

*The Routledge international handbook of philosophy for children* edited by Maughn Rollins Gregory, Joanna Haynes and Karin Murris (2017). Routledge, Oxon. ISBN: 9781138847675

*The Routledge international handbook of philosophy for children* offers 'a wide variety of critical perspectives on this diverse and controversial field, in order to generate new discussions and to identify emerging questions and themes' (xxi). As a collection of scholarly papers on Philosophy for Children (P4C), the volume is a thorough and detailed handbook which highlights the distance P4C has travelled since its inception 50 years ago. Several uses of this volume spring to mind. Somebody new to P4C would do well to read the concise introduction which covers the history and thematic strands which shape P4C. Experienced practitioners or researchers could use the handbook to explore new directions and ideas in the field. School leaders and policy makers could refer to the section headings to identify uses of P4C that would pertain to their particular situations. The editors have identified a fairly definitive list of key questions for P4C; while the papers do not form a cohesive whole, they do function as a useful handbook to give readers a taste of some of the answers currently available to these questions.

The volume comprises of eight sections and twenty-nine papers. It is dedicated to Lipman, Sharp and Matthews and many of the papers cover themes which emerge from these pioneers of P4C. These include sections on the relationship between P4C and democracy, a section on the philosophy of childhood and a section on the community of inquiry. The volume also includes more contemporary issues such as the use of children's books and the aesthetics of P4C. The papers represent a wide geographical and contextual spread, with discussion of P4C with both younger and older children across the world. The authors range from researchers in psychology, education and philosophy alongside P4C practitioners.

One of the achievements of the handbook is that it manages to highlight promising avenues currently being explored. For example, there is a selection of papers relating to racism and P4C in a multicultural world. One such paper is Makaiau's piece on using P4C in Hawai'i to explore 'democratic experiences in multicultural schools' (p. 19). She explains how the use of the Community of Inquiry led to older students identifying a 'hard-to-see manifestation of institutionalized racism at our school' (p. 24). This is complemented by Reed-Sandoval and Sykes' paper on positionality in P4C where, amongst other issues they mention that picture book use can 'marginalize' the 'questions and perspectives of racial and ethnic minority students' (p. 221). These two papers exemplify the diversity of the handbook; they address

different contexts and are written from the differing perspectives of a practitioner and a researcher.

Alongside papers which reflect the role of P4C in contemporary society, there is a large body of mainly theoretical work. For example, there is a section dedicated to the relationship between the discipline of philosophy and P4C and another entitled 'the community of inquiry in action: epistemology and pedagogy'. This includes theoretical papers on virtue epistemology, pragmatism and education of the emotions. These papers give a broad overview of some of the theoretical debates surrounding P4C. These are best viewed as introductory since the concise nature of each paper limits it to a brief overview, coupled with a small amount of discussion of the author's own stance.

The large number of diverse papers is supported by well-pitched introductory remarks at the beginning of each section from the editors, which help to knit the volume together and provide the reader with oversight, despite the specificity of each paper. More time could have been devoted to empirical studies in the field; however, there were some papers representing this area of research such as Daniel, Gagnon and Auriac-Slusarsczyk's paper on whether P4C can develop critical thinking in kindergarten and elementary school children. This sort of quantitative study adds a different angle to many of the claims made elsewhere about the benefits of P4C. Some representation of viewpoints which are critical of P4C would also have made for interesting reading, and helped to put the significance of research promoting P4C into perspective.

In many ways, this collection is representative of current research trends in P4C. While there is much reference to Lipman and his contemporaries' justifications of teaching P4C, the direction of research seems to have moved away from the creation of arguments for bringing philosophy into schools. This is a premature move, since despite the success of the movement, there is still little mainstream or compulsory philosophy teaching in schools. As a body of work, the papers risk being self-referential; in the way that a book about teaching science in schools would discuss the minutia of science pedagogy without arguing that science should be taught. P4C is in no such position and must continue to pursue convincing arguments for including philosophy in the curriculum. While the book discusses many uses of P4C and various purposes it might serve, somebody who read it from cover to cover might be left unconvinced that philosophy, as a discipline, has something distinct to offer school children. This strand of research into P4C should not be neglected and

needs to be at the forefront of current research, sitting alongside the new and diverse directions represented in the handbook.

Nonetheless, given the scope of the book and its potential use to practitioners and researchers, this is a broad and scholarly collection of papers which is focused on contemporary issues and suggests future avenues of research. It illuminates the complexity of the field and its potential to continue to flourish in numerous different and new ways.

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