

**Annalisa Caputo**

## ***When Children Give Rise to Thought (donne à penser)***

The choice of the title of this issue was more difficult than usual. In the end, we chose an ironic reversal of the well-known expression *Philosophy for Children*, which became *Children for Philosophy*. What did we want to communicate and what do we want to propose with this reversal? Certainly not a refusal in itself of the *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) in a strict sense (meaning, of course, that particular method and educational ideal, created (in the '70s) by Matthew Lipman, primarily designed to develop the potential of thought in children and adolescents). So much so that we have chosen to dedicate a section to it in which we asked the two major exponents of P4C in Italy to introduce us to the issue and its relevance (Antonio Cosentino e Marina Santi). However, we want to clarify immediately that this is not a special issue on P4C: neither in its *didactic* session nor in its *theoretical* session. With the overthrow of the title we wanted to indicate 'this' first and foremost: like all issues of *Logoi*, this one has a thematic object/subject, and this subject is children. Children are, in this issue, at the center of the prism of languages (logoi). So, our question, first of all, is not *what can philosophy do for children?* (Or: *how can you make the most of a philosophy for children?*) But: *what happens to philosophy when it reflects on children?*

Another title that we had considered (and which was then passed to this Introduction) is: *Children 'donne à penser'*. Lovers of Paul Ricoeur will immediately recognized the play on words that the philosopher taught us, showing us how in the French language '*donne à penser*' means both '*to give rise to thought*' (to question, to reflect, to push one to think) and '*to give a gift*' to thought<sup>1</sup>. And this, of course, applies not only to philosophy, but as a result – in the interdisciplinary approach of our magazine – it applies (or should apply) to other languages as well. And, therefore, we have not asked, for example, what constitutes children's literature and which examples (classical or contemporary) might be presented. But, on the contrary: what image of children emerges from literature? How is literature constantly forced to rethink its image of the child? And the same: not how to convey art to children, but the image of children in art. And not: how to teach music to children, but the nature of children in music. So, not how to transmit philosophy to children, but how philosophy sees the child.

Of course, the field in question is so vast that it would have been necessary to collect encyclopaedias. And, therefore, as discussed in other issues of *Logoi*, we have limited ourselves to a few *exempla*, which seemed indicated, and indicative of a reversal of perspective which it is always useful to make, when approaching children. And so, for the literary sphere, we have Rai Gaita discussing John Maxwell Coetzee's *Childhood of Jesus* and Chiara Guidi who explains her 'singular' theater linked to childhood; for the artistic field, the analysis of an installation (with children in play) by Duchamp and the tragic nature of childhood that emerges in Luise Bourgeois and Ursula von Rydingsvard; for music Hana Ehllová and Chiara Bertoglio who introduce us to Schumann's *Kinderszenen*.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Le symbole donne à penser*, in "Esprit", 27 (1959), pp. 60-76. In a first English translation, the symbol was qualified as 'food' for thought [*The Symbol: Food for Thought*, in "Philosophy Today", 4 (1960), pp. 196-207], because the symbol 'feeds' reflection without being absorbed into it or absorbing it into itself; but Ricoeur clarifies the meaning of the expression '*donne à penser*', linking the verb '*donner*' (*to give*) with the noun '*don*' (*gift*). «Symbol gives rise to thought. This maxim that I find so appealing says two things. The symbol gives: I do not posit the meaning, the symbol gives it; but what it gives is something for thought, something to think about. First the giving, then the positing»: Id., *The Conflict of Interpretation, Essays in Hermeneutics*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1974, p. 288.

*Exempla*, we said, of the image of the child in literature, in music, art, theater. Why? Because only if we become aware of ‘our’ (adult, western, modern and/or post-modern) image of children, can we try to problematize it, to realize that it is ‘ours’ and not of the children (and how could it be otherwise?). However, we do not have another image, because we (parents, teachers, educators, relatives, friends) are the ‘teachers’ of children. And it could not be otherwise. A child-centric vision is a myth. We cannot free ourselves from prejudices: nor from the fact that the vision ‘of’ the child is inevitably ours (objective genitive) and not ‘of’ the child (subjective genitive).

And philosophy? Does it help us, can it help us in this? Actually, the history of philosophy not only does not help us, but for the most part, in this, it disappoints. As has been noted<sup>2</sup>, in fact, there exists «a dual interpretive scheme that is repeated with respect to the figure of the child»: he is either the ‘minor’, whose minority is only the state from which he must exit to reach maturity (and therefore rationality, happiness, the fullness of humanity) - from Aristotle to Kant, this is the ‘classic’ scheme of Western rationalism; or the child is the lost ideal toward which we nostalgically tend (and, therefore, the voice of truth, innocence, wonder, imagination, curiosity, a free and playful spirit) - from romanticism, to a certain existentialism.

In short, the child is either he who is missing a *logos* and must be gradually educated to develop it; or he who, in his a-logical youth, becomes for us the unattainable goal of going beyond the human. The vision of the child/philosophy relationship, as we shall see in the section on *Philosophy for children*, also depends on this. Because in the first scenario a philosophy for children becomes unthinkable; while in the second case we run the risk of thinking that the child is the only true philosopher.

Now, what we are interested in stressing is not so much or just how much this double scheme is risky from an educational point of view, but how behind this scheme is hidden an ‘old’ rationalist/metaphysical dualism. If man is a rational animal, the child is only non-man (and non-philosopher). But an inverted pencil is still a pencil, and if we only emphasize the greatness of man’s irrational, pathic, alogical authenticity, then man is only a non-child (and non-philosopher).

In short, the fact remains that our inability to think about childhood in a real way (the child nature of the child) primarily depends on our vision of man, entangled in the aforementioned dual pattern: an interpreted man, therefore, starting either from his ‘rational’ origin or his ‘irrational’ one. However, as Heidegger said, «irrationalism, as the counterplay of rationalism, talks about things to which rationalism is blind<sup>3</sup>». And then, maybe, only a different view of humanity will also allow us a different view of the child. Maybe. In the words of J.F. Lyotard, «the monster of philosophers is childhood. But it is also their accomplice<sup>4</sup>». We should start from this complicity, then.

Therefore, from this point of view, the valuable contribution from Walter Kohan *¿Cuándo se empieza a pensar con otros?*, becomes almost a ‘manifesto’ which - for this reason - we wanted to place in the opening of this issue of “Logoi”, but that could have been placed in the same way as a ‘hinge’ between the theoretical part on languages and the part more properly dedicated to philosophizing with children. In fact, after explaining (with Lyotard and others) why philosophy is the infancy of thought, Walter Kohan shows that only from the recovery of ‘this’ philosophy (untimely, incomplete, opening of the possible, liked to the experience of ‘foreignness’ and, at the same time, to the ‘intimacy’ with oneself and things) is it also possible to trigger an authentically ‘political’ mechanism

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<sup>2</sup> I. Poma, in A. Pastore – U. Perone, *Filosofia. Per le scuole superiori*. Vol. III, SEI, Torino, 2005, pp. 678-681; quoted in C. Calliero- A. Galvagno, *Abitare la domanda: Riflessioni per un’educazione filosofica nella scuola di base*, Morlacchi Editore, Perugia, 2010, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. engl. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Harper and Row, 1962, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> J. F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children*, Power Publications, Sydney, 1992.

of rethinking of our life 'together'. Hence, the importance of starting from the school, from the children: and from a certain philosophy 'of' children, 'with' children. Not by chance did we use a quote from Kohan in our *Call for papers*:

we think that philosophy has a commitment with childhood, not only with that of children and with that of any person open to the possibility of another way to exist, but also with the childhood of the world. (...) The world and the childhood in which we (do not) exist deserve this effort.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, with Wohan (and not only with him) we share not only the theoretical scenario of the childhood/thought relationship, but (as we shall see) also problematisation of a certain way of thinking about P4C.

We, the ones who 'already know', the subjects of the experience, put our best intentions into designing the world we want for those who, we think, do not know or have not yet lived long enough. We must risk a bit more (...): stop thinking about children (...) and allow childhood to think about us.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, the second part of this issue enacts a second aspect of the overthrow indicated by the title *Children for Philosophy*: attention to philosophy for/with children, not only as a teaching method, but as a philosophical practice, which must, first of all, say something to the world of adults and the world of philosophy.

*What children teach philosophy* - was another of the titles that we wanted to give this issue. Now it is clear why.

If it is true that our language, our philosophy, our anthropological vision (of the child and the adult) are adult-centric, Western-centric, rational-centric (but which we are unable to move beyond because we are this vision), if it is true that we cannot free ourselves from our prejudices toward the human, toward the child, toward philosophy, however it is also true (as we were taught by hermeneutics), that we can make ourselves more aware of our horizon; and try to take our prejudices into account, in a dialogue that knows how to listen to the world of children (so *in-fans*, so other than ours): not, above all, to bring it closer to us; nor, above all, to cancel us in it. But in the awareness of the difference: that alone can allow dialogue, and the fusion of horizons.

The child certainly is 'not' an adult man, but he is not characterized only by this 'not'. And he certainly is 'not' a philosopher, if by philosophy we mean the conscious exercise of reason and conceptual work; but he is not characterized only by this lack/inability of thought. And, vice versa, we are not only 'children' who yearn for a lost childhood; philosophers disappointed by their work, who need to quench their thirst with pre-conceptual and fantastic thought to find the meaning of their research. No. It is pointless to deny that the approach to this Otherness that is childhood (and that is the child-being) is very difficult for us, i. e. for the Western/rational/adult man that we are (even when we deny being so, and perhaps we strive not to be so). However, we believe that the solution is neither to crush the other in ourself, nor to crush the 'same' in the other.

Childhood 'in itself' does not exist. It is inevitably 'related' to 'us'. But also an adult-being 'in itself' does not exist, except in relation - among other things - to childhood. There is thus the possibility of a reciprocal gift. If it is true that childhood can give something to philosophy (of/and to) adults, even the philosophy (of adults) can give something to children. «Perhaps, then, philosophy and children, rather than fearing a mutual reduction

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<sup>5</sup> W. O. Kohan, *Questioni filosofico-politiche nella filosofia con i bambini*, in M. Santi (ed.), *Philosophy for Children: un curriculum per imparare a pensare*, Liguori, Napoli, 2005, p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> Id., *È possibile che un bambino pratichi la filosofia nella scuola? Su un punto di vista infantile riguardo al senso del filosofare*, in L. Rossetti e C. Chiapperini (ed.), *Filosofare con i bambini e con i ragazzi. Atti delle giornate si studio di Villa Montesca (31 marzo – 3 aprile 2005)*, Morlacchi, Perugia, 2006, p. 45.

could finally enjoy a mutual multiplication, where philosophy helps children to grow and children do the same for philosophy» - writes Marina Santi.<sup>7</sup>

*Children give rise to thought about philosophy. And philosophy can give rise to thought about children.* A circle that can become virtuous, if it is experienced in this double dimension.

I think that teachers really discover philosophy for the first time when they begin to philosophize with children; they are forced to rethink their positions, and what appeared at first to be a given; they discover that children reproduce their own lives and they are really excited about it. This is one of the strongest points in favor of P4C: its being, at the same time, a form of profound adult education –

said M. Lipman, not without a certain emphasis<sup>8</sup>. Whether we agree or not, the fact remains that for philosophy this issue is primarily theoretical and only secondarily pedagogical.

It is perhaps a matter of asking oneself whether the development of different types of itineraries and discourses that call philosophy into question does not say something to philosophy. (...) In this sense, beyond the value which it may have in itself, an experience like P4C is actually also an opportunity for philosophy once again to think about itself (...). In fact, behind the embarrassment that the very idea of the philosopher produces, there is something significant, (...) the dual nature of the philosopher –

emphasizes Luca Illetterati<sup>9</sup>. What is philosophy, if it can be something for children (practiced by children) and not just for adults (or at least for the young)? What philosophy we are talking about? Is it necessary that philosophy reconsider its self-image? And secondly, are all forms of philosophy ‘useable’ with/by children? And if not, why?

It is clear that philosophy for/with children is a challenge for thought, first of all. We will return to these questions in our article *Philosophia ludens per bambini. Lo scenario teoretico e la proposta operativa*). In any case it seemed essential to anticipate the ‘scenario’ of the questions, to justify the large space left to the educational section: that in this light is much more than a merely ‘educational’ section.

In the second part of this issue, in fact, we have collected experiences of *philosophy and children*, first of all with the intention *to listen* attentively: *to listen to* those who have practiced it with passion and competence in recent decades, and *to listen to* the voices of children which are evident in these same experiences. We have, first of all, given space to the Italian pioneers of P4C: Antonio Cosentino and Marina Santi.

In the section *Italian Experiences in Philosophy with Children* we then collected some reflections related to practices of philosophy with children created in Italy which, although starting from the insights of P4C, in some way then moved independently. And we like this: because, although we are always dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, if philosophy is moving (not only in its Anglo-American model, but also in its continental matrix), even philosophy for children cannot remain rigid in its Lipmanian roots. We would be doing an injustice to Lipman himself, as well as to experimentation and research. So, first the contribution of Livio Rossetti, ‘*Tertium datur*’. *I molti bei modi del ‘philosophieren’*, which – starting from the questioning of the (perhaps too obvious) division between Analyticals and Continentals (to which two ways of doing philosophy correspond) –, shows how there is a third way (and maybe many other ways) to experience philosophizing, tied to the «philosophical potential in all of us»; there are «virtual and inchoative philosophies»; and among these emerges the philosophy of children and young people. The contribution by

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<sup>7</sup> M. Santi, *Filosofia e bambini. Condizioni e possibilità di incontro*, in Id., *Philosophy for Children: un curriculum per imparare a pensare*, Liguori, Napoli, 2005, p. 233.

<sup>8</sup> *Conversazione con M. Lipman* (by M. Santi), in “Prospettiva EP”, 6, 1991: now in A. Cosentino (ed.), *Filosofia e formazione: 10 anni di P4C in Italia (1991-2001)*, Liguori, Napoli, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> L. Illetterati, *La doppia natura del filosofo*, in *Philosophy for Children: un curriculum per imparare a pensare*, pp. 198-99.

Rossetti is ‘theoretical’, but we cannot forget (... it appears in a few notes) that behind it there is also the valuable, solid work of *Amica Sofia*, an association founded in 2002 in Perugia, affiliated with SFI (Società Filosofica Italiana), referenced by many teachers and philosophy experimentations with children (scholastic and beyond; in primary school and beyond). In this context we can understand the article by M. Napodano, *La filosofia dialogica come progetto etico*.

Next there is an essay by Luca Mori, *Filosofia degli esperimenti mentali. Esplorare i confini del pensabile con bambini e ragazzi*, who shows how it is possible, through the use of ‘classical’ philosophical puzzles, experiments and paradoxes, to engage children in critical and/or imaginative paths (think, for example, of the value and the possibility for utopian thinking) and to open up the wonder of ‘first’ questions, re-involving the ‘journey’ of the teacher differently (with an ending that is not already preconstituted).

Then we go back on the practical implications of Kohan's theory, with the essay by S. Bevilacqua e P. Casarin, *I tempi e gli spazi del pensare insieme. I ‘millepiani’ delle pratiche di filosofia*.

In conclusion, there is the presentation of ‘our’ experience: ‘*Philosophia ludens*’ for children. It would be useless to deny that this issue began from here, from what we learned from the children of the II B and II C classes of the Primary School ‘D. Cirillo’ (Bari – Italy): ‘playing with philosophy’ and having confirmation of how a *philosophy-in-play* is able to make both children and adult think (in different ways, but still charming).

As we shall attempt to show<sup>10</sup>, we believe that our proposal has *a tinge of originality* especially in its playful dimension, in its getting children to play in small groups, in teams (between *agon* and *cooperative learning*): *a touch of originality*, but not an absolute novelty; and, therefore, we have placed it at the end. Not for false humility, but for recognition of the entire path that has preceded us, and to which we owe something (for affinity or for difference). Because proposals (in philosophy and in teaching) never arise from nothing. We distrust those who set themselves as the self-centered model of their teaching, especially in philosophy with children. We do not believe that you can invent yourself as a teacher of philosophy for children. Nor that methodological rigor can be replaced by the (brilliant?) invention of a master-guru. Many, too many proposals, with eye-catching advertising, flood the web and the schools, promising the teaching of philosophy with children, but not offering anything but their pseudo-insights.

Instead, in our view, teaching *philosophy with children* in Italy has an advantage: it can take advantage of the long history of the Italian *Teaching-philosophy theory* (*Didactics of Philosophy*), a history which is currently in a new phase, and can reap the benefits of overcoming false contradictions that have characterized it in the past.

Today are we all aware of how ‘false’ the Hegel-Kant opposition is in teaching (should you teach philosophy or to philosophize?). We are all convinced that the alternative between ‘*teaching in a historical or theoretical way*’ (which marked a certain stage of the discussion on teaching in Italy) has had its day. We are sure that philosophy is (yes) a style, a practice, a method, but it is also a discipline strongly marked by its history (in particular this applies to continental philosophy, and, inevitably, to Italian *Teaching philosophy*)<sup>11</sup>.

That’s why we believe it to be fundamental that a philosophical practice (and even more a philosophy with children) be carried out by a professor of philosophy, a philosophy graduate, who has behind him/her a strong disciplinary training, and so that *Philosophy with children* it not be carried forward by generic graduates (or undergraduates).

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<sup>10</sup> See my essay in this issue: *Philosophia ludens (PhL) per bambini. Lo scenario teorico e la proposta operativa*.

<sup>11</sup> I take the liberty to of referring to my essay in F. De Natale – A. Caputo – A. Mercante - R. Baldassarra, *Un pensiero in gioco*, Stilo, Bari, 2011.

What do we mean? That the alternative to P4C is talking about Plato, Descartes, Kant to children? Of course not. We believe (and we tried to make it explicit in our essay in this issue) that the philosophizing that you can do with children is not ‘the same’ as what you can do with young people and adults, who are capable of critical thinking and logical argument.

Is there something that unites them? Yes: the *thaumazein*, the size of the question, the *Lebenswelt*, the vital and pre-conceptual world (from which the interpretative articulation arises), the narrative background and the imaginative dimension that accompanies every matter of meaning. The great thinkers of the hermeneutics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century taught us all this. However, it is not sufficient to raise questions, cultivate fairytale wonder, play with colors and materials, create illusionistic scenarios, move in a clownish way to do philosophy. Because philosophy is also the search for answers. Together. In dialogue. Where inevitably the first dialogue is with the thinkers who came before us, and, therefore, with the history of philosophy.

What do we want to say? Do we want to say that you need to study the history of philosophy with children? Of course not. But help them understand (also) that the questions we ask (them and us) belong to a history; and others have tried to answer them before us. And help them understand that we can find the answers (that we search for together) with the help of others who have tried and answered before us. This is not just humility. But truth.

One of the things we have always done in our experimentation with children and with young people was to tell them: ‘*this is what philosopher so and so says*’; ‘*we have learned this from philosopher so-and-so*’. We had a ‘magic box’ from which we pulled out the materials we needed for the philosophical workshop. And clearly this box was for us the object symbolic of the astonishment from which philosophy arises (as well as a catalyst for the children’s attention). But before taking any other tool out of the box (palettes, colors, masks, sheets of paper, etc.), we always pulled books out of the box. Yes, books.

Who knows if these children, grown up, will remember some of the philosophical games we played together. Certainly no one will remember the titles (or authors) of those books that came out of the magic box. But we hope we have communicated this to them, too. That philosophy is not just a game, but it is also a study. And that the *Philosophia ludens* teachers who played with them are not ‘magicians’ who invented questions and used mysterious objects, but they are professors, who before being teachers were students; and that they learned from the great ‘philosophers’ the ideas that, with simplicity (and, we hope, competence), they then tried to experience with them.

So, we practice a ‘hermeneutic’ philosophy with children: in the (virtuous) circle of the *handed down and openness to the new*; of question and answer; of past and future; of history of philosophy, and philosophy. In fact, this has always been the challenge of the *Philosophia ludens* method, created for the High schools, and which now has 13 years of experiments and research behind it<sup>12</sup>.

Anyone who will have the patience to read not only our theoretical paper, but also the project, the didactic sheets, and the results obtained, will get a better idea of what we are briefly trying to reveal here. Our proposal, indeed, is nothing more than a project for implementing the *Philosophia ludens* method also in primary school and junior high school.

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<sup>12</sup> See A. Caputo, *Philosophia ludens. 240 attività per giocare in classe con la storia della filosofia*, La Meridiana, Molfetta (BA), 2011 (pp. 692 – with CD) and *Philosophia ludens: Spielerische Laboratorien für höhere Schulen*, “Zeitschrift für Didaktik der Philosophie und Ethik”, 2015, 4, pp. 88-96.

In our first workshop, our ‘mentors’ were Gadamer (and his ontological game theory) and Aristotle (and his idea of metaphysics as work with questions: which start from what is closest, and reach the highest and most complex issues). In the second workshop we were guided by the philosophers of difference: particularly Levinas and Derrida. In the third workshop, on the theme of the untimely, our guide was undoubtedly Nietzsche, but also the utopian cities of Plato, Campanella, and Thomas More.

For each workshop we chose keywords, which respectively were: *questions/answers; equal/different; timely/untimely*. Alternating moments of discussion in a semicircle and moments of team games, the children were led to problematize (1) their experience of questioning; (2) the knowledge of being equal to all the other children, and yet different from all the other children; (3) the way they see the world, school, their city as they ‘currently’ are, and imagining how they could be (in an untimely, possible, future world).

Of course, the dynamics (carried out with 8 year old children) could not be supported by a high level of conceptual definition and logical argument, but this did not prevent the beginnings of an interpretative articulation of meaning, also facilitated by other types of language channels.

In the first workshop, for example, we worked with iconography: the introduction to philosophy was carried out through a team game based on the iconological image of philosophy by Cesare Ripa. In the second workshop, the centrality of the ‘face’ (and consideration of the uniqueness of each person) was facilitated by the use of masks, and short role plays. In the third workshop the children’s imagination was channeled into the design and construction of ‘untimely’ (ideal, utopian, imaginary) cities and schools.

The rigor of the logos was inevitably tempered by pre-conceptual colors, but the final ‘debriefings’ (and, so, the feedback received by the children at the end of every lesson) showed us the ‘change in looking’ that they experienced through thinking about philosophical questions and content.

I invite you to read the reports on the workshops, written by the *PhL (Philosophia ludens) teachers*<sup>13</sup>: graduates in philosophy who carried out the workshops with me, and who I thank for this important experience of ‘*from the bottom up*’ philosophizing: Eleonora Palmentura, Michela Casolaro, Fabio Lusito, Luca Romano, Gemma Bianca Adesso e Michele Sardone: the entire staff of *Logoi* participated.

Reading, in their pages, the transcripts of what the children (students/players) told us, you will find that 8 year old children are able to express that: *the untimely is something that does not exist yet; it can be a thing of yesterday, but also of tomorrow; something yet to be built or to created; a world that we can change: in which we can change the rules, the school, ... and even the teachers themselves.*

You can discover that they dream of magical worlds, full of color, with houses and streets full of imaginative forms on the edge of unreality, but also of clean, orderly cities, with trashcans everywhere, with gardens in which to move freely, with kings, magicians and mermaids strolling along with robots and flying machines. They dream of countries called ‘Freedom’, schools in which you play and study together, public kitchens where everyone can take what they need to eat even without paying, public offices where the mayor and others work for the good of all, the proliferation of hospitals, houses in which the garbage is automatically recycled, and more.

Reading the reports, however, you can also discover the idea of identity and difference that 8 year old children have, they say (and teach us) that we are all equal because ‘*we are all people*’, ‘*we all have a face*’, ‘*we are all capable of playing*’, but also of feeling ‘*thirst and hunger*’; yet we are also all different, *in our body, clothes, sex, skin and nationality, strength and intelligence, in tastes, in dreams, in our heart, in character, and in our fears.*

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<sup>13</sup> Eleonora Palmentura, Fabio Lusito, Michela Casolaro. See their essays in this issue of “Logoi”.

And you will discover that in the heart of children 8 years old, left free to express their questions, live the deepest questions: *What will my future be? Why am I smart? When am I happy? What is love? Why are there races of men? Why am I a girl? Why do I exist? What is your life like?* - to report just a few.

And the final question (in your opinion, what is philosophy?) they were able to respond, in diverse and intuitively effective ways: *a fun game for everyone (children and adults); a subject which makes you intelligent; a riddle; asking questions; an activity; the mind; a story; a fantastic lesson ...*

And these are just a few examples. In truth, no two answers were alike. And this, in itself, was something to marvel about, and reflect upon.

We do not teach the history of philosophy in the junior high school, nor is it the philosophy of the universities. It is not even properly Philosophy. We would do injustice to the children if we thought of it in this way (turning them into adults), but we would also do an injustice to our hard (conceptual) 'work', if we rendered it *childish*.

Instead, we experienced a wealth of difference: the confirmation that children can give something to philosophy, and philosophy to children. And so, perhaps there is a possible future, of dialogue, between philosophy and children: with horizons yet to be explored, to reinterpret the philosophical image of childhood and to reinterpret the theoretical image of philosophy, thanks to childhood; and to start from the bottom, to make sense of our study courses, our research, our paths, our University.

Right here, today, especially in southern Italy, when graduates in Philosophy are unemployed, when the spaces for the teaching of philosophy are drastically reduced, right here, today, when we have the temptation to close undergraduate courses in philosophy (not to create illusions for those who enroll and will then be unemployed), here and now we would like to conclude with the words of Alessia (8 years), which, if they had not been uttered in the Hall of Frescoes, at the University of Bari (where we ended the presentation of the project with schools), could have been taken from the film *Tutta la vita davanti (Your Whole Life Ahead of You)* by Paolo Virzi: «*when I grow up I want to study philosophy here*».