in the education and curriculum of philosophy for children. And conversely: it is expedient to concentrate on the collective and playful elaboration of concrete and experienced expressions – often – through tales’ stories and their emotional effects. To get to make real *clarified general lessons* in the end we must apply collective conversations and the

technique of endless questioning. It is precisely this procedure -in my opinion- that can be called *philosophical* – in *children's philosophy*.

It is time to ask the question again: what exactly is philosophy for children? A special curriculum (Susanna Massa)? Some kind of activity (Györgyi Tamássy, 2010:94)? A pedagogical method beyond an educational program (Erzsébet Kerekes, 2010:130)? A relatively new and spectacularly spreading scholarship as Paul Standish conceives it?

### *Philosophy for children and the theoretical basics*

I think to clarify the nature of philosophy for children, it is necessary to grasp and – to emphasize again –, (much) more deeply elaborate on the theoretical basics. Unfortunately, there is a somewhat backwardness in this field. I agree with the opinion of Vera Békés: “The starting arguments eased down on the theoretical side and there has not been much advance since then, (...) there are researches going on about children in many professional fields, these are of a methodological nature mainly” (Békés, 2010:7). And proceeding in self-criticism: the problem is not the decreasing tendency of theoretical arguments but *children's philosophy still could not come up with convincing theoretical answers in several basic questions*.

Here lies question of the denomination of the basic concept (i.e. philosophy for children) as a professional field and educational material. For example, *Katalin Lesku* mentions four forms in Hungarian: “child-philosophy”, “philosophy for children”, “philosophizing with children” and “philosophy for the children”. The author recommends the last one, but she consequently uses the first (Lesku, 2010:81). It seems like the use of “child-philosophy” became legitimate in the professional Hungarian texts. In the English, the form “philosophy for children” has spread.

However, for me, the most serious problem is the clarification of the content of children's philosophy. Concerning this, I would like to refer to the insightful but so far responded realization of *Endre Kiss*. He wrote: “The philosophy for children is PHILOSOPHY, thus (...) a reflection on reality. Also, it is for CHILDREN, so (...) it is not acceptable to narrow down (...) the ‘adult’ philosophy's method of reflection, content or categories for children” (Kiss, 1996). The thoughts above, I think, give the principled basics of the definition for philosophy for children, or at least mark the right way of explanation. Endre Kiss' suggestion seems simple and obvious. Truly, we should try to bring together these two categories, ‘philosophy’ and ‘children’, to create a new separate notion. The first question of all is no other than this – continuing the thoughts above: *how could we apply philosophy to the world of children, and vice versa: does child life give us some philosophical message and lesson?* My statement is that this question and the collective answer that can be given to it are the greatest challenges of children's philosophy. I find it sad that there is no professional reaction to the rather sensible ideas of Endre Kiss. Also it will be beneficial if the professionals of philosophy for children (researchers, university and college teachers, active pedagogues, publishers of child matter, editors) would be preoccupied with the elaboration of the starting points above.

It is unnecessary to prove that defining both ‘philosophy’ and ‘child world’ brings about such arguments that are not easy to settle. Also it can easily happen that the effect of these basic notions on each could just further increase complications. Probably the setting up of a valid, coherent and unanimous philosophy for children will still require a long time, and the more effective cooperation of researchers is unavoidable. I cannot and do wish to state that I know the one and only answer to the dilemma above; I only wish to highlight some points to consider.

Let me return to John White’s statement, which – as far as I know – got lost within the international professional literature of philosophy for children, too. He wrote about the scientific classification of children’s philosophy, and states that essentially it is a special case of philosophical thinking, inasmuch as it is “*a side branch of applied philosophy*” [author’s italics] (White, 2012:454). The keyword here is applied philosophy, and as we can see, White defines philosophy for children itself as a part of applied philosophy. Among Hungarian researchers a similar definition was suggested by *József Krajnik*. The title of his study is already obvious: “Philosophy for children as applied philosophy”. While the author discusses Lipman’s view, and does not elaborate on the meaning of applied philosophy, he states: the international professional platform of philosophy “adequately proves (...) philosophy for children as applied philosophy and practical philosophy exists and is necessary” (Krajnik, 2002:176). I presume, too, that it is a good way to place philosophy for children in the system of applied philosophy. Moreover, this connection is not only desired but the one and only step needed. However, much should be done by researchers to prove the rightness of such a perception or intention. Predominantly, it must be cleared that in what way does philosophy for children appear related to applied philosophy, and with what kind of lessons can applied philosophy serve to embrace childhood. We should at least try to systematically analyze the referring correspondences here. I have taken steps towards this in my earlier works, first and foremost to define applied philosophy itself (Karikó, 2011). For the sake of the facts I would like to add this to József Krajnik’s phrase: there is hardly any researcher who brings up the connection between applied philosophy and philosophy for children in the *Hungarian literature*. And the number of those philosophers who work in applied philosophy is not substantial. (Unlike in British countries.)

Let us accept Matthew Lipman’s idea, which is also highlighted by the memoir’s writer, Douglas Martin that main reason and significance for the creation and spread of philosophy for children is: „in the process, children cover much the same ground that philosophers have” (Martin, 2011:1). By this he obviously means that children generally turn to the world with fresh thoughts, ideas, free and open eyes, imagination and permanent curiosity. These childlike characteristics are hardly questionable. Let us observe in this matter *Györgyi Tamássy*’s statement, which is surprising at first. “Children are the ‘best philosophers’: they are much more courageous and motivated than adults in recognizing and directly conceiving philosophical problems. They have a much stronger vein to philosophize” (Tamássy, 2010:92). I agree with this statement, moreover, I might add: and more honest vein. So it is not some role-playing, a learned or forced expression, rather a inherent skill and ability given by nature to

childhood. I believe this to be a very valuable trait. Thus, if we consider Lipman's statement (confirmed by Györgyi Tamássy) true, then why question bringing in philosophy for children into the primary school program to some extent? If we can talk about the natural, or even evident, correspondence between the world of the children and philosophical inclination, then why should we leave out this educational opportunity? John White who has earlier been referred to suggests – among others – that we should think again about the introduction of the program. I can agree with many thoughts by him but I would argue with his view at this point. Even the way he forms his question is problematic to me: Should we teach philosophy in elementary schools or rather should we teach more mathematics? I consider his pessimist conclusion pretentious and unacceptable: "elementary schools should support the improvement of different ways of thinking rather than philosophy" (White, 2012:458). To solve the dilemma above, I think we must clarify the question that what kind of philosophy needs to be brought into elementary schools or even kindergarten in primitive form? It is precisely applied philosophy that can lead us to the answer. At this point we must say something about applied philosophy. Obviously, it is not this study's task to explain details, especially not in a critical aspect, so let us settle with the short summary of two classic applied philosophers, *Brenda Almond* and *Donald Hill*. They write this in the introduction of the book they edited together: applied philosophy is "already widely understood as the name for philosophical engagement about those issues of practical life that hinge upon ethical considerations, and are capable of being illuminated by deeper conceptual understanding and by critical analysis of the arguments they involve. (...) Solutions to the problems of political and social life must in the end be sought in the kind of reflective consideration, characteristic of an outward-facing philosophy, (...) an influential force in the public arena, (...) representing in a sense a return to the earliest conception of philosophy, (...) together with moral qualities associated with these: honesty, courage and a willingness to *hear* what others are saying" (Almond & Hill, 1991:1-6).

This excerpt clearly names the three most important features of applied philosophy. It is not about the so-called academic philosophy with its abstract, universal world view, category-system, deductive methods, and often protruding aristocratism, transcendent mentality. It is a branch, an experiment of philosophy which responds to *concrete* and *actual* problems of everyday life (so not the so-called persistent philosophical dilemmas, ontological and epistemological approaches) (a), while motivating to a *democratic cooperative way of thinking and living, calling for an exciting and fair argument* in an understandable form (b). *Moral view* affects its analysis, (c), for this reason results are based on ethics. In this way any topic brought up is a question of human dignity and responsibility for the applied philosopher. *Pavel Fobel* remarks rightfully in connection with this last statement: "Applied philosophy, like applied ethics serves the moral perfection of practice" (Fobel, 2001:13).

For me it is obvious that all three characteristics, especially the third one (i.e. the moral action and the terms and importance of education within it), make the natural connection of applied philosophy and pedagogy a valid topic of systematic analysis (Kraevsky, 2009:79). At this

point we are only one step away from the conceptual territory of philosophy for children. We can positively handle philosophy for children (too!) as a part of applied philosophy, as it shares these three main characteristics. Hence, philosophy for children brings philosophy down to earth “from the sky” by treating an everyday concrete topic, the questions of the world of children. It debates many different views during analysis in an understandable way to everyone, and shares the results with the *public*. Finally, its theoretical and practical conduct is led by a *moral view* and *judgement*. Philosophers for children are mostly interested in the question that how is a child’s transformation related to the status of education (positive or negative) and the problem of education’s capabilities. I cannot imagine a practice, course or scientific study of philosophy for children that considers contents and lessons related to education as merely additional “elements”. The question of moral education becomes a main principle, requirement.

If education is that important in philosophy for children (and obviously also in pedagogy), let us put aside some often-experienced misunderstandings or simplifications with the matter of education.

Everyone does educational actions to some extent, many people of all sorts. Therefore, we are disposed to think that we are all experts in it. It seems like “discussions of education are rather like the old tale of the blind villagers who, after grasping different parts of an elephant, make vain attempts to describe that great creature to one another. All participants have an empirically-based conviction that their accounts reflect reality as well as the strong suspicion that their colleagues’ analyses are significantly flawed” (Thompson, 2012:493). Undoubtedly, everybody has opinions and experiences about education, so it is easy to rush to conclusions. For example, to concluding that education itself is an easy subject, a clear and controllable “battlefield”. However, education – according to my view – means great challenge, requires special strength, high virtue and commitment, which few people can or are willing to invest. Real and effective educational work needs serious preparation, endless patience, and credibility as a model, which few people have. Lot of them think that while taking care of a child they are doing educational work but in fact, they are just shaping the youth in the wrong direction.

Unfortunately, it is also a fact that we can meet simplifications among professionals, too. It is a good intention but not a convincing approach to trace back education to the socialization process. Let me refer to one of the newest American educational books among the many international and national studies (What is Education?). According to the author „Education is a socially facilitated process of cultural transmission” (White, 2013:120-122). Experiments like this mean to state that the essential aim of education is to acquire social functions and to merge into the world of adults. Undoubtedly, education has this socializing function but I would prefer to believe that it has a deeper content, a higher value, which I would like to specify a little later.

Finally, we should turn our attention towards the spreading of a unique but wrong tendency. Morgan (not the earlier mentioned John!) White describes the constitution and operation of today’s American and British higher education with deep anxiety. We can take his critical view generally, so it is not just about America and Britain, nor about just higher education.



In practice, it looks like „a higher education system which takes the efficient training for future employment of students as its main aim (...) professional training is not enough for the whole of life (...), the education, and university education with it, has gradually become integrated into the wider framework of the bureaucratized welfare state, (...) so good citizenship loses its ties to traditional ideas of virtue and worldliness. (...) it is regarded as an investment which will pay dividends in terms of future earnings, or it is consumptive, in that it is like a leisurely activity, a kind of high-minded frivolity” (Kant, 2005:636). The text makes it clear that education is more and more orientated towards the situation of the labor market (which is otherwise a great challenge), as it can be seen, for example – not mentioned here – within the Hungarian educational (school) system, too, which is barely aligned to practical life. *Education*, however, is becoming a more and more important challenge. Since – we must not forget – a human being is not just a producer and a consumer, not simply some kind of “raw material” but a moral creature with universal values. Education is just the ground, defined action and commitment, which tries to seize this quality and lead personality-forming actions in this way, thus bringing closer the ‘good citizen’, in our case, the ‘good student’ and the ‘good child’.

### *Pedagogy – goodness – tale*

It is at this point that I would like to briefly elaborate on education’s deepest and at the same time highest level content. Pedagogical history – unquestionably – gives something to hold on to: I would like to recall three representatives. All three thinkers investigated that in what ways is education more, or different than merely socialization (“social entry ticket”). When *Kant* wrote, “To make people *universally better* (author’s italics) education needs its freedom” (Kant, 2005), he stated that education according to its deepest content and at the same time, its wonderful and majestic character is not other than *goodness*. Goodness, as we know, belongs to the category of virtues, and it is maybe the most touching human skill or ability. Moving forward in the history of philosophy and pedagogy, let us direct our attention to *Dewey*’s thoughts about the tasks of school. The operation of schools can be called successful if children “develop in smartness, goodness and submission” (Pring, 2004). Here I would like to reflect upon only the first two goals. It is obvious that smartness is connected to the teaching-learning process with the objective of searching and getting to know the truth. However, *goodness* is another quality: it is an honored point of education to be good, perhaps the moral world’s most beautiful virtue. Finally, let us see *Richard Pring*, a contemporary educational philosopher’s suggestion: education always gets to „a moral practice concerned with values and conceptions of what it is to be human... and to make people more human” (Karikó, 2010:62-65).

The thoughts above appear in the history of pedagogy, still I see that they are left out of pedagogical practice and theory. In turn we should make it clear and obvious, what is more coherent that education’s most valued content, motivation, core and – do not be afraid from the words –

sacred mission is *goodness*. So, the aim of educational, its point is primarily not to infiltrate children into the adult world by acquiring basic social norms and functions, but rather to try to be good, to create a good person. We all know, socialization is important and necessary, without it society would not function, and individual prosperity requires it, too. In other words, socialization within education is universal and obligatory, we could say: a moral order. At the same time goodness – we must face it – is not a required, “prescribed” moral value for everyone. It is worthy to recall this last statement the young *György Lukács*’s sharp perception, which is sadly missed by professionals of applied philosophy, pedagogy and philosophy for children up until today. “If goodness appears in us, then paradise had become reality. (...) Goodness leaves ethics, (...) because ethics is generic and required, (...) (but – S. K.) goodness is a miracle and grace. (...) Goodness is ‘obsession’. (...) For in the soul of that who is good, all psychological content, every cause and consequence dissolves” (Lukács, 1997:540-543).

Goodness – as we can see – is not a universal and general phenomenon. It cannot be rationally expected from everybody. Much rather it is a desired and possible virtue, a special gift of fate. Striving for it is a majestic thing, which even withstands accusations of naivety and utopia. Because it is true that reality is full of evil, frailness and sin, but we must never forget: *man(kind) longs for goodness from the beginning of times*. The feeling and desire of goodness cannot be eradicated from the history of humanity.

I would like to attention as the problem of goodness and education. Education – unlike many perceptions – is not so incapable of reducing social inequalities among people. First, we need to recognize and try to stand for education’s deepest content in social dimensions, the most gripping strain of it as well. That is goodness, the try for good. In other words: education’s “holy” mission is: to make a better person. In people’s judgement goodness and the try for good must be the universal standard, not wealth, prosperity and power are the determinant (only) point of view. *In the try for good be equal!* We must see that goodness is not just a beautiful idea or an impossible dream. Milán Füst, Hungarian writer of the XX. century wrote that fine and clearly, that is why we quote his thoughts in full exceptionally.

„They preach in school with no effect, there is none either when the priest, your mother or father tells you to be good, (...) you decide in your childhood you will be good, clean and unselfish for nothing... Life comes – and you have forgotten now, - you cheat, steal, live for pleasures. (...) You are tricky, pusillanimous. (...) But that education, which I have got from my mother, I sucked the idea of the life that not known with breastfeed... But life is – unfortunately – not like this. (...) And you believe your mother has not known life? She knew, - but still (...) she wanted to share the better of herself (...), faith risen up from her because her child can be – *must* be free and clean. (...) And when you are going to have a child: - you (...) will be careful (...) to reveal the horrible, ...and you show life the way just like Moses did with the promised land to the hopeful” (Füst, 1976:178-179). On the grounds of Milán Füst, we can say that the thirst and need for goodness is cannot be extinguished from human mind and life.

The question of goodness as a principle and virtue *directly leads* us to philosophy for children. The short discussion above about education's deepest content now makes sense for philosophers for children, too. It is so mainly because in the world of children tales -with simple and clear stories- have an exclusive role and function. "Tales above all!" And we all know that every tale is preoccupied with "goodness" and the struggle between good and evil. The interest and sensitivity for goodness is naturally inherent in children. Goodness as a preferred idea and value falls on a particularly productive ground in children. The world of stories appears stronger and more evidently compared to all other people (generations). Thus, *for children's philosophy* (in both theory and practice) *goodness becomes a basic category and value*. The researches about philosophy for children are not very satisfying from this view. They still owe us a systematic and deep exploration of the interaction between good and bad. However, I think it is true that generic philosophy does not serve with soothing result in this question either.

As for the status and effect of national and international philosophy for children, there are still many unanswered questions. Mostly it stays on the level of marking out the objectives. Despite every courageous attempt, there are only a few *adequately* supported results professionally that are accepted by much of researchers. Anyhow, we can consider *Karin Saskia Murriss*, educational philosopher's proposition in which she comes up with a rational goal. In my opinion, she duly writes that the pedagogy of the so-called community of enquiry assumes not only the epistemological form of the educator's role but also the differentiated ontology of the 'child' (Murriss, 2008:667). Yes, I agree that it would be reasonable to elaborate on the ontology of childhood life. If this work is done, it would only make philosophy for children "stronger", more convincing and accepted – even in the academic philosophical communities. A lot of present and future analyses would be needed in this topic like, for example, that of Hegel 200 years ago. For me it is obscure why Hungarian philosophy for children has not responded (at least not to the proper extent) to Hegel's following words: "Youth generally turns towards the substantial universal. Its ideal is no longer like a man for a boy but something universal completely independent from the unique. (...) The content of the ideal raises a sense of vigor in the youth: thus, he feels inspired and capable of changing the world, or at least, fixing the world which seems to be off its course. This is how youth destroys the peace that surrounds the child in the world" (Hegel, 1968:84-85).

Hegel's realization and message have not lost a bit from their validity. It is fantastic how he compares childhood life, youth and the adult generations. He tries to catch general characteristics about the child's world through this comparison. The child *lives in harmony with the world*, does not go against it, as a young man, who will fight against it vividly with anger and passion. Moreover, the child's relationship with the direct surroundings is *subjective-based*, i.e. it always perceives and evaluates everything and everybody through actual people (mother, father, kindergarten teacher, teacher, etc.). Finally, a child's everyday task is not systematic learning, nor work (unlike in later life periods). *Play* is in the focus. Everything is subdued to playfulness, even the imprinting, practicing and learning of basic human aspects. Later the endless asking of

“*why*” and asking itself will impregnate every day of the child, his entire self (evoking not Hegel anymore but the traditional philosophy of Socrates from the point of view of children’s philosophy). Questions seem omnipotent. Maybe by recognizing and embracing this last characteristic, philosophers for children willingly call themselves today’s followers of Socrates. One of the basic principles of philosophy for children, if not even its most important statement, is that *the child is honest and open to everything*. Look at Nietzsche’s ontological big shot about this: “Child is innocence, a wheel turning from itself” (Nietzsche, 2008:33). This thought seems to be continued by Endre Ady (Hungarian poet in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) in a special appraisal about the child: a child is “a man not yet in chains, (...) an honesty-Etna” (Ady, 1973:79).

Such philosophical thoughts and the systematic research and analysis of correspondences would be necessary. It would also be good to form all knowledge about childhood life into coherent whole, a convincing concept. Maybe the schematic references of the attempt above, the hint of a starting-point can show: *childhood life* – from an ontological view – is an *independent entity, a separate generation with clear boundaries*. Thus, we may rightfully expect to know much more and most of all, the deeper connections and general messages that other professional fields cannot serve with about childhood life. Well – in my opinion – that is what *philosophy for children is for*.

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