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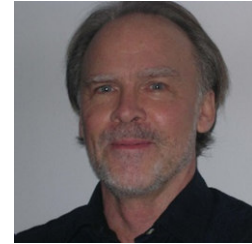
DENOMINAZIONE ALTERNATIVA: *Indagine e Pratica Filosofica*

IT_ Philosophy for Children, *skholé e utopia: in dialogo con David Kennedy*

Philosophy for Children, *Skholé* and Utopia

Manuela Pitterà* in dialogue with David Kennedy**

Matthew Lipman and Ann Sharp realized, with Philosophy for Children (P4C), what has recently been called a real ‘educational revolution’ (Franzini Tibaldeo, 2023). Within this movement, we can distinguish the following fundamental pillars from a theoretical point of view: the pedagogical value of philosophy for the purpose of promoting complex thinking; a renewed conception of childhood, its rights and epistemic agency; and a creative re-writing of the Deweyan link between democracy, inquiry and education. On the methodological level, we could include: the invention of a specific pedagogy, the development of the community of philosophical inquiry, and the creation of the IAPC curriculum. This latter consists in new educational texts that overcome the limitations of the classic school texts, which Lipman always denounced as providing a fictitious access to the world of culture, and indeed as constituting «a barrier between children and their humanistic tradition» (Lipman, 1988, p. 23).



P4C is a complex and integrated apparatus that has inspired the production of an extensive literature over the decades. Within this scholarship, one of the most original voices is certainly that of David Kennedy, who has developed, with autonomous creativity but in continuity with Lipman and Sharp, many of the aforementioned principles. He has always been a member of the IAPC, is one of the teacher educators of the courses at Mendham (a training ground in P4C for facilitators from all over the world), and the co-editor, together with Walter Kohan, of *Childhood & Philosophy*, the official journal of the ICPIIC (the International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children). He is a leading exponent of what we can call the second generation of P4C and has made significant theoretical contributions to the development of this approach, first focusing on the community of philosophical inquiry (Kennedy, 1997, 2004a, 2012a; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011) and on the role of the facilitator (Kennedy, 2004b) and then elaborating in a personal way an intuition of both Lipman and Gareth Matthews (1994) – namely, that doing philosophy with children also involves developing a philosophy of childhood, which represents a new domain of questioning and philosophical knowledge (Kennedy, 2006a, 2006b; Kennedy & Bahler, 2017; Kennedy & Kohan, 2017).

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In recent years, he has provided an original inflection of these two great strands of investigation, on the one hand connecting the model of the community of philosophical inquiry with the anarchist tradition in education (Kennedy, 2016, 2019) and, on the other, undertaking a re-evaluation of the potential implicit in human sensibility, by way of recontextualizing the insights of the philosopher Herbert Marcuse (Kennedy, 2012d, 2014, 2020, 2023).

Finally, Kennedy has always stressed, among the greatest achievements of Lipman, the creation of a really new genre, the philosophical story for children and adolescents. He has analyzed this from both a theoretical and a practical point of view, by writing two philosophical novels himself (Kennedy, 2012b, 2022).

Considering this breadth of interest, which spans the three pillars of P4C (the development of the community of philosophical inquiry, the invention of a new literary-pedagogical genre and the renewed conception of childhood), it seemed to us that his should be one of the first voices to be heard in this column, in which dialogues with important exponents of the pedagogical movement of P4C will be presented. In such conversations, not only will we try to explore, through the experience of the protagonists, the history and future of P4C, but we will also focus on the multiple ways in which these scholars have come to be involved in the P4C adventure, the particular approaches that they have initiated, and the contributions that they have made.¹

LIFE AND FORMATION

MP: Do you remember the first time you were fascinated by philosophy?

DK: It was probably reading a book edited by Walter Kaufmann about existential philosophy.

Existentialism was the first form of philosophy that I encountered which seems to go much deeper than analytic philosophy ever could and with more connections with art and literature. Reading Sartre and Kierkegaard was like reading novelists and I was into folk and fairy tales from an early age. In my late teens, I got into Dostoevsky and D.H. Lawrence and Nietzsche. In my mind, there was no distance between literature and philosophy. I didn't get into philosophy as somebody who was ready to explore the field in an academic or a formal way. I never thought of majoring in philosophy when I was in college. I was more interested in literature, psychology and anthropology.

MP: P4C has revolutionized the relationship between the adult teacher and the child learner.

How would you describe the typical relationship between teachers and students when you were a schoolboy? Were all your teachers typically 'traditional' or were there any teachers who had a different educational sensibility?

DK: I was not a very conscious child. I was submerged in childhood and I wasn't critical about thinking about my teachers. I remember two teachers who inspired me through the readings they gave me when I was in middle school. I have no memory myself of being a child. All I remember is a report from a teacher that was made when I was in nursery school. I think it was something that my father saved to put in a folder. He had

¹ All the footnotes to the main text are mine (MP).

a folder for each of his children. We were three boys. This report said: «David sits in the corner all day long playing the drums intensely and he doesn't let anybody else use them». Maybe in reaction to my childhood amnesia, as well as the experience of having children myself, most of my thinking about childhood and education and school is based on experience with young children. I spent 10 years working in a childcare center in Kentucky and that was where I first discovered Philosophy for Children and where I became interested in young children's thinking and how it might be different than adult ways of feeling and thinking, some way of thinking and feeling that adults have lost, that the culture of adulthood – adulthood – has socialized them out of, so to speak.

MP: Do you remember any smart or bad teachers of philosophy?

DK: Most of the philosophy that I have read has been work that I came across myself, apart from any sort of academic curriculum. I don't remember taking a straight philosophy course mainly I guess because I have no interest in academic philosophy. I like Wittgenstein, but I really have no taste for the rest. Basically, I would have to say that I'm sort of self-taught philosophically. That's interesting – I really hadn't thought of myself as an autodidactic.

MP: You studied as an undergraduate in literature and anthropology and then left and went to Europe. Why?

DK: Going to Europe after finishing the bachelor's was something of a tradition in my family. I always remember the day that I arrived in Genoa because John F. Kennedy was assassinated the day before. I had boarded as one of three passengers on a German freighter, from Philadelphia. The journey lasted two or three weeks because there were mechanical problems. As soon as I disembarked in Genoa, I went to the youth hostel to stay for the night and the guy who was at the desk saw my name. He kind of snickered and said: «Kennedy... boom boom!», while miming a gun pointed to his head with his index finger and thumb. There was another American there and he said: «Yeah, Kennedy was shot yesterday». I went down into the basement of the hostel where I found a few other Americans gathered somberly around the small black and white television. The next day, I began hitchhiking through Italy, stopped in Pisa, then Florence, and somewhere in there a village on the top of a butte that I don't remember the name of, took a boat over to Messina, hitched down to Siracusa, over to Agrigento, up to Palermo, took a boat to Tunis on Christmas Eve, stayed there a couple of days, then hitched through Algeria and Morocco to Casablanca, came up across Gibraltar and spent six or seven months in southern Spain, in Sevilla and then in Almunecar, on the Costa del Sol. I ended up staying for another year – going up to Paris for the winter, then to Aix-en-Provence, where I rented a room in the Chateaux Noir and picked tomatoes for some cash, then back to southern Spain with a lady friend who later became my first wife . . . and so on.

MP: You mentioned some writers and philosophers that you appreciated in the beginning of your studies, and you talked about your formative experience traveling through Europe

and your education. Are there any other educational and formative experiences – both academic and extra-academic – which have been important to you?

DK: I think that I only became a serious student of literature when I left college. While travelling in Europe I was reading Stendhal, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, D.H. Lawrence. I was passionately connected with these readings, whereas somehow before I was not reading with the same level of interest; I read only because I had to write a paper or take a test. The most meaningful educational experience for me came after those two years at the university.

MP: Your most important experience passed through books, not through teachers or living models...

DK: Yes, that's a good way of describing it. Also the experience of travelling, of being out of the typical world of America in the 1960s, of being in a sort of exile. At that moment I was (I'm not sure how seriously) considering becoming an expatriate (not going back to US) because I saw the States as deeply corrupt and troubled with the Vietnam war and right-wing politics (*plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose*). I was at Columbia University in New York City when, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the news was all about what a nuclear attack on the City would look like – firestorms at 600 miles an hour is what I remember. It was at that moment that I said: «I have to get out of here».

MP: But later you changed your mind and came back to the U.S. Why?

DK: I don't know how serious I was. I was planning to go back in one year but I actually stayed for two. I remember my impression of American culture when I did go back and arrived at LaGuardia Airport – the taxi drivers shouting, as if it were normal speech, this whole feeling of gargantuan energy. I was strangely excited by it. I was happy to be back in the US. There was a sense of happiness, ebullient energy, New York energy. It's powerful. At that moment it felt great being back home; I was seeing with fresh eyes.

MP: Do you remember when and how your interest in education was born?

DK: When I got back to the States, I had no taste for academics anymore. I just wanted to write. Furthermore, lots of other stuff happened and I only went back to school after I had my first child, 10 years later. I decided to finish my degree in education because I wanted to become a teacher of children. I was particularly interested in young children, their views of the world, since I was having children at that point myself. So I got a Master's degree in early childhood education and, finally, a doctoral degree some years later in educational philosophy. I took a few doctoral courses in philosophy – phenomenology, which I greatly enjoyed – but that's about as close as I got to formal academic philosophy. How did I get involved in philosophy and education? I guess sort of backwards and sideways.

MP: So, your interest in education started when you had children, not before. When you were a boy did you ever imagine becoming a teacher, an educator, a philosopher, or any professional in this field?

DK: At that time, I wanted to be a novelist, and, on and off, a musician. That's what I wanted. When my first child was born, my second wife and I were living in West Virginia in the mountains, way up on a ridge in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain range, a primitive lifestyle. We got around with horses rather than cars. We had unofficially joined an unofficial movement called, unofficially, "back to the land" which was a countercultural hippie movement – about going back to the country and homesteading there, so that, when the catastrophe comes, people will flood out of the cities and you can take care of them because you know how to start again – make a garden, keep goats and chickens, light with oil lamps, plough and travel around with horses, create a barter economy and so on. We were anarchists, but only a few of us had read enough to call ourselves that. The implicit or tacit idea was that we were waiting for the apocalypse. But when my first daughter was born, I decided that I wanted to go back to college, get a degree in education and then come back to the little villages in the mountains to be a teacher in a small school in rural Appalachia. That was my original idea. Of course, things took me in many different directions and I never went back to the mountains, although I did go back to Kentucky where I worked in a childcare center for about 8-10 years while I was doing my doctoral degree. It was during that period that I discovered Philosophy for Children.

DISCOVERING P4C

MP: How did you discover this?

DK: I was doing doctoral work at the University of Kentucky, and I came across a brochure in one of the offices advertising workshops in P4C offered by a professor at a local college – and another teacher. I was immediately struck – I thought this seems to be completely what I want to do. I was still working at the childcare center, and I developed a manual of discussion plans taken from Lipman's *Pixie* and *Harry* manuals and discussion plans of my own, and started using it with the kindergarten children in the center. I was completely persuaded from the very beginning that this was the way to go in terms of talking with children, listening to children, understanding children.

MP: Did you meet Lipman and Sharp a lot later?

DK: A year or two later I finished my doctoral degree and started working at Northern Michigan

David Kennedy near the outdoor statues at the Art Museum in Princeton University (New Jersey)



University where I heard about a conference to be held in San Antonio, Texas. I participated in that conference and met Lipman and Sharp there.

MP: Which date was this?

DK: About 1990. I had corresponded briefly with Anne Sharp about publishing a paper that I had written which was a transcript of a conversation in the daycare center² and Sharp encouraged me to come to this conference in San Antonio.

MP: What was your first impression?

DK: I remember meeting both of them the first day of the conference. They were coming down in the elevator and when I stepped inside there they were, the two of them. He, very friendly, offered me his hand with a warm smile – he was a very charming man when he wanted to be. After greeting me, Sharp turned immediately back to Lipman – with whom she had been arguing furiously when I entered the elevator – trying to persuade him to publish something, as far as I could tell. He was truculent and non-committal, probably a bit embarrassed by the situation, and they left the elevator still arguing.

MP: Did you remain in contact after the conference?

DK: Yes, and six years later, after several conferences and several Mendhams and several relevant publications, in 1996 I applied for a job at Montclair State University in P4C and the IAPC. When I got it, our family moved to New Jersey, and I've been there ever since.

REMEMBERING LIPMAN

MP: You had a professional collaboration with Lipman but also an intense friendship. Could you tell me any episode to give an idea of your relationship?

DK: I remember him as welcoming in a profound sense. Most of my memories of him cluster around his final years when he was in a home for seniors with Parkinson's disease. I was visiting him once a week and sitting and talking. I was particularly charmed and intrigued by his sharing with me his Parkinsons-related hallucinations: he loved cats and used to see them in his room – sometimes six or seven at once, mostly kittens – although no cats were allowed at the center. Once he said that his second wife Terry, who was deceased at that point, was lying in the bed. He shared it, not as if he was trying to persuade me that this was the case, but as if he were stating a fact, without any sense of pain or madness. He did not appear to be mad at all. He was just sharing his perceptual life with me, not so that I would agree with him saying «Oh yes, I see her» or «That's ridiculous!». He was totally lucid.

I remember one moment where he was saying «Look over there, there are three kittens now on the bed» and I said «No, I don't see them» and he got up from the very comfortable stuffed armchair that he stayed in all day long and he said, «I'll show them to you». He started walking towards the bed. It was a small room. He took only three or four steps and then started to collapse under his own weight, and I grabbed him and

² More details about this experience may be found in Kennedy, 1991.

held him up and helped him move back to the chair. He said: «I could not show them to you». That was in a sense the only time we made physical contact. I mean we shook hands a couple of times, but we never touched otherwise. Keeping him from collapsing onto the floor was a fleeting form of intimacy, a son's protection of his father.

MP: Was he a cold man even if you said he was a welcoming and sociable person?

DK: His sociability was all in his head. He had a luminous gaze and a sort of dreamy smile. I don't want to say that he was repressed but just the order of repression among some academics, maybe his generation of academics. A sort of distance while still genuinely friendly. A sense of deep integrity and focus. He went to his office every day of the year, and welcomed whoever came to his door.

MP: This can be very interesting because I see a possible connection between this attitude of his and your insistence on P4C not only as a cognitive and logical activity but also a physical activity, involving the whole body, sensitivity and feelings included.

DK: He was either incapable or unwilling as a facilitator. Anne was the super-facilitator. When he came to Mendham, he just talked and everybody was hanging on every word but it wasn't a philosophical dialogue. He was spontaneous but he had that quality, which some genius academics have, of talking, literally, like a book. I heard Levi-Strauss talked that way too. Record it and write it down and you have a complete text.

MP: Did he not work directly with children?

DK: No, there are some photographs of him sitting with a group of children, I think early on when he first came to Montclair State. He would go occasionally and talk with children. He was not a practitioner. He had all the principles, and it didn't strike me as dishonest or contradictory or hypocritical. This was his function: he was the mastermind of the program.

LIPMAN AND SHARP'S GREATEST INTUITIONS

MP: During the last period of his life, you interviewed Lipman about Ann Sharp, who was deceased by that time. What did he say about her contribution to P4C?

DK: He was very clear in describing how the pedagogical idea of the community of inquiry was hers.³ He, then, connected the idea of the community of philosophical inquiry with the American philosophers Charles Sanders Peirce and Justus Buchler – the latter was one of his teachers at Columbia. Although he had sources that he could identify with the community of philosophical inquiry, he recognized Ann as the person who grabbed the idea and went with it. She was a wonderful facilitator. I remember at Mendham several times sitting in a group that she was facilitating. She was great, she got people excited by her own very genuine excitement and her profound attentiveness.

MP: Why did you join immediately Lipman's program?

DK: I think that philosophy *of* childhood was always important to me. I wrote my dissertation and several early papers about young children's intuitive philosophical persuasions and

³ See Kennedy, 2010a.

convictions. I was particularly interested in two elements: one being the connection between childhood and Romanticism: thinking of childhood as a sort of ideal epistemological condition, carrying a view of the world which is lost in adulthood, reminds me of the Romantic notion of the child as being prophetic of a form of consciousness. This is associated with the idea of adulthood as a fall from grace – understanding childhood as a condition of possibility of who we might become, the possibility of cultural evolution – trying to imagine a culture in which the child’s vision has not been lost. For example, animism. I am intuitively of the belief that the universe is animate, interactive, autotelic, self-organizing, emergent, and I think children tend to see it this way as well.⁴ It’s like Schiller said: «They are what we were; they are what we should once again become».

Besides the theme of seeing childhood as a prophetic condition, there is the idea of Socratic pedagogy. I prefer to call it neo- or post-Socratic because I don’t think Socrates was really doing the same collaborative work that the P4C facilitator is doing. Most of the time, he was basically manipulating people into arriving at his own ideas. This only has the appearance of dialogue. That being said, he did implicitly teach a form of critical reasoning, although that too was rooted in the law of the excluded middle. Remember that he (or Plato?) wanted to banish the poets, and limit music to the Dorian and the Phrygian scales.

MP: It could be interesting to dwell a little more on the role of the P4C facilitator. In several works, you investigated the basic critical strategies and moves to better facilitate a group conversation⁵: could you please illustrate them and tell us if, over the past twenty years, you’ve been rethinking of them in any way?

DK: Well, two identities stick with me in thinking about the role of the facilitator. One is the active listener – the one who lives to clarify the ideas of his or her interlocutors; not to influence, or shape, or suggest, or guide or even challenge, but to clarify clarify clarify, in the faith that clarification is the discursive engine of the dialectic. This is a therapeutic role, and has its first major expression in Carl Rogers’s psychotherapy. And of course it is geometrically amplified when it’s a group engaged in communal dialogue; then the facilitator also lives to refer one member’s meaning to another’s, and to assist at their mutual coordination and the dialectical emergence of a “third thing.”

This leads to the second role as that of, let’s say, the conductor of an improvisatory orchestra. Think of the orchestra as “playing” the Argument, the one, as Socrates said, that “leads” us, and which it’s our joy to “follow.” As the themes and concepts under discussion are articulated, rephrased, exemplified, summarized, challenged – that is, as

⁴ In the foreword of Kennedy (2006b), G. Matthews explains that the author in this book “warns us that we cannot see childhood at all except through some intervening social, cultural, religious, or philosophical lenses” and leads us to reflect on the role that these lenses “play in our perception of childhood and on the alternatives we have available to us” (p.i)

⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the role of the facilitator and the strategies to reinforce his critical reasoning moves, see Kennedy (2010b), ch. 8.

the Argument builds on its own momentum, the facilitator is not just a conductor-who-is conducted by the emergent music but a scout – he or she is out in front of it, eyes and ears focused on where it’s going, half-consciously speculating on its emergent path, watching for connections, *feeling* it, anticipating it, trusting its cumulative movement. Here the Socratic position of ignorance is fully exemplified. This is why I think we would do well to examine other group dialogue models – David Bohm’s (1996)⁶ for example, or Igor Jaszinski and Tyson Lewis’s Community of Infancy⁷, both of which position the facilitator more as silent witness, and the dialogue as taking its own course.

MP: What do you consider to be Lipman’s greatest intuition?

DK: The idea of education as the experience of meaning as opposed to conditioning, described in his first book on the subject, *Philosophy in the Classroom* written with Ann Sharp and Frederick Oscanyan (Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan, 1980). In this beautifully written early book, there is a clear sense of rebellion against the standard model of education and a clear distinction made between education for meaning and education as preparing for some economic future. Lipman was radical. Like Marcuse, he rejected education as simply an ideological state apparatus – as some way of organizing and controlling the economy⁸. So, in that sense, P4C emerged as an emancipatory program. His main idea was ultimately a political one: we are going to teach children to think critically and, therefore, to be able to critique existing structures. Those who see P4C as, at least in performance, indoctrinatory, as preparing children to think critically in order to fit in the system rather than to resist and transform the system, have lost track of his original intention. Of course, the critique of P4C as a “gated community”⁹ as, basically coopted by colonialist pedagogy is a valid one, but we might have expected that. Capitalism’s chief long range weapon is co-option. So, I completely agree with the “gated community” critique, but we should be careful, as the saying goes, not to paint with too broad of a brush.

DREAMING ABOUT A UTOPIAN SCHOOL

MP: In those years, you actively participated in P4C with Lipman and Sharp. Were there any differences between their and your views about the theory and the practice of P4C? If so, how would you describe them?

DK: I went a step further in thinking about the relationship between P4C and the way the school is organized, and about the application of Philosophy for Children to the other disciplines within the school curriculum. I’m interested in thinking about how the community of philosophical inquiry might act as a general foundational discourse upon which the whole curriculum is built, rather than just one piece of it. I am thinking of

⁶ See also <https://www.bohmdialogue.org/>.

⁷ See Jaszinski & Lewis, 2021.

⁸ For a wider analysis of Marcuse and Lipman’s criticism of the traditional education model, see Kennedy, 2012d.

⁹ See Chetty, 2018.

schooling in a more radical way. I think that Matt and Ann basically accepted the conventional school system or, if they didn't accept it as it was, they assumed that in the long run philosophy would become more and more important to the school in general. I started dreaming about a utopian school while they remained pragmatic, but we had the same ultimate goals.

MP: In your interview with Lipman, you describe him as «an exemplification of the philosopher as one with *double-vision*, a person capable of seeing the beauty of the world from across the street and from the distance of space» (Kennedy, 2012c, p. 1), quoting a definition contained at the end of his autobiography (Lipman, 2008, p. 170). Do you think that this description could be suitable also for you? Do you consider yourself as a *double-vision man*?

DK: Oh, I don't know. He definitively had a utopian tendency, but he kept it under control, whereas I did not. He was an academic for academics, whereas I was speaking more from another corner.

MP: Right, just a guy in the corner as in your teacher's report but wondering if the cat on Lipman's bed was really there even if you could not see it...

DK: (just smiling)

THE VERTIGINOUS FREEDOM OF A DARING GAME

MP: You wrote that Lipman transformed his love and fear of heights through philosophy because philosophy is a kind of flying since it allows the mind to fly over the world (Kennedy, 2012c, p. 11); moreover, you describe the joy and terror of the intensive formation «because any given moment within the life of the CPI is an instant of vertiginous freedom» (Kennedy, 2010b, p. 192). These are two descriptions that strike me and that seem to me to have a resemblance, so to speak, to the dynamics of vertigo. Can we say that you both share the same feeling when experiencing the process of trying to capture the explanation of the world? Can I see a similar endeavour in showing that philosophy is not only a cognitive activity, but it is an activity that brings into play the engaging dimensions of our being in the world?

DK: Lipman professed both a longing for and a fear of heights. It sounds like there is a connection there. Sometimes, when a discussion is really 'cooking', one feels that something really important is about to be revealed, if we do it right. If we keep at it, if we listen, then some new meanings will emerge. Vertigo appears in the sense that one part of us doesn't want different meanings. We find it frightening to be faced with this process of deconstruction and reconstruction of belief through dialogue. The emergence of new ideas can be scary. I had not looked at it that way. I think that a good session is frightening in the sense that it's exciting, but it is also safe, because there are rules¹⁰.

MP: It is a serious game, a daring game, isn't it?

¹⁰ About the role of the play in the design and function of Socratic dialogue as practiced in community of philosophical inquiry, see Kennedy 2018a.

DK: I absolutely agree. I can't really imagine Philosophy for Children or the community of philosophical inquiry as amounting to much if it is not a force to transform the school, to – as Deleuze and Guattari put it in *What is Philosophy?* – invent concepts. The idea of communal philosophical inquiry as a *dispositif* for shaping our ideas of the world, of what the world might be, has deeply influenced my idea of what the school might be if it were organized on that basis.

MP: So, why are so many people afraid that they are unable to understand philosophical thought, and even experience a sense of inferiority towards abstract thought and, perhaps for this reason, denounce its remoteness from real and daily life?

DK: They think it's too obscure or too unreal, but there is also an instinctive fear that we have of expanding our meanings because we feel that it could lead to madness – or maybe I should say a loss of boundaries.

MP: Furthermore, you describe philosophy as something *light*. Most people think, instead, of philosophy as something *heavy*, in other words hard instead of easy. Is it something demanding for people who are not used to thinking in this way?

DK: Certainly, this is true with the great philosophers. It's difficult to read Kant, Leibniz, Hegel, maybe Heidegger not so much. That's why P4C is a different form of philosophy. It releases us from that necessity to systematize, to make every statement line up with every other statement. It's not afraid of the poetic. Above all, it's polyphonic and dialogical, many voices; and dialectical – emergent through facing and working through conceptual contradictions.

MP: But, you know, when discussing the ideas in the novels, Lipman's characters evoke ideas from the philosophers. Doesn't each character represent a consistent system of ideas?

DK: That's one of Lipman's happy conceits, I think. There are probably moments where this happens – a character channelling a particular philosopher – but it's either unsystematic or episodic. I'd be more likely to think that where it happens is in the dialogue itself – Gareth Matthews was always finding “real” philosophy in certain moves that children made. In fact, we are all sort of involuntarily and unconsciously echoing the ideas of Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche. They are among us, and, through dialogue, we almost accidentally evoke them. Elfie and Pixie are real philosophers but involuntarily real. They are not working off any model, except the model that is forever emerging through group dialogue – following the Argument where it leads.

MP: Since the ideas are hidden among us, philosophical dialogue should be an indispensable activity for all to see them.

DK: Absolutely. I dream of a school which is fully grounded in communal philosophy, not just the philosophy class but also in math and geography and so on. Here, in a dialectical return to its status as “queen of the sciences,” philosophy is understood as the fundamental academic discipline, in which the major concepts that underlie the curriculum – in history, science, literature, art, geography, even physical education – undergo episte-

mological and ontological interrogation, are problematized in the interest of their reconstruction. And, in fact, there have been attempts to construct a whole school model on the basis of communal philosophy, for example in the seventies and eighties by Lynn Hinton, who was principal of a small school in Australia.

DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL MODEL

MP: In your more recent writings, you have been concentrating on this democratic school model. Could you say more about that?

DK: The idea would be a self-governing school like Summerhill, based on democratic theory and practice, in which the school becomes, in Dewey's words, an "embryonic community" in which the habits and dispositions of social justice are cultivated and practiced through actual self-governance. I am using the word justice in the sense of Plato's *dikaiosune* (*δικαιοσύνη*), which means more than legal justice. It's like "righteousness," a condition of clarity and integrity in terms of our responsibility to each other, and is learned through the communal life of the school. So, the school becomes the site for the emergent auto-construction of an ethical universe.

MP: To what extent do you consider this school system as anarchistic?

DK: It is an anarchist argument that groups of people, when they're small enough and they're equal enough, tend to work out their own moral equations, and to construct justice among each other through their interactions. So, we don't need a hierarchy to enforce responsibility, but rather small collaborative groups that are interlinked with each other; it's a question of scale. The philosophy circle, then, can also be transposed into the governing circle.

MP: How does a democratic school work in practice?

DK: In democratic schools there is a weekly meeting where anybody can bring up any issue. There's a vote for every person and, typically, there are more children in the room than adults. From an early age, they are learning to be responsible adults, starting to make ethical decisions, even about disciplinary matters. The school must be small enough that decision-making can happen among all the participants in the community.

MP: The community of philosophical inquiry is described as an experimental cultural space where the participants are allowed and encouraged to develop their personal and relational habits, so that they experience the vision of a process toward a new political order. In other words, the P4C circle becomes an embryonic society that makes authentic democracy possible. Could this really work also outside the school? How utopian or real do you think this system of embryos is? Can this embryonic society make an authentic democracy possible?

DK: Well, there's always a shadow, there's always the possibility of corruption, of narcissism and sociopathy. Pathology is a part of the human condition. Any behavior that acts to overcome the dark side of human nature is by definition utopian.

MP: You identified this particular form of schooling with the ancient Greek idea of *skholé* (Kennedy, 2017). Did you choose this model because Athens in the 5th century B.C. was where democracy started?

DK: The word *σχολή* means free time or leisure. It presents us with another type of schooling, a place set apart from the pressures of production and skilling, no longer a function of the state or the economy. Here new solutions to the problem of human darkness can be introduced and discovered – a laboratory for democracy. It’s interesting to me that this idea of *skholé* as a place apart for study, for passionate inquiry, for philosophical discourse, arises at the same moment that actual democratic practice arises in the city state, the *πόλις* of Athens, and also at the same moment at which Socrates’ public circle in the *ἀγορά* begins. So, we have this convergence of implicitly democratic forms. Given the fact that slaves and women could not participate, we can only take it as a prophetic statement. To construct democracy, we must create new relational forms. A new sensibility is more than just a political system, it’s a way of feeling and understanding which is already present, virtually anyway, as one strong human possibility. It’s somewhere in the gene pool, waiting for expression. If the group is small enough, is organized on a local level and then connected with larger levels, an ethos or culture of justice is naturally developed. Anarchism is a perpetual human possibility, and *skholé* offers us one pathway for the exploration of that possibility.

MP: One of the main ideals of P4C is that, by practising it, people become more able to relate within society in a more respectful and democratic way. Thanks to your long experience as a facilitator with people of any age, can you testify that P4C really educates for a democratic sensibility? Can you confirm that this attitude improves in people who have learnt doing P4C?

DK: No, I can’t, except in glimpses, and except for the fact, as I said, that it’s already there – it’s virtual, which by Gibert Simondon’s definition is a state of perpetually becoming-actual, an ongoing “metastable equilibrium.” There are many pre-figurations, – it’s a utopian ideal – but, like Marcuse says, utopia is just what is prevented from coming about by existing societies. The process of change is inscrutable and impossible to predict – we live in a universe of chance. Miracles can happen but it is also the case that ideals can never be fully realized – that full realization is just beyond our reach. Emancipatory or liberatory education is in continual struggle with both internal and external forces of domination and exploitation.

BECOMING CHILD

MP: You love the potential of philosophy to conserve childhood, just like Lipman did. How could we balance a way of remaining a child – meant in the sense of always being at or near some beginning – and adult responsibility? How is it possible to encourage children to preserve their childhood and, at the same time, help them to become responsible adults?

DK: I think that the school could become a laboratory or a zone, not just for the child's development, but for the adult's as well, in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming child," which is a lifelong process. For me philosophy always points in the directions of ethics. It always comes down to what shall we do, what should we do, what is to be done. These are Kant's questions, and Tolstoy's as well. There are always practical implications to the reconstruction of concepts that goes on in philosophical dialogue.

MP: You said that you preferred to work with young children, but do you believe that P4C works well also with teens or adults to create or to improve their democratic sensibility? Is it too late for adults?

DK: I don't think it's ever too late. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming child is based on the possibility of experiencing new affects, feelings, and relationships at any age. As such, childhood is not a chronological condition, but rather a form of consciousness, of lived time. It implies continual transformation and self-formation – of living with open borders so to speak. It represents a change in sensibility, which is as much a social phenomenon as it is a personal one. In the utopian imaginary, school as *skholé* becomes one locus for this process, because it's the social institution where the generations encounter each other. It's a sort of temple – *temenos* – sacred space, space removed from economic determinism, social indoctrination, class markers, for the broad purpose of, as Dewey put it, the ongoing reconstruction of the relationship between impulse (child) and habit (adult).

MP: Since P4C encourages children to grow up as active and responsible citizens by helping them to discover and cultivate intense curiosity and wonder, do you even think that they can already participate in the public debate and social transformation?

DK: Of course, there are all the issues that are brought up by Darren Chetty's¹¹, critique of the "gated community of inquiry," where issues like racism and inequality and classism are carefully avoided in our nice little philosophy circles where everybody is just talking about ideas, trapped in abstractions. I think that's a real issue, and it's connected for me with the possibility that we are entering an era in which that child in Hans Christian Andersen's fable *The Emperor's New Clothes* demands to be heard. Look at Greta Thunberg and the growing number of children, mostly teenagers but even younger children, who are becoming involved in protests about climate change or about gun violence in the United States. Is there any place in this pre-apocalyptic moment where the voices of children become potentially transformative? Typically, people say that it is dangerous to encourage children as activists, because then certain adults – perhaps many – will indoctrinate them in their own hate-filled authoritarian narratives, and they'll become even more stultified and stupefied than those adults. What is the political role of childhood in a moment of planetary crisis? That for me is a big question. Hannah Arendt would say children should not be exposed to politics at all, but others disagree. Given the morally

¹¹ See Chetty, 2017, 2018.

insane kind of political discourse that is going on in the United States right now, where you feel that many people are actually mentally ill, if not just mentally challenged – some kind of low-grade social psychosis – if that hysterical slide toward fascist ideology gets communicated to the children, that’s a real problem. But maybe, the philosophy circle is just the place to talk about that issue, as a potential third space for entering dialogue about fundamental ethical questions. But the schools that exist to perpetuate that hateful ideology – right wing Christian schools in the West and Islamic madrasa in the East – will not have a philosophy circle, you can be sure of that.

MP: You consider children as closely related to fools who reveal «the secret language of the world by babbling and playing, for it can be revealed in no other way» (Kennedy, 1989, p. 375), since the young child’s ontological and epistemological convictions were left behind when the modernism of the West developed. Do you remember any time when a young child, by expressing his/her thoughts in the circle, surprised you so much that you clearly felt the need to rethink your own perspective as a man of the twentieth century?

DK: I’ll give you one ironic example – probably not what you’re looking for – which I wrote a paper about, in fact.¹² As I already said, I’m something of a neo-animist. I believe in the cellular basis of consciousness – the latter implying agency, interaction, and sentience. I’m in Piaget’s first stage of belief about what’s alive and what’s not – namely everything. I went in to talk to a bunch of second graders to try to find out if they felt the same way, and they were all operating, in public at least, on the adult assumption of a fundamentally mechanical *inanimate* universe. So, this was an ironic situation in which I was trying to project back into them an earlier stage of belief, one they had already “outgrown.” And in fact, at a certain point, a couple of them said something like «Yeah, well, I suppose you *could* think about that that way . . . »¹³. Very adult!

MP: What do you mean when saying that they were already very adult?

DK: I don’t think that children have the vocabulary to describe the kind of thinking I was invoking until they no longer think that way – until, that is, they “grow out of it.” These seven-year-olds were basically already Western adults in terms of their ontological and epistemological convictions. Maybe you have to go before language to find this infant vision of the animate universe.

THE ROLE OF *AISTHESIS*

MP: Maybe they can express it through paintings...

DK: Yes, I think art is one way that we remain in touch with the living universe. The role of art is fundamental to opening the senses to the world.

¹² See Kennedy 2006c.

¹³ About the idea of the young child’s ontological and epistemological convictions such as animism, finalism and artificialism, see Kennedy 1989.

MP: What about art in the methodology of P4C? Despite art being an aesthetic way of perceiving the world, rather than a logical way, can we use art during a P4C session? Do you think that intuition through art can be as effective as logical understanding through words?

DK: Actually Lipman in *Thinking in Education*, when presenting the five-step methodology for a CPI session, identified the last step as exploring the ideas discussed through other modalities, for example through poetry or dance or art or theatre – in short, in the move from *logos* to *aisthesis*.

MP: Do you consider *aisthesis* to be a form of intelligence?

DK: Yes, absolutely. The aesthetic is a form of awareness, a way of knowing based on right-brain processing, to put it crudely. It changes perception and acts to reduce what I have seen called *sensory gating* – the narrowing of our perceptual boundaries such that we only approach the world through categorical language and logical ideas; we might call it the gated community of perception. There is no reason why we can't engage in practices that serve the transitional space between *logos* and *aisthesis*. Lipman would say that, after the discussion, then we might paint, we might draw, we might write a play or a poem.

MP: Would you recommend using paintings as a stimulus, instead of a story, at the beginning of a session?

DK: Yes, very much. That would be very interesting, but *aisthesis* is uncontrollable. It is that section of the lived world where something happens that we did not bring about consciously; a transitional zone in which the unconscious speaks through symbol.

MP: What about using abstract paintings?

DK: That's even further out there, isn't it? Abstract art requires a whole other language to translate into, more like the language of physics. That would be fascinating – to present the CPI group with a Kandinsky or Miro or Jackson Pollock or de Kooning or Mondrian, and generate questions. What if CPI dedicated itself to that on a regular basis? The painting as philosophical text... This connects directly with Marcuse's (1978 philosophy of art, put so powerfully in *The Aesthetic Dimension*, where he says: «The inner logic of the work of art terminates in the emergence of another reason, another sensibility, which defy the rationality and sensibility incorporated in the dominant social institutions» (p. 7). Art – and philosophical dialogue! – as the cultivation of a new sensibility.

RETHINKING P4C 50 YEARS LATER

MP: From the '70s – when P4C was launched – to today, the world has changed a lot. In your opinion, is there any aspect of P4C which is no longer correspondent to current needs and should be updated or adapted?¹⁴

DK: Say more, updated why?

MP: 50 years have elapsed, and the current world is different in terms of relationships, digitalization, speed...

¹⁴ For the question of P4C after Lipman see also Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011a, 2011b.

DK: I guess I don't see the world on a fundamental level as different at all. It might have to do with my age but, socially, culturally, the US has remained the same. What's going on there today – racism, tribalism, imperialism, corruption, radical individualism and political polarization as well as optimism, openness, generosity, and a sense of opportunity for ongoing personal and collective reconstruction – have always been there. The differences are of degree, not of kind. Fascism has always been present in one degree or another. The tools become ever more complex and sophisticated, but not the patterns of action and reaction. But it seems to me that CPI, like *skholé*, embodies an eternal human archetype of collective deliberation, intrinsically dedicated to the dialogical exploration of our evolutionary possibilities – to literally “new” brains in the sense of more integrated, more functionally connected: a new sensibility. To practice it from childhood on is, I think, at the heart of a good education.

MP: You are saying that very little or even nothing has changed over the last 50 years. What about the way children think and our beliefs and assumptions about childhood? Has this changed? How?

DK: Lloyd deMause was a psycho-historian who published a book called *The History of Childhood*, where he argues that there has been a historical evolution of child rearing modes, based on our shared beliefs about the nature of children, the social role of childhood, and how we should “raise” them. He posits six stages – the Infanticidal, the Abandoning, the Ambivalent, the Intrusive, the Socializing and the Empathic. The rise of universal compulsory education corresponds with the Intrusive Mode – discipline, shaping – turning the chaotic, impulse-ridden raw material of childhood into adulthood by more or less violent means. Now he understands us as having entered, roughly mid-20th century, the Empathic Mode, in which we learn from children, we connect with childhood in openness to what they have to offer, we allow them their childhood because we recognize it in ourselves, and we recognize childhood as a prophetic condition, a statement of possibility. The Empathic Mode is exemplified in Deleuze and Guattari's *becoming child*. We are more and more seeing the child as agent and interlocutor. In fact, there is a new emergent movement in the United States and Europe called Childism, which connects a new way of seeing childhood with decolonization. Child was originally a colonial subject, and colonized people were like children. American racists used to address black people as ‘boy’. This association of childhood with colonial subjects in Foucault's sense of “subject” as one who is “subjected”, is being questioned and taken apart by the scholars and pedagogues in the childism movement. More and more emphasis on the agency of children raises the question that you brought into our conversation: if we see children as agentic and empowered, are we preparing them for adulthood?¹⁵

¹⁵ In Kennedy 2006a, the author investigates the history of childhood, the history of adulthood and their interrelationship from a philosophical perspective and offers an approach to child study which could lead to a qualitatively different school system where the child is viewed as participant rather than object in the structure of social reproduction.

UTOPIAN SCHOOLING

MP: Aren't you afraid that we have shortened their childhood and that this has happened not because society sees them as agents or is interested in hearing their new voices, but because of its need to have them as active consumers?

DK: Yes, I think that is a real danger, one of the many associated with rampant corporate capitalism, which coopts everything it sees. And that's why I think the models of *skholé* and the "embryonic community" of the small, democratically self-governed school is our path forward as educators. I'm thinking about such a school as representing a special kind of discursive and relational space in the adult-childhood relationship. This school is small enough that it can be co-governed by students and teachers. I think of it as a special place for the growth and the transformation of the adult-child relationship – where adults become more like children in the sense of *becoming child*, and children becoming adults in a way that is not as colonial subjects but as democratic actors¹⁶. I think this is happening to a certain extent also in youth movements that are growing around the major planetary issues of the day, like global warming, and, in the United States at least, the proliferation of gun violence. In both of those issues young people have been rising up and organizing and speaking out.

MP: You wrote that «the idea of a dialogical school has been made possible by a historical shift in adult views of the child as an interlocutor rather than an *othered* object of adult formation» (Kennedy 2016 p.551). How much has this idea been absorbed by the US school system? Has this transformation led to a change in the autonomy of thought of young people?

DK: The democratic education movement has spread all over the world. There are several hundred small schools like Summerhill, the original model (or the best known), where children have an equal part in governance and in the design of curriculum. These dialogical schools are prophetic of the possibility of what school might be; they represent a forerunner, but this prophetic possibility needs work and experience in order to grow. Meanwhile, these schools are completely excluded from the mainstream – they have no influence at all; the "experts" and the politicians in Washington have most likely never heard of them. And the existing system acts to groom them for capitalistic "citizenship" – i.e. mindless consumerism and a spooky blend of conformity and selfish individualism.

MP: Maybe the dialogical school can spread only in a dialogical society, whereas Western Societies are becoming increasingly polarized. For example, I have read that only 3% of marriages in the US are between people voting for different parties. In this context, do you think that P4C is still possible? P4C pedagogy is clear but is there any risk that it is outdated? Do you see any signs of hope?

¹⁶ About this child-adult chiasm, namely an ideal school where both, the child and the adult grow, undergoing educative experience, see Kennedy 2015.

DK: There is an eternal question in philosophy of education: does society change because the schools have changed or do schools change because society has changed? What is the causal relationship between a form of schooling and the adults it has produced? It would seem that other sorts of changes have to happen: health, economic, infrastructural, political changes. Do they have to happen before the school changes? Do they determine and control the way the school works? Is the school merely a function of society or can it influence society? It's a question that is impossible to answer completely because it's causally overdetermined.

In my small experience (and perhaps distorted imagination), the change happens at the local level when everything else is gone. It's a post-apocalyptic situation that emerges as the big system fails, and we are sitting in our newly localized neighbourhood no longer inexorably plugged into the big system. When everything has been localized because of the breakdown, then there is the possibility of new forms. So, you have a bunch of parents getting together and starting a school. I am an anarchist by persuasion: there is no *archē*, no over-branching system that can freeze us forever. Localism, community interaction, that's where the change can actually happen. Maybe, it will always be a utopian piece hidden under the shell of the bigger picture – what Ernst Bloch called the “novum”—the new (and perennial) thing that beckons us from the future.

PHILOSOPHICAL STORIES

MP: During the last decades, the original Lipman curriculum has been enriched with a considerable number of stories and handbooks from different authors and addressed to children of specific age ranges or dealing with particular thematic areas. Can you imagine any issue that has not been covered yet by the current publications which you consider worth investigating with children through philosophical inquiry?

DK: Issues like race, for example, or patriarchy are carefully kept out of the conversation. That seems to be the source of tension right now, and it raises the question of how much negativity in the world should children be exposed to. Some people say children should live in a protected world; they should not have to deal with these bigger issues. Some others say children can and should be more involved in political and social issues like racism and climate change and gun violence and economic inequality, and that the community of inquiry should be a place where we can talk about real problems, not only about friendship and what's real or not, but about Tolstoy's “What Is to Be Done?” – the ethical imperative. The gated community doesn't allow anything but ultimately unimportant talk. Even if you just talk about justice, you talk about it in the abstract. I think that one element of the democratic school movement should be local activism – for example about some sort of environmental problem in the community which is not being addressed, or, internationally, the problem of land mines, or immigration, or world hunger. Schools can be places where those local issues are studied as part of the curriculum and acted upon.

MP: Lipman's stories have proven to be very effective in stimulating complex thinking (Lipman, 1991; De Marzio, 2011), but they might sound not so exciting and fun to young ears. As a writer of philosophical novels (Kennedy, 2012b, 2022), how did you try to combine effectiveness and appeal in your stories? Do you consider these texts of yours as pedagogical devices?

DK: My two novels are basically fantasy and adventure. I didn't do that on purpose, it just happened. At the same time, I'm sorry that they're not a bit more pedagogically positioned. I think Lipman's novels may be conservative and a bit parochial, but they are also valuable just for the fact of having those limitations. They are meant to be taken as pedagogical texts – read aloud together episode by episode, questions generated, starting place for the discussion decided on, etc. – and then forgotten. They are meant to fall away like rocket boosters as the philosophical issues they trigger are transformed into questions. I still believe in their efficacy, especially when they are used in conjunction with the manuals that accompany each one, which are filled with discussion plans and thought experiments that focus on the concepts that are strewn throughout the novels like Hansel and Gretel's bread crumbs, but I also believe in multiple ways of presenting philosophy to children. Both of my novels have crazy plots and wild things happening along with the conversations between the protagonists. My novels are more dreamlike, verging on magical realism.

MP: You said that Lipman's novels are great because they have some limitations. Could you expatiate a little more on this point? Since you believe that these texts are valid as a stimulus for philosophical questions, in your opinion, what are the essential characteristics that have made these stories a new genre? And is it merely a new pedagogical or also a new literary genre?

DK: I'm not that interested in making distinctions between genres or sub-genres in literature. It seems to me that the novel itself is intrinsically a philosophical genre. The novels by Thomas Mann or Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Stendhal, D.H. Lawrence, Hesse, Nabokov, Faulkner etc. are philosophical works, as are picture books like *Peter Rabbit* or the works of Arnold Lobel and Maurice Sendak or William Steig. On the other hand, Kierkegaard is a novelist of sorts, as are Wittgenstein and Novalis and Plato's Socratic dialogues. It's all in the uses of the text by the community of philosophical inquirers. As I said, Lipman's texts are designed to "fall away" as the concepts within them are identified and problematized, and we can do that with Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as well.

P4C AT DISTANCE

MP: The pandemic period has seen an explosion in the demand for e-learning. Do you think that a digital P4C is possible? Would it be an adaptation of the classic model or would it be something new?

DK: Meeting and communicating – being present to each other – in two rather than three dimensions has to make some difference in the quality of the experience. What I see on

the screen is an optical illusion. There is no way to check reality. I can't verify whether the shelf full of books behind you is something that's just being photoshopped for our meeting because that's what an academic study looks like. This is the crisis of the "post-truth" era. However, the digital device makes the connection we are having right now possible. I think that the webinars organized by PLATO— the Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization, which is growing very fast now – would be ways of introducing ourselves and maintaining community, although in the long run I do take Lyotard's (1992) worry that what he calls "complexification," an inexorable process of technological development is, as he puts it, «coming to thwart the plan of human emancipation» as it bridges the human-machine divide.

MP: During the pandemic several P4C centers in the world tried different ways to continue their activity at a distance. In terms of method, do you see any valid new ideas associated with P4C?

DK: I tend to be conservative in the sense that I think of Socrates' circle as a universal model for dialogue. I see P4C as a neo-Socratic dialogical form that lies beneath or beyond Socrates' method, which has been given a boost by the theoretical work on dialogue in recent years, beginning with Gadamer and Bakhtin. There are other models out there. David Bohm, who is a physicist and also a metaphysical thinker, constructed a form of group dialogue¹⁷ that is much more open-ended. As he framed it, there would be about twenty people present and there no fixed agenda and no facilitator. So, that would be a more radical emergent form of dialogue.

Dialogue has a form and energy of its own that, when we allow it to unfold, leads to the emergence of new meanings. It's a universal form of interaction and discourse – an archetype. I don't see how that would change through technology. I don't see it changing as the world changes, because it's a function of language.

MP: During the pandemic, you explored the possibility of having philosophical reasoning with your students through the web. Have you ever tried a session at a distance? I think it could work in developing critical thinking but not in developing a community. Do you agree?

DK: Yes, when I tried, it was very difficult. Typically, it ended up being only three people really participating and the rest were in silence. I didn't want to be a bully forcing people to talk in order to make it work. This was with undergraduate students who I had met only once in person. If it was with fifteen doctoral students, I think it would have been quite different.

MP: And your audience, in that case, didn't know the game!

DK: Exactly, they had no idea. I was hoping the game would be self-evident.

MP: I think it would be even worse with children.

¹⁷ See Bohm, 1996.

DK: Probably. There are always three or four who are out there and ready to talk but the others go silent. But I don't think that my experience should determine anything. It was a very low-grade, but that's on me.

MP: You have been to the Italian P4C Summer school in Acuto twice and experienced its special atmosphere. How can you describe the magic of Mendham to the Italian public? Do you think that being together for several days in an isolated place represents a fundamental aspect for the formation of the community?

DK: I think Acuto and Mendham represent a very similar model. What's wonderful about the model it is that it's a place apart, removed from the demands of production and conditioning and commodification – it's *skholé*, “free time,” aionic time, time on the mountaintop, that rare situation in which everyone who is there *wants* to be there. It's a utopian model in the flesh. It provides, especially for educators, a concrete example of what school as *skholé* could be, would look and feel like on its best days. Obviously, that cannot be replicated in an online situation, nowhere near. But we're in a historical situation in which we don't really know what the new information environment can do, much like that moment over 500 years ago of the invention of the printing press. Now like then, we can see its dangers pretty clearly, but its evolutionary possibilities are not yet obvious. Will it act to facilitate or to “thwart the plan of human emancipation”?

Well, I hear there's going to be an online Mendham next winter. Let's see what comes of it!

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