

# Aspects of Philosophical Dialogue with Children

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(received 5, October 2006)

The aim of this paper is to explore the philosophical significance and the cognitive value of philosophy with children and their relation to educational objectives. Although philosophical discussions can be conducted with people of any age, we have in the first place in mind discussions in the classroom with children of elementary school age. It will be argued that the three phases of philosophical sessions in the classroom, the reading of a story, questioning, and the subsequent discussion, each have their own cognitive value and educational objectives. The philosophical conditions of a community of inquiry will be investigated and it will be seen that they lead to a specific conception of philosophy. Finally story-reading will be seen as more than an arbitrary occasion for bringing forward philosophical questions.

Key words: Philosophy for children, discussion, narrative, education

## INTRODUCTION

Philosophical sessions with children in the classroom usually take the following form: A short story or part of a story is read aloud, often by the children, in turn.<sup>1</sup> Questions relating to the story are formulated, preferably by the children, and a particular question is chosen for discussion. The question under consideration is discussed until a common conclusion has been reached, or it has become clear that no common conclusion is within reach. The choice of a story as start of the session seems arbitrary, the more so because many practitioners of philosophy for children do not start with a story, but simply with a question, with a play, or even with an object brought into the classroom.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, each of the phases has its particular value and aims. Because the story read is often seen as no more than an arbitrary occasion to start the discussion, the cognitive value of story-telling and its relation to philosophy will be discussed at the end of this paper.

## QUESTIONING

The German Neo-Kantian philosopher Leonard Nelson used to begin his philosophical seminars in the University of Göttingen by asking if anyone had a question. If no one had a question, there would be no discussion. Because, Nelson argued, the business of philosophy is a serious and difficult one, and if you have no question you will never endure the hardships of philosophical investigation.<sup>3</sup> Although this view on the discipline of philosophy may be a little bit exaggerated, the ability to ask and formulate questions is a skill, which tends to be heavily underrated in formal education. Questions, which can be discussed in a philosophical session, have to answer to two criteria:

1. They have to be sensible questions, that is, questions that are important and interesting enough to be investigated in joined inquiry.

2. Questions should be understood by everybody and should be answered on the basis of reasoning and common experience alone, excluding specialized empirical or scientific knowledge, or special insights.

Philosophy, to say it in the words of Leonard Nelson, is thinking about the conduct of our common lives:

*We expect from philosophy that it will give us rules to judge the facts of life, which we need to be able to act in a thoughtful way. Such a thoughtful attitude requires insight in the ultimate objectives and aims of human life. And just these objectives philosophy has to teach us.*<sup>4</sup>

This vision seems to imply that philosophical discussion in the classroom will be restricted to moral questions, questions about the meaning of life, and questions about living in a human society; this, however, is neither necessary, nor in practice the case. As examples will show, philosophical discussions in the classroom cover a wide range of philosophical problems, from moral philosophy to epistemology and metaphysics. For, to quote again the philosopher who was one of the first modern thinkers to revalue the practice of philosophical discussion:

*Philosophical inquiry is, as all search for truth, its own intrinsic aim. But this higher interest in truth, which is independent of any utility, in the last resort has a bearing on the relation between our thinking and reality and confers value only upon those efforts of the mind, which foster our insight in reality.*<sup>5</sup>

How should children learn to ask questions which ‘will give us rules to judge the facts of life, which we need to be able to act in a thoughtful way’, and which, moreover they can answer on the basis of their common experience and rational capabilities? There is no instructional and structured course for learning to ask sensible questions. But in practice children learn fast enough which questions are fit for a philosophical discussion without any guidance. The question ‘can we answer this question in our discussion’ could, however, itself be discussed philosophically.

## DIALOGUE IN PHILOSOPHY<sup>6</sup>

Without starting a long discussion about the nature of the subject, we will define philosophy as the discussion of our frames of reference, of the principles underlying our experience of reality, of the place of humans in that reality and of the conduct of life in general. Philosophy is a rational activity in which arguments and reasoning count, but which does not rely on specialized empirical knowledge other than our familiarity with everyday life. Obviously, conducting philosophical discussions in the classroom will have as objectives exactly the skills which are needed to discuss the rational principles underlying common experience, as Matthew Lipman, the founder of the Philosophy for Children movement, repeatedly stresses:<sup>7</sup>

1. The sharpening of analytical and reasoning skills or critical thinking. These include not only what is commonly understood as ‘informal logic’, but also skills like conceptual analysis (what exactly is the meaning and what are the implications of abstract concepts), argumentation (including analysis of preconceptions and weighing of arguments), metaphorical and analogous reasoning (including discussion of the value of metaphors and analogies), and classifying.<sup>8</sup>
2. Imagination and speculative thinking: in philosophical discussion we are confronted with questions and problems we may never have thought about. We have to form an opinion about matters unknown so far and have to come up with new ideas and theories.<sup>9</sup>
3. Reflection on attitude and behavior, on moral and esthetic values, on the meaning of life and the nature of social life.<sup>10</sup>
4. Co-operation in inquiry: if philosophical discussion is the exploration of the common principles of our daily experience and behavior, then it obviously has to be a common enterprise, for which

Lipman coined the phrase 'community of inquiry'.

In an earlier publication<sup>11</sup> I argued that accepting dialogue as a legitimate way of doing philosophy had certain implications for our conception of philosophy. In particular, philosophical dialogue as a principle of philosophy excludes a scientific view of philosophy, in which philosophy is seen as a body of accumulating knowledge. When we take philosophy as the total of rational principles underlying our everyday experience, this has two consequences:

1. Every person capable of rational thought can contribute to philosophical insights, and, on the other hand, what counts as philosophical truth has in principle to be understood and acknowledged by every rational person.
2. Because the principles of our experience are not automatically given as such, doing philosophy is the unending task to explore the common world in which we live.

Between philosophy and dialogue there has been a close relationship from the beginning, in European as well as in Eastern, Chinese, philosophy.<sup>12</sup> Dialogue has been at the cradle of philosophical thinking, in the early, so-called 'socratic' dialogues by Plato, and in the *Analects* (論語) of Confucius. Although dialogue soon was replaced by the treatise-form, in Europe in the works of Aristotle, in China in the *Mozi* (墨子), in the last case under the thin guise of conversation by the introductory formula 'Master Mozi said' (子墨子曰), dialogue returned: in Europe e.g. in the works of Cicero and Seneca, in China in the *Mengzi* (孟子) and the *Zhuangzi* (莊子). Even in more recent history dialogue has been a major literary form in philosophy, mainly in the periods in which philosophy was not regarded as a 'science', that is as a body of accumulating knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

The frequent use of dialogue as a literary form in philosophy, in contrast to scientific works, is in itself, of course, no proof of the dialogical character of philosophy. Quite a number of authors choose the literary form of dialogue because of its theatrical effect, or to disguise their own opinion if revealing it could be risky. The spoken dialogue, by contrast, can be a dispute, in which the participants merely try to convince each other, or at least an audience; or an eristic dialogue, in which disputers try to win according to specific rules of the game, as these were customary among the Greek and Chinese sophists.

There seem to me to be two types of dialogue which can be characterized as 'doing philosophy', jointly trying to reach an insight, in contrast to merely presenting philosophical insights or opinions: the Socratic and the Confucian dialogue.<sup>14</sup> Socrates and Confucius share the conviction that insight is of cardinal importance for right conduct, and both act as a pedagogue without claiming that they themselves have the superior insight. Their dialogues are a kind of instruction, they are not on equal footing with their partners in conversation, but at the same time they confess to have no definite answer to the questions asked. Nevertheless, the kind of insight and the way to gain it are in both cases completely different and have very different epistemological implications.

Socrates' 'maieutic method' has the implication that insight not only is possible, but that it is somehow already present in the interlocutor and can be brought to light by questioning. This insight is of an abstract nature. What Socrates is after is a general definition of or insight in the virtues (sometimes skills) investigated. This general knowledge is necessary and sufficient for right conduct, as Socrates tries to elaborate in the so-called *Hippias Minor*, where he even goes so far as to assert that nobody knowingly does wrong. The implication of this is that the insight sought is universal, potentially present in every person, and that it is of an articulate nature.

In contrast to Socrates, Confucius, when asked about the nature of the cardinal virtue, humaneness (仁) does give an answer, but this answer can barely be understood as a definition or even a description of humaneness. In fact, the master gives quite different answers at different times. The answer has something to do with the person addressed and the situation in which it is given. The disciple only gets a scanty indication, which in fact means he has to find out for

himself, the master only pointing to his main obstacle in gaining insight. The nature of this insight is quite different from the Socratic or Platonic insight. It is not of a universal nature and not of an abstract quality, but a personal insight that has to be arrived at by everybody in his own way.

The discussion in the community of inquiry or inquisitive dialogue has characteristics of both types of philosophical dialogue. Although there is no one-to-one personal relationship between the teacher or facilitator and disciple, the main task of the former is indicating where the difficulties in the discussion lie. The teacher doesn't pretend to know or pretends not to know an answer to the question investigated. On the other hand, the inquisitive dialogue is characterized by the fact that it represents a common effort to find a convincing answer to a question of common concern, let us say, the truth, which brings it near to the socratic conception of philosophical dialogue. Now, precisely here lies a major difficulty. We are all familiar with conceptions of philosophy according to which there are no definitive answers to philosophical questions. That is exactly the reason why the history of philosophy is important for the activity of doing philosophy, in sharp contrast to the meaning of the history of physics for doing research in physics. Trying to find an answer to a philosophical question is, in the terminology of Guilford<sup>15</sup>, a divergent, not a convergent activity. Because philosophising is a divergent activity, the situation in which and the way by which an insight is gained, is of cardinal importance, and this brings the philosophical dialogue nearer to the Confucian conception.

But if gaining philosophical insight is so tightly connected with personal development, if a philosophical insight is a personal, individual acquirement, how then does this go together with 'finding out truth together' in philosophical inquiry? To be clear, even if the gaining of philosophical insight is a purely individual matter, this does not exclude the benefit of communication with others. Outside influences can bring me nearer to the realization of my insights. However, the nature of these influences would in that case be indifferent to the results. Listening to music or enjoying a view of nature can bring me nearer to personal insights, and so might conversation with other people. It is not improbable that the communication with other people is a more effective means to advance my personal insights than music or a landscape, and this could be a justification for philosophical dialogue. The insights gained by different participants could, however, be different and diverge widely, even if remarks and questions by others would have been a real stimulus for every one of them.

If, however, the conversation with others is regarded purely as a means to my reaching insights or even, let us say, wisdom, I am in an asymmetrical position, because the other participants, however high may be my esteem for them, are at the best a better means than music or landscape. This situation is not fundamentally altered by the fact that others would consider me as an effective means to further their personal development. It is in my interest to gain as much as possible and, at the best, indifferent how much I give. I might be moved by compassion to further the insights of my companions, but I have no direct personal interest in that, except that living together with people having a minimum of common rationality makes life more agreeable.

This excursion into game theory may be a little bit a parody. What we can learn from it, however, is that the realization that an insight gained is, in the last resort, a personal matter, provides us with no strong drive to co-operate in a joint enterprise to find out. Joint effort can only be motivated by the realization that behind personal motives and personal development there lies something common. I can only whole-heartedly co-operate with others in an earnest effort to gain insight, if that insight can be reached, not only with the help of others, but on the condition that they advance their insight too and that we are moving in the same direction.

The insight I am after is the insight in the principles underlying my experience in a world I have in common with others. Rational principles, because philosophical dialogue is a rational activity.

My personal world of experience consists of more than the underlying principles; it contains a lot of contingent facts, quite personal insights or opinions that have little to do with a shared world, or even false insights. How can I discern which insights are the principles underlying our common world of experience if I remain restricted to my individual perspective? Well, if there is such a thing as a rational structure underlying common reality, then others have to share it. Their perspective, different from mine, can help me discover what is contingent, and what is — to use the language of rationalism — necessary truth in my view of the world, but only under the condition that my partners undergo the same process. Only a common enterprise can lay bare the principles underlying our common experience of the world. The others form so to say a mirror for me, maybe even a better mirror the more different their perspective is from mine.<sup>16</sup>

What is the nature of this common experience we are exploring in philosophical dialogue? In the foregoing we repeatedly spoke of ‘common experience’ as a level of reality accessible in principle to all who share the faculty of reasoning. Daily experience in a literal and concrete sense, however, is clearly very different for the university teacher, the philosophical practitioner, the factory worker, the salesman, the peasant, the consultant, the IT-technician. There barely is any common experience on the basis of which we can develop common rational insights. Common experience only means that we live in a common world, meet each other, try to understand each other, live together, sometimes have common interests and can make appointments. But this common world is no more than the shell inside of which our very different lives are enacted.

Practising philosophy is trying to understand how all these different lives fit together in a common reality, is to have the ‘eye on the whole’ in the phrase of Wilfred Sellars.<sup>17</sup> “Philosophy in an important sense has no special subject matter which stands to it as other subject-matters stand to other special disciplines.”<sup>18</sup> There is, this means, a radical difference between philosophical insights and understanding in any other area of human thought.

To be able to act thoughtfully we have to discover the ultimate aims and objectives of human life, which obviously can be derived from the principles underlying our common experience. Again we can ask: are those principles somewhere present in the common substance of our diverse worlds of experience, like the grain in the wood, ready to be discovered by the seeing eye? Can we regard these various worlds of experience as the diverse manifestations of one and the same underlying reality?

It is difficult to imagine that a common experience, which is not experienced, is nevertheless somewhere present. The reality of which philosophy promises to find out the truth is not a definite area of experience to be explored, but a common experience that still has to be constituted. The ‘shell’ in which our various areas of experience fit, is not an object lying around somewhere, but a task to be fulfilled. In this respect philosophical reasoning is something very different from the instrumental reasoning in specific areas of experience. The reality of which philosophical practice tries to find out the truth, is not given. It is the result of an intersubjective, in the last resort intercultural dialogue.

We may conclude that the educational objectives of learning to reason, speculate, reflect, and co-operate, are no accidental results of philosophical discussion, but are tied together by a specific view of the nature of doing philosophy: the constitution of a common world of rational human beings.

## THE COGNITIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF STORIES

The cognitive value and educational objectives of stories (narrative) is discussed here last, because the theme has barely had any attention in the literature on philosophy for children.<sup>19</sup> A complete discussion of the cognitive significance of narrative would require a book length study;

we will concentrate here on the aspects that are particularly relevant for philosophical dialogue with children.

The Lipman-curriculum ascribes to the novels, which form the core of the curriculum, the function of 'modelling': the children in the novels are of the same age as the intended public, and the philosophical discussion starts already in the story itself. The expectation that children will simply imitate the behavior of the children in the story seems a little bit naïve, as I argued elsewhere.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, the stories used as starting point of a classroom discussion can contribute to reflection and insight, as we will see.

Evidently, stories develop in time. Although in recent literature there has been a renewed interest in the cognitive significance of narrative,<sup>21</sup> the classical representations of knowledge neglect time altogether. As an example I take John Anderson's well known ACT\* production system.<sup>22</sup> Although Anderson recognizes temporal encoding as a specific kind of knowledge representation, this only means arranging events in an ordinal sequence, out of which the specific duration and the passage of time have been eliminated. The same is true for Schank and Abelson's 'scripts', which also represent the passage of time in the form of a timeless spatial scheme.<sup>23</sup> The experience of time is thus reduced to mere ordinal arrangement, a spatial tool for planning and overseeing temporal experiences and activities.

Attention has been paid to the passage of time in philosophical, especially phenomenological literature. Husserl investigated the temporal structure of experience,<sup>24</sup> but his analysis is restricted to individual, passive experiences. Heidegger, in his *Sein und Zeit*, considers the temporal structure of the whole of human life and existence, but his accent is on the limits of temporal being in his concept of *Sein zum Tode*. The value of those contributions is, however, that they disconnect the tie between temporality of human existence and episodic memory, the capacity to reproduce the story of one's own life.

Knowledge, of course, is stored in memory. Usually, two kinds of memory are distinguished: systematic memory and episodic memory. Systematic memory contains the knowledge of facts and relations for which time is irrelevant, e.g. the knowledge that 2 plus 2 equals 4. Episodic memory contains the knowledge of the past, in the first place one's own past, the story of one's life. The acquisition of systematic knowledge takes place in the course of one's life, but the temporal location of this knowledge is irrelevant for the character of systematic knowledge. Very often people don't even know when they acquired specific knowledge. Knowledge of particular events, actions or circumstances can, of course, only be acquired at the time they occur.

About episodic memory three related observations have to be made which are relevant for the importance of narrative in the development of thinking. Episodic memory is essentially the storage of what happened in a person's life and it is closely tied to one's feeling a definite person and to the sense of meaning or coherence of life.<sup>25</sup> One would expect, therefore, that our memory of the past arranges the events of our life — as far as there are of any importance for the conception of the whole — in a unilinear sequence. Actually, episodic memory contains many stories the time relations between which are unclear (in this respect there is no difference between episodic and systematic memory). We are engaged in a great number of projects that seem to develop independently and need not to be correlated in time.<sup>26</sup> Our life is not so much a novel as a collection of stories.

Secondly, to be incorporated in the story of a person's life and give meaning to it, an event need not to have taken place at all, as Freud discovered.<sup>27</sup> The consequence is that not only dreams and fantasies, but also stories told by others and stories from literature can be incorporated as a meaningful part in one's own life as far as we can actually accept them as parts of our life. Our lives would be very much poorer without the narratives of literature and movie. This is particularly

important because meaning and coherence in life are no static characteristics of one's life, but are subject to continual revision. The final biography of our lives can only be written at the end of it, unfortunately by others. In youth, however, the story of our lives is still relatively open.

Thirdly — and this is an observation which connects the significance of narrative to what we said about the nature of philosophical dialogue as an exploration of a common reality — the story of our life is not a completely individual story: our lives are intertwined and by history and tradition connected to past generations.<sup>28</sup> The common experience of which we try to discover the underlying principles in philosophical investigation has the form of narrative.<sup>29</sup> Storytelling is, therefore, itself an important skill and one of the means to develop that skill is the use of stories in philosophical sessions.<sup>30</sup>

In European philosophy narrative doesn't seem to play a big role.<sup>31</sup> Reference is made to stories and anecdotes, of course, but the stories referred to serve as examples to elucidate some point that is afterwards cleared in discourse. The function of the story or anecdote is to draw the attention of the reader or give the reader some concrete clarification. The story itself doesn't belong to the philosophical view or theory exposed. It could be left out. Only very rarely will a philosopher use a story to expose some of his views, like Plato did in the *Republic* with his myth (*muthos*) of the cave, and the myth of the Thracian. Plato, moreover, resorted to narrative where no rigid dialectical demonstration was possible and probably regarded the *muthos* as an inferior mode of exposition. The situation is completely different in ancient Chinese philosophy. Works like the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, the *Han Feizi* 韓非子, the *Guanzi* 管子, the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, the *Lun heng* 論衡, the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 abound in stories and anecdotes. Marcel Granet once remarked<sup>32</sup> that in Chinese thought stories and anecdotes seem to form the building blocks and the train of thought is determined by the selection and order of the stories. Although this may be an exaggeration — dialogue and dispute play a role in Chinese philosophy too — it is clear that narrative is more than an ornament in Chinese thought. Chinese thinking seems to be a combination of what Jerome Bruner called logico-scientific or paradigmatic and narrative rationality.<sup>33</sup>

If we ask what is the value of the stories the first thing that comes to mind is their mnemotechnic function: what is told in the form of a story is not easily forgotten. Who will not forever remember the story of the man of Song and the hare from *Hanfeizi* 49, or the story of King Hui of Chu and the leech from Wang Chong 王充 (*Lunheng* 論衡 6.20) after having read those anecdotes? If there would be no more to the use of stories than that, the narrative element would be only a means to organize and remember the dialectical argumentation, the story itself would have no cognitive significance, only a supporting function.

There is, however, a deeper layer of narrative. Some philosophical works, particularly the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, seem to be little more than collections of stories and anecdotes, for which reason some philosophers exclude these works from the history of philosophy altogether and delegate them to the field of literature. Both philosophers are representatives of an epistemological perspectivism, the view that any perception of reality is inextricably bound up with the perspective of the observer or witness. This view cannot be uttered in words without betraying its own message. It can only be shown: in stories. In the cases of *Zhuangzi* and Nietzsche there exists a strong internal link between the message propagated and the literary form of the work.<sup>34</sup> Stories from *Zhuangzi* can certainly be used in philosophy for children, although some may need some adaptation because of the very different literary conventions of *Zhuangzi*'s time. We do not expect, however, the story to propagate a specific message; after all, as Bruner remarks, the story is 'in some deep sense a joint product of the teller and the told'.<sup>35</sup> At the least, the story needs an interpretation, and for an interpretation, it has to be questioned.

As the story totalizes elements and events into a whole, the first question is that of the causal

concatenation of the events. Questions why things happened as they did, or for what reason a person in a story acted as he or she did, frequently arise in the classroom. The causal connection between events in a story — or, for that matter, in real life — is not mediated by general laws, that is, explanation by foregoing events in a story is not a nomological explanation.<sup>36</sup> The consequence of this is that there are no general rules that can automatically be applied to historical explanation.

Not only does every historical explanation remain open to discussion, but giving a historical explanation or interpretation requires a skill that can only be developed in frequent practice. The stories in philosophical sessions serve exactly this aim in education, although interpretation, of course, is also practised in daily life.

The philosophical story should have some puzzling or perplexing aspect,<sup>37</sup> but we can give no general recipe how to write a philosophical story.<sup>38</sup> Every story, however, contains something out of the ordinary. As far as we simply follow every day usage, no story is needed except the narratives that legitimize the tradition itself. The story especially forges 'links between the exceptional and the ordinary' in the words of Jerome Bruner.<sup>39</sup> "When you encounter an exception to the ordinary, and ask somebody what is happening, the person you ask will virtually always tell a story that contains reasons..."<sup>40</sup> Thus the philosophical story is simply an exaggeration of what is already inherent in story telling.

By stressing the extra-ordinary, stories contribute in another way to cognitive development. Narrative confronts us with unusual situations that are open to various interpretations and on which we have to form an opinion. Was it right, or wise, for the person to act like he or she did? Understanding the unusual contributes to what Aristotle called 'phronêsis' (practical wisdom), sharply to be distinguished from theoretical or logical thinking skills, because for practical wisdom no general deductive rules can be given and for which a variety of experiences is required.<sup>41</sup> Stories precisely contribute to the widening of the horizon of experience, for our personal experience tends to be very limited.

We can conclude that narrative contributes to the development of skills in education exactly where skills allow no algorithmic rules for the solution of a problem or the answer to a question. And, in a sense, Lipman is right, because the discussion and the attempt to reach consensus or agreement in a discussion, is itself a story that develops in time.

## NOTES

- 1) In socratic discussions as conducted among others in the German *Philosophisch-politische Akademie* no story is read, but philosophical analysis starts with an example from the life experience of one of the participants. This, of course, is a story too. For the socratic method see: Gustav Heckmann, *Das sokratische Gespräch; Erfahrungen in philosophischen Hochschulseminaren*, Hannover, Schroedel Schulbuch Verlag, 1981.
- 2) Thecla Rondhuis started a discussion by bringing a Carlier watch into the classroom, which was much admired until she revealed that she had bought it in Thailand for about 10 EURO. This initiated a discussion about what is 'genuine' and what is not. See: Thecla Rondhuis, *Filosoferen met kinderen*, Rotterdam, Lemniscaat, 1994.
- 3) See: Leonard Nelson, 'Die sokratische Methode' ('The Socratic Method'), in: *Gesammelte Schriften in neun Bdn.*, I: *Die Schule der kritischen Philosophie und ihre Methode*, Hamburg, Felix Meiner, 1970, p. 269–316.
- 4) Id., 'Von der Kunst, zu philosophieren', o.c. p. 224.
- 5) Ibid., p. 234.
- 6) I will use the terms 'dialogue' and 'discussion' interchangeably.



- 7) See: M. Lipman, A.M. Sharp & F.S. Oscanyan. *Philosophy in the Classroom*. 2nd. ed. Philadelphia, Temple Univ. Pr., 1980, p. 53ff.
- 8) An even broader definition of 'thinking skills' is used by Matthew Lipman in his *Thinking in Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge U.P., 2003, p. 166ff.
- 9) For an elaboration of this category, see Matthew Lipman, o.c., p. 245ff.
- 10) Obviously we expect behaviour and attitude to be influenced by reflection on them. The question of the transfer of acquired skills and attitudes to other areas of experience and behaviour is discussed by me in: 'Reflections on the aims of a Philosophy for Children Program', *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften* 12 (2001): 4, 450-452.
- 11) 'Philosophical Dialogue and the Search for Truth', in: *Thinking; The Journal of Philosophy for Children* XVII: 3, 17-23.
- 12) For the role of dialogue in ancient Chinese philosophy, see my: 'The Dialogue Form in Ancient Chinese Philosophy', to be published in the Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> EPIC International Conference "Talking Thinking: Philosophy and Dialogue with Children and Adults", Glasgow, Strathclyde University, 17-19 June 2006.
- 13) I leave aside the question of the relationship between dialogue as a literary form and the existence and importance of actual philosophical conversations.
- 14) What is said here about the Confucian dialogue is not restricted to the person of Confucius, but characteristic for much of Chinese thought. Particularly fine examples can be found in the work of Wang Yangming (王陽明), *全習錄*, translated by Wing-Tsit Chan as *Instructions for Practical Living*, Columbia Univ. Pr. 1963.
- 15) *The Nature of Human Intelligence*, New York 1967.
- 16) An additional reason why the history of philosophy, including non-European philosophy, that is to say the views of people living in a very different world, is of lasting interest.
- 17) Wilfred Sellars: 'Philosophy and the scientific image of man', in: Id., *Science, perception, and reality*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963.
- 18) *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 19) Surprisingly, because the practice of starting a philosophical session in the classroom with the reading of a story is almost universal. Even Matthew Lipman's theoretical foundation for philosophy with children, *Thinking in Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge University Press, 2003, pays no attention to the cognitive role of narrative in philosophy for children. The function of the story is, according to Lipman, to provide 'an inquiry-fostering environment', 'a habitat' (p. 156/57).
- 20) See: 'Reflections on the aims of a Philosophy for Children Program', l.c.
- 21) For a convenient survey, see Donald E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, Albany, SUNY, 1988, which discusses a great number of contributions.
- 22) John R. Anderson, *The Architecture of Cognition*, Harvard U.P. 1983, particularly p. 45ff.
- 23) See: R. C. Schank & R. P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding. An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures*. Hillsdale, Erlbaum, 1977. The same terminology is adopted by Anderson in his *Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., New York, Worth, 2004, p. 163ff.
- 24) See: Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, Hrsg. von Martin Heidegger, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1980.
- 25) See: David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, p. 73ff.
- 26) Carr, o.c., p. 79.
- 27) See: Polkinghorne, o.c., p. 120/21.
- 28) Carr, o.c., p. 122ff.
- 29) Carr, o.c., Ch. 6.

- 30) In this respect Gareth Matthews' procedure of doing philosophy in the classroom is particularly interesting. He starts with a story that is unfinished and uses remarks from the discussion to continue the story, until the class has the feeling the story is finished. See his: *Dialogues with Children*, Cambridge MA, Harvard U.P. 1984.
- 31) There are exceptions, like Montaigne's *Essais*, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* and the work of Martin Buber, especially *Die Erzählungen des Rabbi Nachmann* and *Die Legende des Baalschem*.
- 32) In his *La pensée chinoise*, Paris 1934, introduction.
- 33) Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Cambridge MA, Harvard Univ. Pr., 1986.
- 34) Something similar can be said of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Thinking in stories which can not even be represented in dialectical form abound in Zen-Buddhistic literature, notably in the Rinzai-school, e.g. in the famous collection Biyan Lu or Hekiganroku (碧巖錄).
- 35) Jerome Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*, Cambridge MA, Harvard U.P., 1990, p.124.
- 36) This has been repeatedly stressed in the literature on narrative, most extensively by Paul Ricoeur in his *Temps et récit*, Tome I, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1983, Part II, p. 137ff.
- 37) In Lipman's words: "because it is problematical, containing many ill-defined, essentially contested concepts, and because it displays the employment of many intellectual instruments, such as mental acts, reasoning skills, propositional attitudes, initial and follow-up questions, and judgments." (*Thinking in Education*, p. 156)
- 38) Classical examples are, of course, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Often puzzling, also, are the animal stories by the Dutch author Toon Tellegen, some of which have been translated into Japanese. A master of philosophical short stories was my former student and colleague Berrie Heesen, e.g. *Klein maar dapper*, Budel, Damon, 1996. Unfortunately, only a Spanish translation is available.
- 39) *Acts of Meaning*, p. 47.
- 40) *Ibid.*, p. 49.3
- 41) The fact that stories are a form of moral education is stressed by Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Notre dame 2003, esp. ch. 10.