

**Philosophy for Children and Culture Circle:
contributions to a comprehensive, dialogued and participatory education for children¹**

*Filosofia para Crianças e Círculo de Cultura:
contribuições para uma formação integral, dialogada e participativa da criança*

*Círculo de Filosofia para Niños y Cultura:
aportes a una educación integral, dialogada y participativa para niños y niñas*

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze the contributions of Philosophy for Children, in conjunction with Paulo Freire's Culture Circles, to the integral, critical, and participatory formation of children in Early Childhood Education and the initial years of Elementary School. The methodology adopted is theoretical-bibliographical, based on authors such as Aristotle (2008); Freire (1967; 1981; 1987); Galeano (2025); Gallo (2006); Lipman (1990; 1994); Lorieri (1994); Kohan (2018); Silva (2024) and others, articulating philosophical and pedagogical foundations. The results indicate that philosophical practice, when integrated with Freirean principles of dialogue, problematization, and awareness-raising, favors the development of autonomy, active listening, argumentation, and critical reflection in children. The experience of Culture Circles, adapted to the children's universe, enhances the emergence of philosophical questions from everyday life, promoting a more meaningful and humanizing education. It is concluded that the union between Philosophy for Children and Culture Circles constitutes a potent pedagogical proposal for the construction of a protagonistic, reflexive, and transformative childhood.

Keywords: Philosophy for children; Culture circles; Dialogical education.

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Resumo: Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as contribuições da Filosofia para Crianças, em articulação com os Círculos de Cultura de Paulo Freire, para a formação integral, crítica e participativa da criança na Educação Infantil e nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. A metodologia adotada é de natureza teórico-bibliográfica, com base em autores como Aristóteles (2008); Freire (1967; 1981; 1987); Galeano (2025); Gallo (2006); Lipman (1990; 1994); Lorieri (1994); Kohan (2018); Silva (2024) e outros, articulando fundamentos filosóficos e pedagógicos. Os resultados apontam que a prática filosófica, quando integrada aos princípios freireanos de diálogo, problematização e conscientização, favorece o desenvolvimento da autonomia, da escuta ativa, da argumentação e da reflexão crítica nas crianças. A experiência dos Círculos de Cultura, adaptada ao universo infantil, potencializa a emergência de questões filosóficas a partir do cotidiano, promovendo uma educação mais significativa e humanizadora. Conclui-se que a união entre Filosofia para Crianças e Círculos de Cultura constitui uma proposta pedagógica potente para a construção de uma infância protagonista, reflexiva e transformadora.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia para crianças; Círculos de cultura; Educação dialógica.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las contribuciones de la Filosofía para Niños, en articulación con los Círculos de Cultura de Paulo Freire, para la formación integral, crítica y participativa del niño en la Educación Infantil y en los años iniciales de la Enseñanza Primaria. La metodología adoptada es de naturaleza teórico-bibliográfica, con base en autores como Aristóteles (2008); Freire (1967; 1981; 1987); Galeano (2025); Gallo (2006); Lipman (1990; 1994); Lorieri (1994); Kohan (2018); Silva (2024) y otros, articulando fundamentos filosóficos y pedagógicos. Los resultados apuntan a que la práctica filosófica, cuando se integra a los principios freireanos de diálogo, problematización y concientización, favorece el desarrollo de la autonomía, de la escucha activa, de la argumentación y de la reflexión crítica en los niños. La experiencia de los Círculos de Cultura, adaptada al universo infantil, potencializa la emergencia de cuestiones filosóficas a partir de lo cotidiano, promoviendo una educación más significativa y humanizadora. Se concluye que la unión entre Filosofía para Niños y Círculos de Cultura constituye una propuesta pedagógica potente para la construcción de una infancia protagonista, reflexiva y transformadora.

Palabras clave: Filosofía para niños; Círculos de cultura; Educación dialógica.

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1 The revolutionary power in the relationship between philosophy for children and Culture Circles

This article proposes a reflection on the pertinence and significance of introducing Philosophy for Children in early childhood education and the initial grades of elementary school, with the potential to extend to basic education. Beyond merely methodological or disciplinary content issues, the text discusses the fundamental value of a philosophical initiation in childhood that awakens philosophical doubt, creativity, and curiosity in children, both in relation to themselves and to other people and the world around them. The central

purpose of this proposition is to contribute to the construction of an educational practice that positions the child as the protagonist of their own learning and that enables them to perceive themselves, others, and the world in a more conscious way, promoting a comprehensive, dialogical, reflective, inclusive, and critical education.

In contrast to a teaching model frequently marked by technicality and the valorization of immediate utility, which finds it difficult to accommodate dialogue and respectful argumentation in the classroom, philosophical initiation in basic education presents challenges by demanding distinct pedagogical practices and methodologies. Philosophy, according to the Aristotelian perspective, is valid and sought not for the sake of some external utility, but as an end. It begins with wonder (*thaumázein*) before things that surprise, seeking the understanding of reality through the exercise of reason and a deep look at the whole (Aristotle, 2008).

In this context, the child is viewed as an integral being, endowed with rationality and feelings, fully capable of doubting and reflecting on the reality in which they are inserted, even if it is contradictory, utilitarian, and pragmatic. However, a crucial and necessary question emerges: is it possible to teach Philosophy to Children? Can children philosophize and perform meaningful abstractions, or are their questions limited to superficial inquiries? It is in the face of this problem that the article delves deeper, seeking strategies that lead children to reflective thinking and a critical and questioning view of reality.

Considering the above, the central proposition of this article is that the activities of the “Culture Circles”, as conceived by Paulo Freire, can contribute significantly to the development of Philosophy for Children classes. This union aims to enable moments of awareness for the child about themselves, their relationships, and their world, in what is called childhood as a “revolutionary power”. The text, therefore, will proceed with an appreciation of the work of Philosophy for Children, its propositions and experiences, and subsequently analyze the proposal of the Culture Circles as a mechanism that values reflection, criticism, and awareness.

To illustrate the power of this union between the Culture Circles and Philosophy for Children and to demonstrate how it enhances the integral and critical formation of the child from their own reality, the article also explores how this articulation manifests itself in contemporary developments such as the Culture Circles of Childhood (CRIA). Grounded in Freirean assumptions and other important theoretical foundations, CRIA utilizes narratives from the daily routine of Early Childhood Education as a starting point, transforming children's experiences, curiosities, and concerns into generative themes for collective discussion. In this sense, the article will present and analyze

practical examples extracted from the ebook “Circles of Cultures of Childhood: narratives from the daily routine of Early Childhood Education”, highlighting how philosophical questions can emerge authentically from children's experiences and be investigated by the community of inquiry, under the educator's mediation. This analysis seeks to demonstrate how the CRIA methodology, by validating children's voices and grounding the discussion in concrete reality, enables a conducive environment for Philosophy for Children to provide the conceptual tools necessary to deepen reflection and stimulate critical, creative, and caring thinking.

To this end, the article is structured in sections that present the role of philosophy in the development of children's reflective and critical vision; the relationship between Circles of Culture and Philosophy for Children, highlighting childhood as a revolutionary power and the contribution of the dialogical relationship; and, finally, it will explore the emergence of philosophical inquiry in daily life based on the practical propositions of the Circles of Cultures of Childhood (CRIA) and their narratives.

2 The role of philosophy in developing children's reflective and critical vision

The Philosophy for Children approach, practiced for nearly four decades, does not entail transmitting ready-made content from major philosophical movements, nor does it involve instilling in them theses of renowned philosophers. This would transform the philosophy class into one distant from its proper philosophical activity. It is not enough to know the thought of a philosophical reference to say that one is already a philosopher, nor is it enough to present a logical reasoning to say that one is fit to philosophize. According to the North American thinkers Lipman, Oscanyan, and Sharp (1994, p. 87), “Although all philosophical activity involves reasoning, it cannot be concluded that everyone who reasons is involved in a philosophical activity”. Thought and reasoning are natural abilities that can be developed by everyone, but there are abilities that are specific to philosophy, such as forming concepts, seeking meanings, interpreting relationships between phenomena, and making inferences of cause and effect.

Lipman, Oscanyan, and Sharp (1994) argue that the development of cognitive skills can reflect on other formative and pedagogical aspects, enabling children to expand their skills of analysis, comprehension, and expression. It is expected that these skills will be transferred to all areas of knowledge and that they may further improve the ability to listen, study, learn, and express oneself.

Philosophy, as a discipline, seeks not to accept the simple transmission of knowledge. It aims to achieve reflective development after raising important questions that are part of the child's world. It is up to the teacher-philosopher to have the ability to conduct reflections in an articulated manner and promote the development of cognitive formation. The proper conduction of the contents of the philosophy discipline in the classroom is done through dialogue, without a transfer of pre-structured knowledge, and in search of a construction of knowledge based on significant attitudes.

Philosophical activity is exercised and constructed in teaching practice, so that they walk together towards an unprecedented discovery, in which the child appropriates their reality, and they themselves seek explanations for their inquiries.

Philosophy for children classes differ from the systematic, critical, and rigorous discourses present in academic circles. They are based on the natural curiosity of children, their investigative potential, spontaneity, and longing for meaning. However, they require adequate philosophical guidance, capable of raising pertinent questions about life and values, as well as about the search for meanings that are fundamental to human formation. With the teacher's mediation, the child can develop genuinely philosophical inquiries.

The great interrogations of philosophy are present in the questions of children, who, intuitively or curiously, seek to understand the world and are interested in finding answers to their doubts. Lipman, Oscanyan and Sharp (1994, p. 88) point out that

children begin asking “why?” from a very young age, and therefore, we can consider them to be engaged in philosophical behavior early on. In fact, children are so persistent in this that, compared to the characteristic lack of curiosity of adults, we are tempted to say that a person's philosophical behavior diminishes with age. This contrasts sharply with the increase in information that children acquire and with their greater ease in using conceptual tools.

It is common to wonder about the “why” of things, since the individual has the need and the possibility to capture and produce meaning. However, while many young people or adults have already lost their enchantment with the world, children are fully involved in questioning and seeking meaning for their experiences.

Awakening systematic curiosity in children and leading them to maintain naturally reflective attitudes is almost a guarantee that these skills will extend to other learning activities. The fact of making them think for themselves allows autonomy in thought and behavior. Teaching children to think, according to Lorieri and Rios (2004), is to bring to school, alongside rigor and seriousness, the pleasure of discovery, the expansion of knowledge,

and therefore, of the world. With philosophical initiation, the child has the possibility of developing and perfecting their thinking. And learning to link thought and action.

Philosophy classes enable the common good, the overcoming of conflicts and differences; moreover, sometimes it is important to highlight some differences, to work on valuing dialogue, to seek consensus, in short, to bet on the infinite capacity and creativity of children. The way the teacher conducts philosophy classes determines the relationships of respect among the children. They accept “the arguments coming from the meticulous thinker with the same respect given to those who present their point of view quickly and articulately” (Lipman; Oscanyan; Sharp, 1994, p. 69). The teacher is also led to reflect on what is put forward by the students. It is very common to believe that the one who teaches has all the answers, but in the dynamics of the class, they realize that both are learning. With this, the various contributions of students should be well received, because in these interactions the foundations, values, and life experiences of everyone are revealed.

Encouraging philosophical thinking must necessarily begin with terms and concepts from everyday language with which children are familiar. The world in which the child is embedded will be the basis for their inquiries and investigations, and it is from this world that questioning should be conducted.

Children generally become very involved in questioning; they have a natural curiosity that facilitates philosophical investigation. Always eager for their turn to speak, they all demonstrate a great deal of eagerness to participate and contribute their ideas and opinions to the debate. They seem to have answers to all of their peers’ questions, just not for their own. They always bring examples from their own experiences and want to share them with the other children and the teacher. All of this reflects a pleasant class; children like to participate actively, and there is greater involvement when the child knows that their contribution is important. In the words of Lipman (1990, p. 20), “perhaps nowhere else is philosophy more welcome than at the beginning of school education, until now a desert of lost opportunities”.

It is up to the philosopher-educator to listen and demonstrate interest in everything that is put forward by the children, as well as to encourage them to listen to one another. Achieving this can take time and requires patience. As beautiful, rich, and pleasurable as philosophical work with children may be, it also brings a lot of weariness and fatigue. The teacher needs to have a great deal of skill, as children have an agitation typical of their age, and a classroom normally contains many children. And they all need to feel comfortable questioning, and the condition of listening is not always respected.

The philosophy class, however, is not free from all the elements inherent in educational processes. Certain difficulties can generate anguish and discouragement. At times, student indiscipline, lack of boundaries, and disrespect can occur even with the teacher's intervention. We are embedded in a challenging educational system, in which philosophy is included and strives to make its contribution and make a difference. However, the fact that it is a philosophy class does not exclude such difficulties.

The existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger (1984) points out paths regarding philosophical investigation that can contribute to the good development of a philosophy class, by saying that:

It is one thing to verify the opinions of philosophers and describe them. It is quite another way to debate with them what they say, and this means what they speak of.

Supposing, therefore, that the philosophers are questioned by the being of the entity, so that they say what the entity is, while it is, then our dialogue with the philosophers must also be interpreted by the being of the entity. We ourselves must come with our thoughts to meet that to which philosophy is on its way. Our speaking must co-respond to that by which the philosophers are interpreted. If we are fortunate in this co-responding, we respond in an authentic way to the question. What is this – philosophy? [...] (Heidegger. 1984. p. 19).

Philosophical work in the classroom is directly linked to all the work of the school and society. There is a broader context involved in the educational process that extends beyond the classroom; that is, the school is closely linked to society, in which the complex situations of the contemporary world are reflected and produced. The Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano (1998) raises the issues of education in an upside-down world, in which violence, disrespect, precarious teaching, and low teacher salaries, “que se ven con lupa” (Galeano, p. 104), are indicators of education's lack of prestige.

Children are educated for society, not for total isolation. The teacher has a great responsibility in their activity. For everyone to effectively participate in this necessary reconstruction of society and its meanings, it is essential that everyone be involved with education. In this sense, Silvio Gallo argues that,

teaching philosophy is an exercise in appealing to diversity, to perspectivism; it is an exercise in accessing fundamental questions for human existence; it is an exercise in opening oneself to risk, in seeking creativity, in a constantly fresh way of thinking; it is an exercise in questioning and distrusting easy answers. Anyone who is not willing to engage in such exercises will hardly find pleasure and success in this adventure that is teaching philosophy, learning philosophy [...] (Gallo, 2006, p. 20).

Philosophy seeks understanding that concerns meaning, significance, and value. It presents itself as a “way of thinking” that has “its own content: the fundamental aspects of reality and human existence” (Lorieri; Rios, 2004).

The method of philosophizing with children should be supported by an ethical, autonomous stance that generates concrete actions. When a child is familiar with the concepts of a person and respect, worked on in a philosophical context, it becomes easier for them to have an ethical attitude. When a child is stimulated to get involved in moral practice, whether during classes, at recess, or in school, they feel more responsible for the trust placed in them, and a perception of the moral dimensions of the world around them gradually occurs. The child begins to understand the meaning of the words and actions of the people around them.

3 Circles of Culture: childhood as revolutionary potential and Philosophy for Children

Paulo Freire’s legacy has contributed to educators reflecting on the meaning and significance of education, on its importance for the development of the person, their relationship with other people, and their relationship with the world around them. It also encourages critical reflection on the problems of the social, historical, and economic reality of Brazil. It encourages reflection on and the self-esteem of people in relation to culture, education, well-being, and in relation to the political and economic stability of the country.

It can be said that Paulo Freire sharpens the perspectives of different viewpoints in a society as contradictory as Brazil. For some, he is the patron of education; for others, he is criticized for not ignoring the poor and the oppressed, addressing the people in their experience and in his writings. Importantly, his writings provoke reactions from various segments of Brazilian civil society.

In his various experiences in education, Freire proposes that it be dialogical, starting from the reality of the people, pointing out their contradictions, with activities that favor and enable reflection on their own lives. That is why the author uses the analogy of dialectics to explain how this dynamic process of reality occurs: *action, reflection, transformed action*. It signifies that reality is dynamic, contradictory, and transformative, and that the *conscientization* process proposed by the patron of Brazilian education is inseparable from praxis.

The effort of conscientization, which is identified with cultural action for liberation itself, is the process by which, in the subject-object relationship, the subject becomes capable of perceiving, in critical terms, the dialectical unity between him and the object. For this very reason, let us repeat, there is no conscientization outside of praxis, outside of theoretical-practical unity, reflection-action [...] (Freire, 1981, p. 113).

In Freire, awareness has transformative importance, enabling reconnection, connection, a critical and revolutionary spirit, through dialogical relationships, as philosophy itself has addressed since its origins. For the “dialogical relationship is the seal of the cognitive act, in which the knowable object, mediating the knowing subjects, surrenders itself to its critical unveiling” (Freire, 1981, p. 116).

In Koahn’s words (2018), regarding Paulo Freire’s vision of childhood, his history in childhood, in the development of his proposition, is closely linked to our own proposition.

In his words, “in understanding History as a possibility, tomorrow is problematic. For it to come, we must build it through the transformation of today. There are possibilities for different tomorrows” (Freire, 2001, p. 40) because “the future is not a given fact, a destiny, a fate” (Freire, 2015, p. 179). Thus, childhood realizes the political meaning of a properly human existence: its irrenounceable vocation to be more, to affirm the future as possible and not as determined, its permanent being in the process of becoming instead of being once and for all. In this sense, the Pernambuco native says: “the struggle is not reduced to delaying what will come or ensuring its arrival; it is necessary to reinvent the world” (Freire, 2001, p. 40). Childhood is political. Childhood is, for Paulo Freire, a world re-inventing force [...] (Kohan, 2018, p. 24).

Freire's thought deals with an analysis of the Brazilian reality, about its ills and a proposition to overcome the condition of submission and low self-esteem of Brazilian society. It is the act of overcoming and leaving the condition of submission that this society is in. Thus, the proposition of the *circles of culture* is a form of awareness and understanding of one's own reality.

Considering all these considerations, it seems clear to me that illiterate peasants do not require a theoretical context – in our case, the Culture Circle – to become aware of their objective situation as oppressed people. This awareness occurs in the “concrete context”. It is through their daily experience, with all the dramatic weight, that they become aware of their condition as oppressed people (...). In this sense, the Culture Circle must find paths, which each local reality will indicate, through which it extends into a center of political action (...). Only in this way, in the unity of practice and theory, of action and reflection, can we overcome the alienating character of everyday life, as an expression of our spontaneous way of moving in the world or because of an action that becomes mechanized or bureaucratized (...). but also, what exists between the constituent partialities of the totality of each one and, on the other hand, the necessity of establishing a constant vigilance over our own thinking activity [...] (Freire, 1981, p. 110).

The practice of culture circles with children, integrated with Philosophy for Children, allows Freirean principles to come to life in an adapted way:

- **Dialogue:** It is the basis of educational practice and the condition for philosophical activity. The dialogical relationship is the hallmark of the cognitive act. In Circles, children learn to experience, share, question, and dialogue, and the teacher can conduct reflections in an articulated manner through dialogue. Respect is built in the way the teacher conducts the classes, and the children accept the arguments of their peers.
- **World reading and generating themes:** Freire proposes an education that starts from the reality of the people. With children, this means starting from the world in which the child is inserted, which will be the basis for their inquiries and investigations. Questioning should be conducted from it. The idea that reflection starts from the child's experiences and reality functions as a starting point, as a generating theme. The child is stimulated to reflect on their current experience, on their life, their relationship with others, and their relationship with the world in which they are inserted. This "reading of the world" by children, their doubts and admirations in the face of things that surprise them (such as the universe or feelings), become the raw material for philosophical reflection.
- **Problematization:** Starting from the child's reality implies pointing out its contradictions and launching important questions that are part of the child's world. Philosophy stimulates restlessness, inquiry, doubt, questioning, and creation. The child, seen as a being capable of doubting and reflecting on reality, is encouraged to ask very pertinent questions about life, values, and the search for meaning.
- **Awareness:** Culture Circles are conceived as a mechanism for understanding an education that makes women and men increasingly aware beings. With children, Culture Circles facilitate moments of awareness about what the child is, their relationship with others, and their relationship with the world. The Culture Circles + Philosophy for Children alliance seeks this awareness of their reality, in the unity of practice-theory, action-reflection, to overcome the alienating character of everyday life.

The articulation of Philosophy for Children with the practice of Paulo Freire's Culture Circles emerges as a robust pedagogical proposition, aiming at a comprehensive, dialogical, and participatory education for children. Moving away from traditional

teaching models based on mere content transmission, this union seeks to awaken curiosity, critical thinking, and reflective capacity in children, in opposition to timidity, conformism, and repetition.

The circular format inherent to Culture Circles is fundamental to establishing a democratic and conducive environment for dialogue. Sitting in a circle, without fixed positions of power, fosters horizontality in the relationships between educators and children, and among the children themselves. This space-time, intentionally organized in the classroom, becomes a privileged locus where everyone is invited to experience, share, question, and dialogue. In this configuration, the pedagogical relationship occurs more equitably, allowing children to perceive themselves as active authors in the construction of knowledge and in the transformation of their reality.

The adaptation and application of Freirean principles in Early Childhood Education form the basis of the Culture Circles methodology with children. The centrality of dialogicity and sensitive listening is paramount. This is not just about listening passively, but about attentively and respectfully hearing children's voices, valuing their stories, knowledge, and sociocultural contexts. The children's "reading of the world", their daily experiences, their curiosities, desires, and concerns, constitute the starting point of the process. The educator, in the position of debate coordinator or facilitator, observes, listens to, and records these manifestations, transforming them into generative themes for collective discussion. These themes, which emerge from the group's own reality, dictate the course of learning.

Within this dialogical space, the problematization of themes and of reality itself becomes an engine for instigating reflection and action. This process is crucial so that children can go beyond a "naive consciousness", developing a more critical understanding of themselves, of each other, and of the world around them. The practice in Culture Circles is seen as a moment of "awareness" of their reality, driving conscientization. Children are encouraged to express their ideas, to reconstruct their knowledge based on their experiences, and to perceive themselves as "makers of their own history". The Freirean praxis, which unites reflection and action, is experienced in this space, where understanding is linked to the possibility of intervening. The use of multiple languages – not only verbal, but also artistic and cultural – is valued to facilitate expression and enrich the debate. This inclusive and multifaceted approach contributes to the humanization of the educational process.

The power of the union between Culture Circles and Philosophy for Children lies precisely in this synergy that enhances the integral and critical formation of the child. The Culture Circle provides essentially democratic space, validates children's voices, and grounds the discussion in the concrete reality of children, combating the historical silencing of

childhood. Philosophy for Children, in turn, offers the conceptual tools of philosophical inquiry to structure thought, deepen questions, and develop reflective and critical skills within this safe and dialogical space. This combination allows children to learn to “think for themselves”, to articulate thought and action, to dialogue, to overcome conflicts, and to value different points of view, applying the rigor and seriousness of philosophical thinking to the pleasure of discoveries about the world. This alliance goes beyond what each approach offers in isolation, configuring itself as an “unprecedented viable” in pedagogical praxis, promoting “childhood as a revolutionary power” and the incessant search for a “more being”, guided by love and respect for differences.

3.1 Culture Circles: Childhood and the Emergence of Philosophical Inquiry in Everyday Life - Practical Propositions

The articulation between Philosophy for Children and Paulo Freire’s Culture Circles finds particularly fertile ground in the daily life of Early Childhood Education. As highlighted in Silva’s (2024) article, both approaches share the centrality of dialogue, the valorization of curiosity, and the pursuit of awareness and criticality. Brazil has accumulated experience in Philosophy for Children, and Freirean Pedagogy is a milestone in Brazilian education, with relevant contemporary developments such as the Childhood Culture Circles (CRIA).

To illustrate the potential application of this FpC+CRIA articulation in real contexts, especially within the scope of CRIA, we will use practical examples extracted from everyday narratives of Early Childhood Education present in the ebook “Children’s Culture Circles: narratives of everyday Early Childhood Education”. It is essential to clarify that the analysis of these narratives does not constitute an empirical study of the implementation or results of the specific union between FpC and CRIA but serves as a demonstration of how philosophical questions can authentically emerge from children’s experiences in this dialogical environment, thus offering a solid basis for proposing how this articulation can manifest in practice.

By integrating Philosophy for Children (FpC) and Paulo Freire’s Culture Circles, a pedagogical environment particularly conducive to philosophical investigation in childhood is proposed. As highlighted, the circular format inherent in Culture Circles is fundamental to establishing a democratic and horizontal environment.

In this articulated context of Childhood Culture Circles (CRIA) and Philosophy for Children (P4C), the role of the educator transcends mere facilitation. It is configured as a sensitive mediator and philosopher-teacher, combining the functions of coordinator of the Culture Circle with that of a guide in philosophical inquiry. The mediation process begins

with attentive and sensitive listening and observation of the experiences, interactions, curiosities, desires, and concerns of the children in the daily life of CRIA, identifying in them the potential for the emergence of questions of a philosophical nature. Once identified, these questions, which authentically emerge from children's experiences and become generating themes, constitute the engine of the investigation conducted in the children's community of inquiry under the mediation of the educator. It is in this dialogical space, based on the democratic and horizontal environment of the Culture Circle, that the "conceptual tools" and reflective skills of Philosophy for Children are mobilized and worked on. The educator does not transmit ready-made content but guides the dialogue, encouraging children to formulate arguments, to respectfully question the ideas of their peers, to seek conceptual clarity (by exploring concepts such as identity, reality, care, color, as illustrated by the examples of everyday narratives of Early Childhood Education, present in the ebook (Silva; Almeida, 2024), to listen actively, and to consider different points of view.

Through this attentive mediation, children are encouraged to exercise critically, creatively, and carefully thinking and to integrate thought and action. The experience of Freirean praxis in this dialogical path promotes the search for awareness about oneself, others, and the world, contributing to overcoming the alienating character of everyday life.

The Circles of Childhood Cultures (CRIA), as presented by the author Silva (2024), as a pedagogical approach in early childhood education (2024, p. 75-94), is a pedagogical approach based on Freirean assumptions about Culture Circles. It is also grounded in the "Historical-Cultural Theory" (Vygotsky, 1933/2010), in the "Pedagogies of Childhood" (Barbosa, 2010) and in the "Sociology of Childhood" (Sarmiento, 2003) and (Silva; Almeida, 2024, p. 22). Its essence lies in starting from the reality of children, their experiences, curiosities, desires, and daily concerns (existential situations). Attentive observation, recording, and narration of these experiences by educators transform them into generative themes, from which the pedagogical action is organized. This methodology promotes dialogue, participation, and the collective construction of knowledge.

Figure 1 – Assumptions of the Circles of Childhood Cultures (CRIA)

Figura 01: Pressupostos dos Círculos de Culturas da Infância - CRIA

Source: Elenice Silva (2024, p. 86).

It is precisely within this context of Childhood Culture Circles (CRIA) that philosophical questions can authentically emerge and be investigated by the children's research community. The narratives of daily life in Early Childhood Education, present in the ebook, serve as practical examples of how children's curiosity and experiences generate inquiries that, when deepened, can touch on philosophical dimensions of existence.

Let us consider, for example, the narrative "The Knight and the Apprentices", mentioned by Thiago de Matos Oliveira and Sônia Maria Alves de Oliveira Reis (2024, p. 236). A child's observation of transforming a table into a horse emerges as an "existential situation" and a "generating theme". In a Childhood Culture Circle (CRIA), this experience would be the starting point for investigating the world of equines, discussing horses in different cultures, exploring languages (literature, art, music) related to them, promoting the rise of naive curiosity to epistemological curiosity.

Within this same dynamic, Philosophy for Children could enrich the investigation by leading children to think philosophically about the situation. Questions such as:

- "Is a table that becomes a horse still a table?" (Introduction to the idea of identity and transformation);
- "What makes a horse a horse?" (Exploration of concepts and essence);
- "When we use our imagination to transform something, what happens? Does reality change, or is it only our idea of it?" (Discussion about reality, imagination, and perception);

- “Why do we like to imagine things differently from what they are?” (Reflection on desires, creativity, and human nature).

These questions emerge from the concrete experience narrated, validated, and brought to the center of the pedagogical process by the Culture Circles (CRIA). The philosopher-teacher and the philosopher-teacher, or the educator trained in philosophical guidance, would guide the children’s community of inquiry (Lipman, 1990) in dialogue, encouraging attentive listening, the formulation of arguments, the respectful questioning of colleagues’ ideas, and the search for conceptual clarity – central skills in Philosophy for Children. The dialogical relationship, a fundamental basis of both Freire and Philosophy for Children, would be the hallmark of the cognitive act, allowing children to appropriate their reality and seek explanations for their inquiries in an autonomous and reflective manner.

Let us now analyze the narrative “Is the little garden armadillo a beetle?”, written by Aline Maria Costa Oliveira (2024, p. 155). Murilo’s curiosity about a “little animal buried in the ground” and the subsequent discussion with other children about whether it is an armadillo or a beetle, whether it has a tail, whether it has a nose, and how it breathes underground, illustrate the naive curiosity that, with the teacher’s mediation, can be transformed into epistemological curiosity. In a Culture Circle of Childhood focused on this experience, the initial investigation may be biological (identification, habitat), but the questions can unfold into the philosophical field:

- “What makes a little armadillo be who it is, and a beetle be who it is?” (Questions about identity and essence);
- “Do the little creatures that live in the earth think?” (Reflection on consciousness and mind);
- “Why do we care about small creatures?” (Ethics, relationship with nature).
- Murilo’s own question, “How do they breathe at the bottom of the hole?”, in addition to the scientific dimension, can generate admiration and awe in the face of the mysteries of nature, touching on an aesthetic curiosity.

Another example can be drawn from the narrative “My name is Doctor Emanuel”, written by Isabel Camargo de Oliveira (2024, p. 67). Emanuela, three years old, claims to be a “doctor” because she “will take care of people” and has a “toy vaccine”. She transfers the idea of a vaccine to her stuffed horse (“Cuddle Horse”), saying that he also gets a vaccine “Because he is sick”. When asked about the horse’s illness, she replies: “Hummm, cuddliness!”. In a

Culture Circle, this narrative can generate discussions about care, health, illness, and imagination. The philosophical dimension, articulated from these experiences (as recommended by CRIA), could include questions such as:

- “What does it mean to take care of someone?” (Ethics, care);
- “Can we take care of toys as we take care of real people or animals?” (Distinction between real and imaginary, different natures);
- “Is a ‘disease’ like ‘cuddliness’ a real disease? What makes a disease real?” (Concept of disease, reality);
- “When we play doctor, are we really being doctors or just pretending?” (Identity, being and seeming, imagination).

The narrative “Teacher, why do I have to be black? Can't I just be Elano?”, written by Micheli Oliveira Fraga dos Santos (2024, p. 263), is another powerful example. Elano's question about the color of the “cat man” that is scary in Enzo's story and Samily's subsequent search for the “skin-colored pencil”, followed by the reflection of the boys Nicolás and Miguel on skin colors and their association with the colors of pencils, are existential situations laden with social and cultural significance. A Culture Circle that welcomes these questions opens space for discussion about identity, color, fear, and prejudice. Philosophy for Children, in this context, can mediate deeper reflections:

- “Why do some colors scare us or are associated with bad things?” (Symbols, associations, emotions).
- “Is there a ‘right’ or ‘normal’ skin color? What makes our skin color?” (Diversity, identity, basic biology).
- “Can we be ‘just Elano’, or is our color part of who we are?” (Identity, belonging, essential vs. accidental characteristics)
- “Why is it important that all colors are seen as beautiful?” (Ethics, values, respect for diversity).

These examples, inspired by the everyday narratives present in the ebook (Silva; Almeida, 2024), demonstrate how the CRIA methodology, by starting from children's authentic experiences and questions, creates a conducive environment for the emergence of philosophical questions. The role of the educator, in this scenario of unity, would be that of a sensitive mediator, capable of identifying the philosophical potential in children's speech and

actions, and guiding the community of inquiry to deepen reflection, promote respectful dialogue, and stimulate critical, creative, and caring thinking.

The pedagogical methodology proposed within the scope of this study, called Childhood Culture Circles (CRIA) (Silva, 2024) with a philosophical focus, articulates the assumptions of Paulo Freire's Culture Circles with Philosophy for Children (P4C). Based on the pedagogy of participation and a materialist, historical-cultural, and dialectical epistemology that understands the child as a social and cultural being who produces culture, the CRIA approach to philosophical inquiry starts from the existential situations experienced by children in their daily lives. The process begins with the teachers' attentive and sensitive listening to the children's speech, interactions, curiosities, desires, and concerns. Through observation and recording of these experiences, educators identify prior knowledge and potential generating themes and, crucially for the philosophical dimension, the emergence of questions of a philosophical nature from these experiences. The role of the educator as a sensitive mediator and "teacher-philosopher" is fundamental, as it is up to them to problematize these situations and questions and lead the children's community of inquiry, promoting respectful dialogue, active listening, the formulation of arguments, the search for conceptual clarity, and the development of critical, creative, and caring thinking. Philosophical investigation at CRIA is enhanced by the integration of multiple languages – verbal, artistic, cultural, and bodily – which serve as tools for the expression of ideas, the exploration of concepts, and the appropriation of meanings and cultures by children. Pedagogical planning emerges from this dynamic cycle, organizing contexts of experimentation that allow children to act and reflect (Freirean praxis), constructing knowledge and perceiving themselves as protagonists in the reading and (potential) transformation of their reality.

Freirean praxis, understood as the unity between action and reflection, is experienced doubly: children act and interact in the world, generating the experiences that ground the Circles of Culture; and, in this dialogical space, they reflect on these experiences, seeking to understand and (potentially) transform them. Philosophy for Children provides the rigor (in the Popperian sense of Socrates, the awareness of limitations and intellectual modesty) and the tools for this reflection to become more in-depth and conceptual, contributing to the critical awareness that is at the heart of Freire's liberating education.

Therefore, although the excerpts do not present empirical studies of the union, the narratives of CRIA offer a solid basis for proposing how this articulation can occur in practice, using daily life as a living curriculum and children's questions as the engine of philosophical investigation. The richness of the experiences narrated in the book demonstrates that the raw

material for philosophical investigation is present in the daily lives of children, and the CRIA methodology provides the path to access and enhance it in a dialogical and meaningful way.

4 Horizons Opened by a Philosophical and Dialogical Education in Childhood

A favorable classroom environment fosters democratic participation among children, characterized by cooperation and the experience of values. In addition, the presence of interdisciplinarity is necessary for new educational processes. The child is seen being capable of developing logical reasoning and reaching other dimensions such as the affective and aesthetic.

The philosophy for children has its specificities in relation to the Culture Circles. The teaching of philosophy in the initial grades has achieved significant acceptance given the possibility and the necessity of its presence, although there is also resistance and questioning - even among those who believe in the importance of introducing philosophical principles in the formation of children. The mistrust of the efficiency of such a program by some academic philosophers arises from questioning the maturity or the absence of necessary tools for children to rigorously and systematically philosophize as proposed by the major philosophical currents. This position opposes the proposal suggested by some defenders of Philosophy for Children, who recognize the concrete presence of essential elements, such as questioning and perplexity, precisely in this phase of the child.

Nevertheless, we assessed the proximities between Philosophy for Children and the practices of Culture Circles. Given this, this text sought to reflect on the significance of the role of Philosophy for Children in Early Childhood Education and in the initial grades of Elementary School, and in all its work in Basic Education; it also sought to propose an alliance between the practice of philosophy in the classroom and a national experience, based on the literacy practices of Paulo Freire, which are the Culture Circles. This is the time when the child can reflect, express and share their thoughts, their feelings, their impressions about the studied theme, about their current experience, about their life, their relationship with others, and their relationship with the world in which they are inserted.

The alliance between the work of Philosophy for Children and the practices of Culture Circles can contribute to a more meaningful class and also to the development of a person who has the ability to perceive themselves, others, and the world around them; once again, what Freire (1981) calls awareness of their reality, that is, *in the unity of practice and theory, of action and reflection, we can overcome the alienating character of everyday life*.

Thus, activities focused on thinking (Philosophy for Children and Culture Circles), within the classroom setting, can contribute to children learning reflectively and being awakened to curiosity rather than timidity, to critique rather than conformity, to reflective capacity rather than repetition.

Brazilian education should invest in education for thinking, from the perspective we propose here, with the goal of making this practice a public policy, so that all children have access to a quality, reflective, and critical education, and are formed based on human values, mutual respect, good relationships with people, with the world around them, with nature, always in pursuit of their well-being.

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