

Anthropological Horizons of P4C Focusing on Lipman Theory

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Abstract: One of the primary objectives of any educational system is to raise awareness and focusing on thinking skills of students. In recent decades, Lipman has suggested philosophy as a curriculum for children to develop philosophical thinking and philosophizing in students. A curriculum is based on the insight and vision of its founders to the truth of man and of his existence in terms of the goal or goals considered for education and their beliefs in the quality of growth and human movement towards the desired goal as well as certain philosophical and theoretical foundations. Since the foundations of educational systems and consequently curricula are based on four anthropological, ontological, epistemological and axiological fields, this study examines the anthropological foundations of P4C from the perspective of Lipman. The methodology used is analytic and deductive. Data is collected by archival studies, review of documents and note taking and analyzed by deductive categorization system. Finally, this study identifies the anthropological foundations in impressive focus of this curriculum on biological evolution of children in the nature as well as their individual and social growth in the community. Philosophical dialogues of children in the community of inquiry form around discussions on nature and society. This dialogue is associated with both individual rights of children which are expressed by the concept of "I" and "other" in philosophical debate and ethical considerations by learning how to interact in groups which is the underlying assumption of Lipman's P4C. The advantages of this curriculum include positive attitude to human, personal and social identity, belief in free will and change in human.

Key words: Philosophy for children curriculum, philosophical foundations, anthropology

INTRODUCTION

Foundations of education refer to the study of social forces, institutions and human relations in order to strengthen formal education in the fields of economics, sociology, anthropology, geography and philosophy. Although, it is very important to clarify the meaning and purpose of education, it is not enough to decide on the various situations. The goals determine the destinations; intention requires a plan which is inevitably based on the origin to ensure achievement. Foundations of education follow human, his capabilities and limitations as well as requirements which always influence his life (Shokuhi, 2010).

Different categories are presented for foundations of curriculum. Although the findings of sciences related to human are necessary and useful in many cases, they are not absolutely valuable for education and sufficient to solve problems. First, curriculum is a cultural phenomenon and strongly correlated with requirements of thought, belief and value systems; for this reason, social, philosophical and psychological foundations of curriculum are discussed in this system (Maleki, 2010).

Second, raw scientific data cannot be utilized in education; it needs to be modified by philosophical and ethical considerations before it is used in educational situations. Third, science would not be able to answer most questions which arise in the field of education; philosophy can solve this problem (Shokuhi, 2010). Therefore, these philosophical foundations give certain orientation to curriculum. One of the most important foundations of curriculum is its philosophical foundations. Each aspect of philosophical foundations gives certain implications which orient the curriculum; philosophy is the study of nature, causes and principles of truth, knowledge or values based on logical reasoning (The American Heritage Dictionary).

Philosophy can be considered as a discipline consisting of different branches (ontology, epistemology and axiology) as other disciplines.

Inquiry on the origin of human, his evolution, purpose of creation, his covenant and responsibility is rooted in anthropological ideas discussed in various religions since the creation of human. Human and his different aspects have always been the focus of philosophy and consequently curriculum, because the

meaning and purpose of human life determines the direction of his life and discovery of the principles of education requires accurate consideration of various aspects of human life. For this reason, inquiries on human and his nature as well as purposes of education have been the focus of many scholars as highly important, sensitive and complex problems.

Philosophy for children (P4C) was first implemented in America and gradually spread to other countries. Many researchers, including Philip Kam, believe that P4C must be tailored to the culture of indigenous population (Kam, 2005). By introduction of this curriculum in educational systems, intellectual and philosophical foundations of P4C with intellectual content reflecting its philosophical basis influence the audience intellectually. This suggests that the P4C is based on certain principles. Therefore, P4C cannot be adopted without a knowledge of its consistency with the culture of society for which this curriculum is implemented. Therefore, curriculum needs to be based on indigenous conditions. That is why this study is to derive anthropological foundations of P4C to examine this curriculum as an emerging phenomenon in the educational system with a philosophical approach. The results of this study can contribute to the enforcement of P4C in different educational systems focusing on anthropological foundations.

It is noteworthy that P4C is a curriculum; thus, most of its foundations are implicitly discussed. To derive anthropological foundations governing this curriculum, intellectual roots of Lipman and his followers need to be addressed. Thus, intellectual roots of Lipman are briefly described in the next section.

INTELLECTUAL ROOTS OF LIPMAN

To invent P4C, Lipman was inspired by philosophers such as Socrates, Peirce, Dewey, Mead, Wittgenstein and Ryle and learning psychologists such as Vygotsky.

Socrates: Noting the direct influence of Socrates, Lipman introduces his philosophy as philosophical practice; he writes, the practice of philosophy is the unique movement of Socrates, for whom philosophy is not an academic discipline or profession but a way of life (Lipman, 1988). Unity of free dialogue presented by Lipman is reminiscent of dialectic practice of Socrates. Starting a dialogue with someone, Socrates tried to extract his thoughts on the topic. Socrates tries to reconstruct children's knowledge using the power of reason without providing children with ready concepts. Boghosian believes that Lipman has inherited this scientific reconstructive approach of Socrates. As Socrates said: there is a truth that we must

work together to find it. In his curriculum in the form of the community of inquiry, Lipman reconstructs children's knowledge by the Socratic practice. Haynes considers P4C as the Socratic critical thinking model where new ideas can be extracted (Haynes, 2008). Explaining the idea behind P4C, Kennedy believes in the tradition of critical thinking which triggers creative thinking and development of children. Whether children or adults, Socrates expose people to inquiries and provides them with the opportunity to think as philosophers to achieve deep insight.

Peirce and Mead: Community of inquiry which was first presented by Peirce in his *The Fixation of Belief* was considered as a practice of P4C. Peirce limited the term community of inquiry to scientific inquiries. Latter, the term was extended to other scientific and non-scientific areas; Dewey used the words community and inquiry in parallel. According to Morris, Lipman was the first to use the term community of inquiry in parallel for teaching philosophy in schools. Inspired by Mead, Lipman asserts that Mead first understood the profound implications of education in integrating two strong concepts of community and inquiry in a single, flexible concept, the community of inquiry (Lipman, 1985). Lipman's community of inquiry used for P4C is an effort to realize the Herbert Mead's theory of the self and its educational implication in a social context. Mead finds the self as meaningful in relation to others. In his view, self or I is not meaningful without others. Lipman was inspired by this social perception of Mead in the field of education and developed the idea of community of inquiry (Jusso, 2007). Hence, Lipman borrowed the community of inquiry of Peirce and used it in a combination of practices for education following Mead.

John Dewey: Lipman as he notes was most inspired by John Dewey in inventing P4C. He claims that he has not missed any aspect of Dewey's education by P4C; P4C is undoubtedly based on Dewey's idea (Lipman, 1981). P4C is considerably rooted in Dewey's works. However, it is required to see these effects can be traced to which one of the Dewey's intellectual dimensions (Daniel and Auriac, 2011; Jusso, 2007). P4C is strongly influenced by epistemological teachings of pragmatism in objectivism. Golding (2007) notes the children's objective discovery along with intellectual reconstructionism as an epistemological goal of P4C and asserts that P4C moves in a continuum between mental reconstruction and objective discovery. Golding believes that pragmatism focusing on both discovery and creation is the best means to achieve epistemological goals of P4C. Perhaps

Lipman avoids metaphysics because of his orientation to epistemological goals of pragmatism. In this regard, Lipman shows his objective orientation to naturalism and believes that it is difficult to engage children in metaphysical discussions because of its broad, general, yet non-objective implications (Lipman, 2002). According to Lipman, metaphysical questions are very broad, far-fetch questions. They have the highest degree of universality and comprehensiveness. It is difficult to answer those questions, because they contain concepts which are so broad that no classes can be found to include these concepts. Therefore, these concepts are not tangible and objective and cannot be used (Lipman, 1980). Lipman's objectivity is influenced by naturalistic assumptions of Dewey. Dewey adopted his natural and biological perception of life from Darwin and explained the relationship between human and environment (for more information, contemporary philosophy of education, Tehran; Mehrab Ghalam). Lipman used Dewey's methodology in P4C under influence of Dewey's naturalistic assumptions along with his reconstruction of experiences in the natural world. Sociologically, Lipman was also inspired by Dewey's social ideas. In developing the community of inquiry, Lipman was inspired by Dewey (1986)'s ideas on integration of self and democracy in which dualism of man and community is rejected (Bleazbay, 2005). Following Dewey in developing community of inquiry as a small community, he attempts to strengthen the social nature of children by social interactions (Lipman, 1985).

Moreover, Lipman adopts Dewey's problem solving model in learning along with an extension of the model in the form of community of inquiry in P4C. He notes the five-step problem-solving model proposed by Dewey as an essential paradigm of modern education (Lipman, 1993).

Inspired by Dewey (1991), Lipman emphasized the reduced gap between theory and practice. Following Dewey, Lipman believes that philosophy is responsible for education rather than conventional theories of mind. Valuing the practical reason, he believes that the theory alone, without considering the practical dimension of thought will be useless or unable to solve problems (Lipman, 1993).

Moreover, Lipman (1991), influenced by Dewey, emphasizes children's thinking and their artistic creativity. In short, Lipman was inspired by Dewey in adopting the concepts such as reconstruction of experience (Lipman, 1991), practical benefit of thinking (Dewey, 1916), problem solving model (Dewey, 1966) and emphasis on self and democracy (Dewey, 1991) for his P4C. Belief in relativity of values and originality of agreement in ethics during

philosophical dialogues of children is axiological foundation of Lipman's P4C under influence of Dewey. This is discussed in details in the section on philosophical foundations of P4C.

Ittgenstein and ryle: Linguistic philosophers are another group inspiring Lipman in development of his P4C. Lipman was most influenced by Wittgenstein and Ryle for their focus on everyday language. As Lipman asserts, he was inspired by Ryle for language and autodidacticism and Wittgenstein for the effect of language in complex, social and lingual relationships (Lipman, 1976).

Lipman borrows Wittgenstein and Ryle's meta cognitive dialogue which relies on analysis of concept. According to Lipman, if adult's meta-cognitive dialogue is to be considered philosophy, it is not right to withhold this dialogue from children.

In his *Philosophy in the Classroom*, Lipman considers the formulation of concepts as the first skill in the checklist of thirty thinking skills which children need to learn by practicing intellectual and philosophical stories (Lipman, 1980). Therefore, he adopts clear dialogue plans to solve linguistic problems caused by unclear concepts and words (Lipman, 1980).

Lev Vygotsky: The cognitive psychologist Vygotsky emphasizes language development of children in learning under social and cultural environment of children. For him, human lives in the community as required and he creates culture. Children as an element of this community grow in the process of social learning as a result of interaction with parents and teachers and peers through linguistic interaction. He differentiates actual growth and potential growth of the child. According to Vygotsky, the actual growth is a level where children understand phenomena without the help of others while potential growth is a level where children show their talents by the help of others.

Inspired by Vygotsky's idea on potential intelligence of children, Lipman distinguishes two types of thinking; first, substantive thought in which children are evaluated by conventional tests in schools and think alone; second, complete thinking in which children participate in group dialogues and help each other to complete their thinking. Following Vygotsky who believes that children's potential intelligence appears in collective activity and social interaction, Lipman asserts that P4C persistently seeks to encourage children for complete thinking rather than conventional thinking. Conventional thinking leads to irrational bias (Lipman, 2002).

Thus, Lipman encourages teachers to foster complete thinking in children; to this end, he forms the community of inquiry in P4C. Along with their personal

intelligence, the members of this community socially interact with each other; this reveals their social intelligence which is potentially hidden. Children receive feedbacks of their verbal behavior through the dialogue in the community of inquiry and try to raise their level of verbal and social capability. Thus, a real community of inquiry reveals children's weaknesses and strengths and teachers can make efforts to eliminate the former and improve the latter.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LIPMAN'S P4C

P4C is based on human and his understanding. Lipman as the founder of P4C, considered the inflexible behaviors of his students as an outcome of no recourse to reason and argument. He was encouraged to include correct thinking in pre-university courses and inure learners to independent and skillful thinking in order to train more thoughtful, more critical, more flexible, more rational and more considerate children (Fisher, 2004). He established these skills in the form of a community of inquiry based on thinking and dialogue. Members of this community are people who have unique attitudes and interests and discuss with each other to solve the social problems. Human, dialogue, human interaction, thinking and reasoning, decision-making and listening are discussions on anthropological foundations of Lipman's P4C which are addressed here.

On anthropological foundations of P4C, response to a number of questions can show a clear picture of those foundations. Who is Lipman's human? What are his features? Where does he stand? What are his governing values? Is he free or forced?

Regarding human, Lipman is inspired by several philosophical figures. He is primarily influenced by the pragmatic philosopher Dewey. He took advantage of Dewey's understanding of children, emphasis on thinking in the classroom, recognition of the significance of artistic creativity and emotional enthusiasm of children (Lipman, 1976).

After Dewey, Lipman is inspired by Vygotsky particularly in the field of anthropology. He was interested in Vygotsky's discussions on children's recognition, correlation between children's thinking and class debate, children-community interactions and the relationship between adult language and growing intelligence of children.

He uses Piaget's discussion on interaction between thinking and behavior as well as Gilbert Ryle's discussions on the relationship between language, education and autodidacticism. He was inspired by

Wittgenstein in his lingual discussions associated with complex social relationships and certain linguistic elegances. He also was influenced by Mead in social psychology and debates on social nature of self (Lipman, 1988). These influences reflect a series of anthropological features in theory and practice of Lipman which can be recognized in his attitude toward human.

Relying on Lipman's ideas reflected in his work and his inspirations of Dewey and pragmatism along with his impressions of Vygotsky, this section explores anthropological foundations of P4C.

NATURAL AND BIOLOGICAL NATURE OF HUMAN

Biological nature and evolution of human in P4C is reflected in two stories of Kio and Gus on various topics related to the biological nature. These stories are composed in a naturalistic context in which characters are two children one of whom is blind. They learn about nature and their place in the nature. These stories depicting human relationship with natural environment persuade children to think about nature and relationships between natural phenomena along with their natural growth. Lipman is not only inspired by Dewey in launching inquiry in his stories but also influenced by Dewey's naturalistic assumptions on the nature of human, along with his reconstruction of experiences in the natural world. This is best exemplified by Kio and Gus stories. Based on P4C curriculum, the educational scope of Kio and Gus stories is based on training in the natural and biological environment and their philosophical scope relies on reasoning about nature and environment. Moreover, the teacher's guide *Wonders of the Natural World* has been also published (Fisher, 1998). It is noteworthy that evolutionist naturalism is a pragmatic feature of philosophy.

Personal and social nature of human: In P4C, community of inquiry is formed to establish human-society interactions. Through P4C, Lipman plans to bring the society into the school by developing community of inquiry. In this regard, he is under influence of Dewey's ideas. In a community of inquiry, children are encouraged to acquire both intellectual and social skills such as social interaction, collaboration in solving social problems and hearing others. In forming the community of inquiry, Lipman inures children to become familiar with their roles and structure of the society. According to Sharp, entertainment in this community establishes intelligent relationships by which people can know themselves by relying on each other.

Lipman believes that a school in a free society needs to teach features and structures of the society and help children to react by each other through philosophical dialogue in a community of inquiry (Lipman, 1982).

Although, all philosophical stories of P4C contain social actions and reactions of children, the educational scope of Mark's story is directly related to social studies and formation of community groups and social structures. Through this study, children are directly engaged in discussions on social philosophy and perceive the implications of self, other and group. Mark's story depicts two second-year students and Mark, one of the students is accused of sabotage and vandalism. Through the discussions that take place between students, they realize the role of law and the nature of bureaucracy and unique concepts of justice (Lipman, 1980). The philosophical scope of this story is related to reasoning in social subjects (Fisher, 1998). In addition to Mark's story, children practically realize the social interaction by the story of Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery.

HUMAN'S ABILITY TO CHANGE

Change is a fundamental fact of pragmatic ontology. Change involves both natural environment and human as a part of the nature. As noted earlier, pragmatism considers human as a part of natural environment. Since the natural environment is constantly changing, human also experiences change in parallel with the nature. To be more precise, human change is a function of natural evolution. Human change is not limited to his biology including gradual growth from childhood to adulthood; this change includes his individual and social dimensions. In pragmatism, human inevitably interacts with the society and adopts its laws and regulations to meet his needs for social life. Therefore, human experiences changes in parallel with the change in his society to adapt to the changing circumstances. The pragmatic human reconstructs experiences by means of permanent wisdom. Thus, the pragmatic human lacks the fixed, defined and unchanging nature of idealist and realist human.

By the features of natural environment and the universe, this human is constantly changing to adapt to the new conditions. In parallel with changes in the environment and the nature, the structure of human experiences also changes. Old experiences are replaced by new ones and change human and his life.

Following pragmatism, Lipman's P4C is based on change. This change includes biological, personal, social and intellectual aspects of children. As noted earlier, Lipman set his educational goals in a series of fundamental changes in biological, personal, social and

emotional aspects of children (Lipman, 1982). In general as Lipman claims, he seeks to convert children to skilled searchers and this needs change (Lipman, 1993). Lipman's community of inquiry is the main model of change and innovation. P4C pursues change in intellectual, experiential, moral, artistic, literary, aesthetic and linguistic dimensions and change in social skills of children through experience, reasoning and interpretation.

CONCLUSION

Matthew Lipman as the founder of P4C has been inspired by philosophers such as Socrates for critical thinking; Peirce, Mead and Dewey for practical and experiential thinking and Wittgenstein and Ryle for analysis of everyday concepts. Therefore, it is essential to review the Lipman's works as the founder and his predecessors to understand the anthropological foundations of P4C.

Influenced by social thinking of John Dewey and the Russian social psychologist Lev Vygotsky, Lipman studies children in biological, individual and social contexts. Lipman is inspired by Dewey in biological, social and natural perception of children and their central role in the society where they live. Hence, the theme of his most philosophical stories for children is nature and society (Fisher, 1998). Lipman is influenced by Dewey's naturalistic assumptions on the nature of children, along with his reconstruction of experiences in the nature (Jusso, 2007). Biological nature and evolution of human in P4C is reflected in two stories of Kio and Gus on various topics related to the biological nature. Lipman is interested in Vygotsky's discussions on the effect of social-cultural language in children's learning and their lingual growth, children-society interactions and the relationship between adult language and growing intelligence of children. Lipman believes that a school needs to teach features and structures of the society and help children to react by each other through philosophical dialogue in a community of inquiry. In P4C, community of inquiry is formed to establish a relationship between children and his peripheral group. Through P4C, Lipman intends to eliminate the difference between school and society and develop a community of inquiry. Thus, anthropological foundations of P4C are based on its significant focus on children's biological evolution in the nature and on individual and social nature of children in the society. Children's philosophical dialogues in the community of inquiry are formed on subjects of nature and society. This dialogue with the individual rights of children reflected in philosophical debates by perceiving the concept of I and other is associated with learning how

to interact in groups by ethical considerations. Positive attitude to human, personal and social identity, belief in free will, choice and human change are strengths of P4C.

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