

i MATERIALI
Erickson

Strumenti per la didattica, l'educazione,
la riabilitazione, il recupero e il sostegno
Collana diretta da Dario Ianes

Luca Mori

Philosophical Riddles

Thinking challenges for courageous children

Erickson



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With a PhD in Philosophical Studies (University of Pisa), he has been designing and conducting philosophy workshops with children for many years. Among his many projects was a journey of over 10,000 km throughout Italy to propose the experiment of utopia to children between 5 and 11 years of age (www.utopiedibambini.it). He collaborates in the development of philosophy projects for children with the San Carlo Foundation College and the Municipality of Modena, with Prof. A.M. Iacono (University of Pisa), with schools from various Italian regions and various European countries (Bulgaria, Germany, England, Romania, Sweden) and with a research group from the University of Brasilia. Among his publications: *Children's Utopias. The World Redone by Children* (2017, Edizioni ETS).



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Introduction

Sofia is five years old when she looks at the starry sky and asks herself and the adult who is with her an unexpected question. “Does the sky have an end, or not?” Instead of answering her the adult asks, “What do you think?” Encouraged by both questions—the one which sprang to her mind, surprising her, and the one which the adult asked her—the child formulates her first explicit cosmological hypothesis. “According to me, the sky never ends. In all the places I have ever been, it has always been there.”

Let us dwell carefully on this sentence. Technically Sofia’s reply is an inference from the moment in which the child established a relationship between a premise (*the sky was present in all the places I have been*) and a consequence (*the sky has no end*). The premise is based on observation and memory: wherever Sofia has been, the sky was always present, and Sofia is *certain* about this. The consequence which she draws is that the sky *never* ends, unlike any other thing which we have commonly experienced: the countryside and cities, rivers and roads, woods and meadows *finish* somewhere. Even the sea, which extends as far as the eye can see, finds a boundary on the beach where children play.

Being five years old, Sofia uses “always” and “never” in reference to her own experience, not yet imagining the depth of the sky beyond the visible starry plane in the way that Giacomo Leopardi did, for example, in his poem *Infinity* [*L’Infinito*]. And yet the child succeeds in relating what is present to her gaze with what is absent: her *here* and *elsewhere*.

With the passing of time, “never,” “always,” “end,” and “all” will evoke meanings in her mind that are less tied to personal experiences. Already in both her question and inference, some characteristic elements of philosophizing emerge: the feeling of wonder, the doubt felt observing the sky and the persistence of the question with an answer that remains open. In fact, Sofia says according to her the sky never ends, distinguishing the degree of certainty of the premise from that of the conclusion.

To summarize, we have the following:

An unusual question suddenly surfaces in an opportune moment (for example: the sight of the starry sky): <i>Does the sky have an end or not?</i>	
Response and attempt at inference:	
► Premise (given as certain)	<i>In all the places I have been, the sky was always there</i>
► Consequence (probable)	<i>According to me, the sky never ends</i>

A potentially fruitful relationship between belief and doubt emerges here.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that “children learn because they believe adults” and that “doubt comes after belief”.¹ In our case, though, the situation is different. There is no initial belief because no adult previously suggested to Sofia what to believe about the extension of the sky. Moreover, she was the one who suddenly encountered an “open” spot in her beliefs with the question that came to her mind. In other words, the child managed to conceive the question about the extension of the sky even without having any beliefs on the matter. Her doubt does not stem from pre-acquired beliefs, but from the possibility of using the adjective “finished” as an attribute of the sky.

Sofia turns to the adult to get an idea or, if you rather, to have a belief with which to address the question mark that has surfaced in her mind. The attitude of the adult who is with Sofia becomes philosophical and conducive to philosophizing by keeping the question open and inviting her to express herself instead of giving her a clear answer in terms of “yes” and “no.” If the adult hadn’t done this, he or she would have simply dispensed their beliefs one way or the other or suggested that the question in mind cannot be answered, dampening Sofia’s drive for exploration and autonomous generation of hypotheses.

Here we touch on a crucial point for whoever is interested in practicing philosophy with children. After listening to their hypotheses about a question such as the one formulated by Sofia - which incorporates a classical philosophical question - an adult could certainly suggest that, according to some philosophers, the question has no answer. Depending on the age of the children, you can go into details about the point of view of individual philosophers and their ideas, but what matters most is to keep the problematic tension open, asking for example: *what do you think of the idea that a question like this cannot be answered?* This, among other things, leads us to reflect on what constitutes a question in general, and the fact that some questions may or may not have an answer.

¹ Wittgenstein L. (1978), *On Certainty*, trad. It. by M. Trinchero, Torino, Einaudi, p. 160.

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Why practice philosophy with children?

So why practice philosophy with children? Because something similar to what happens to the body happens to the thought process: taking steps and breathing do not support different and challenging physical activities if one does not venture in steep climbs and difficult descents. Balance and the ability to orient oneself are not exercised if one does not put oneself to the test on uneven and unknown paths. You can not conquer unexpected horizons with your eyes if, after a long hike, you do not come to the realization that when you touch a peak the journey is not over—because every peak is only a pit-stop. Descending to the valley can become a more difficult undertaking than the climb.

It works the same for thought, which breathes if extended beyond the confines of what has already been said and what has already been understood, when faced with questions that open up unusual scenarios, moving from one hypothesis to another, holding each other's hands, from word to word, changing directions and ideas while redrawing the maps already present in the mind. Unlike other approaches to philosophy *for* or *with* children, this book proposes starting with classical problems from the history of philosophy, making them access points for an authentic area of discovery - venturing into the unexplored dimension of the *thinkable*, to practice crossing it and mapping it, pushing beyond the confines of the *usual* speaking and of the *usual* thinking. This is the gymnastics of thought and language.

When giving children between the ages of eight and eleven questions and problems (in an understandable and stimulating way) that for centuries have been, and remain, a source of reflection for adult philosophers, it is necessary to keep in mind their marked ability to ask questions independently. What are the difficult questions that they come up with on their own and for which they would like to find an answer? Why do they consider them particularly important and what do they wonder about each time they think about them? When I asked children in that age range to share their most important questions with me by writing them on a piece of paper (before hearing those of their friends, and even before I mentioned a few questions from philosophers), I found myself faced with a surprising list. To give you an idea, here is a selection of their questions:

"Who invented the Earth?", "Do aliens exist?", "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?", "What is there after death?", "Why were we born in this world?", "If humans never existed, what would fate be like?", "Where did the point that created the Big Bang come from?", "Who invented history?", "How was the boar made?", "What are chickens made from?", "Where did the idea of school come from?", "Where did houses come from?", "Why does human life and animal life exist?", "Why does nature exist?", "Who invented ink?", "After the Euro, what come next?", "Why do we die?", "How were bees made?", "What happens when we die?", "Why do colours exist?", "Why do we cry?", "Why was I born?", "Will the Earth disappear because of pollution?", "How was glass invented?", "How was paper invented?", "How did the sky form?", "After you die, do you end up in another world?", "Where did the idea of the theatre come from?", "How did people identify every object?", "Who invented studying?", "Adults know more things than us children, but why are they afraid and don't show?", "Why do children sometimes act like bullies when they are really just scaredy cats?", "What will happen to poor children in the future?", "What is life?", "What is our purpose?", "How did we grow?", "Why is there poverty?", "Who will I marry?", "Will I be a pilot?", "Will I become a good volleyball player?", "When I grow up will I still love my parents?", "What will happen to me in the future?", "Why is there war?", "Why do people kill each other and why do they make war?", "Why was the world and space born?", "Why were machines and technology invented?", "Where does love come from? Why do we fall in love?", "How was science born?", "What is there in the universe?".

It is interesting to note that questions like the previous ones sometimes have clear philosophical implications, but at the same time they intertwine with what one studies at school, like the natural sciences and the history of nature, of man and of technology.

When and under what conditions do such questions emerge? According to the children, these questions present themselves in situations like the following: “rarely, when I do something new and I want to do another new thing”; “when my mom and I argue or when I am at my dad’s”; “if no one reminds me, never”; “when I see something that reminds me of something else that is somehow connected”; “going somewhere where people are dressed differently and maybe where there is poverty and technology: seeing the differences in the surroundings”; “when we are alone and we are calm, we do not know what to think about and the things of the past resurface, from the bottom of our heart”; “when I stare at something, like my notebook for example”; “at night, before going to bed”; “when I am alone”; “when I don’t know what to do”; “at nighttime”; “when I do tests, but not tests from the teacher at school, but when I am at home and I do my own tests”.

Perhaps these questions are abandoned as soon as they present themselves “because they are too difficult”. According to an 8-year-old girl, these questions can come to mind while at school, in those moments when one looks out the window. In both cases, it seems that there is not enough effort or time to face these questions in depth, despite the fact that they appear interesting.

Why does one look out the window? Sometimes from boredom, naturally. Other times because doing something interesting generates other thoughts that pop into our minds which cannot be “contained” within that lesson or in that room. We must ask ourselves, then, whether it is worthwhile intercepting the questions that may arise between the classroom and the window outside (the world!), making the “inside” and “outside” interact, starting an unusual journey of discovery...

This book suggests that a way to do this, or at least a good sail with which to equip your boat for the journey, can be philosophy.



Volume Guide

Philosophy with Children, Learning Objectives, Skills and Life Skills

Philosophical questions and the conversations they can generate have important implications in relation to many general objectives indicated by the *National Guidelines* for primary schools (2007). In fact, they have a more-or-less-obvious effect on the “learning environment” and encourage “collaborative learning”. The questions proposed in this book contribute to “giving value to the students’ experiences and knowledge”, since the students will often have to refer to their own experiences and knowledge - accepting and addressing their limitations – in order to face the feeling of displacement arising from every question. The doubts and hypotheses that they come across in conversation contribute to “encouraging exploration and discovery” through “problematization”, which the *National Guidelines* appropriately defines as an “irreplaceable function” of the learning processes.

All activities, depending on how they are dealt with and developed, contribute to the learning objectives related to Italian [language arts] (listening and speaking, reading and writing), because they work on skills like understanding the nature of a question and the articulation of a theme, interacting in a collaborative way in a conversation, formulating precise and pertinent questions, paying attention and understand the positions of others, and debating. Among the general learning objectives associated with the activities proposed in the book are the following: exercising intellectual abilities and abilities of understanding, observation, interpretation, extrapolation, inference, analysis and synthesis, exercising the elaboration of hypotheses and their evaluation, stimulating the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking combined with the ability to collaborate in group discussions.

Section One: Philosophy of Nature

The activities associated with the philosophical problems in this section are linked to some of the *learning objectives* that characterize the teaching of science: identifying relevant concepts for describing and connecting concrete experiences to natural phenomena; debating, and advancing or rejecting a hypothesis by using models, concepts or experiences. The proposed activities can also support the development of skills, such as those related to exploring and experimenting, imagining the causes of the most common phenomena and looking for solutions to problems.

Section Two: Philosophy of Humans

The activities associated with the philosophical problems in this section contribute in various ways to “laying the foundations of active citizenship”. They do this by *activating complex reflections* regarding the characteristics of human beings as “social animals” in relation to their possibilities of communicating, cooperating, and organizing themselves in social and political forms of various kinds. Questions are accompanied by suggestions to pass from philosophical reflection to research and analysis of what history and science have to say today about the issues addressed.

Section Three: Philosophy of Language

The activities associated with the philosophical problems in this section (and the next) are particularly useful for “promoting awareness of one’s own way of learning”, as they practice tackling intricate questions from a logical point of view and developing alternative strategies to reformulate problems. Possible *errors* and *hesitations* are valued as *attempts* or *doubts* to be taken into account, to understand logic and to consciously try to find other strategies. All this contributes to the process known as “learning to learn”, which the *National Guidelines* insists on in the general lines related to learning environments.

Section Four: Changing Perspectives

The activities associated with the philosophical problems in this section, like the previous one, are particularly useful for “promoting awareness of one’s own way of learning”, as they invite us to reflect on how things can change their appearance when they are considered from a different perspective (codes, models, etc.). Activities are directly linked to the learning objectives of the visual arts curriculum (observe and read images).

For some years, the importance of developing the use of *key competences* for all citizens and of planning school activities in terms of these skills has been emphasized.

Philosophy can be very useful in this sense, considering *above all* the mutual skills which must be “trained” in relation to citizenship skills (learn to learn, plan, communicate, collaborate and participate, act autonomously and responsibly, solve problems, identify connections and relationships, acquire and interpret information). Since the skills can be conceived as a group of abilities, knowledge and attitude implemented in a context, training these skills requires a preliminary creative effort to imagine situations which are favorable to their development. This is where philosophy can be of help, because it proposes problems that put concepts and experiences together in an unusual way, creating favorable conditions for reflecting on what is known and what is not yet known, on one’s own limits and on the different strategies that can be adopted individually and in group when grappling with difficult questions, while valuing the errors and provisional hypotheses made.

In fact, when facing philosophical problems in a group, things such as those shown in the table below occur.

Processes activated by philosophical inquiry	Citizenship skills
Addressing questions that lead to the limit of one's own ability to say, or to the threshold of the "already thought out" requires the elaboration of new strategies to extricate oneself from the point in which one finds oneself in an attempt to grasp ideas and hypotheses never reached before. In doing so, alone or in a group, one must relate the knowledge already acquired with one's own experiences and those of others, trying to find a practical path, sometimes backtracking and being available to change ideas or strategies to face the question. All of this has to do with the ability to reflect on one's own way of proceeding and to orient oneself in thinking and on the possibility of changing it.	Learning to learn
Some philosophical problems require you to design activities and experiences to test yourself and explore the links between concepts, hypotheses and reality.	Planning
Every philosophical conversation provides practice for expressing oneself in an understandable way and making oneself understood even when words for certain thoughts are not easily found. Equally important is the ability to listen and carefully consider the way others put forth their argument, to integrate what others are saying, or try to constructively show their limits.	Communicating
Facing philosophical problems in a group means entering a space of discovery with others, where what you find depends very much on the ability to collaborate on research, taking care of yourself and others. In this way relational competences and the ability to interact in a group are practiced, since engaging in an "open" philosophical conversation requires contributing to a process of shared discovery and elaborating any conflicts between points of view that generally and fortunately crop up in a constructive way.	Collaborating and participating
The philosophical conversation requires knowing how to insert oneself in an active way, and with adequate arguments, in social exchange, asserting one's right to the word and one's own reasons, recognizing at the same time those of others, and following shared rules, without which neither individuals nor groups could express themselves at their best.	Acting autonomously and responsibly
Philosophical problems generally do not have a single solution, and when one begins to converse, it is often unclear whether they have at least one, or many. From this derives an important consequence: by addressing the philosophical questions, the ability to reformulate these questions and the problems they evoke is also exercised, looking from different perspectives to situations in which "we do not find ourselves".	Solving problems
The questions proposed in the book and the ideas for continuation that accompany them encourage exploration of the subtle connections between experiences, concepts and themes which appear far off at first sight, or which can be addressed in different contexts and disciplines. The resulting overlapping of frames exerts the ability to relate different codes and languages, refining sensitivity to connections and analogies.	Identifying links and relationships
When addressing a philosophical question, one must search, select and critically re-elaborate the information available on the phenomena considered, evaluating its usefulness, relevance and reliability in relation to the problem.	Acquiring and interpreting information

It can be noted that the processes mentioned are also relevant to the development of the so-called *Skills for Life* (i.e. *problem solving*): creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, relational skills, self-awareness, empathy, emotional self-control, stress management, and decision making. Likewise, it will be easy to recognize their importance to the fundamental skills listed by Ken Robinson¹, when thinking about the basis of a new education for the creative schools of the future: curiosity (the ability to ask questions and try to understand how the world works), creativity (the ability to generate new ideas and apply them in practice), critical thinking (the ability to analyze information and ideas and to formulate thoughts and weighted judgments), communication (the ability to express thoughts and emotions with clarity and security in different forms and with different means), collaboration (the ability to work constructively with others), compassion (the ability to empathize and act accordingly), composure (or self-mastery), and citizenship (the ability to engage constructively in society and to participate in processes that keep it alive).

The highest aspiration of this book is to help the children who read it, together with the people responsible for their education, get involved in all of these plans. The children whom I have worked with around Italy have told us that living well requires shared experiences like these, which allow the mind and the body to “explore” together with others and practice a sort of relationship dance. Philosophizing with children can be experienced as this kind of dance, conducted within a frame made from words, explorations and shared question marks.

Structure of the book

The problems

This book proposes 15 problems inspired by the history of philosophy, formulated in such a way that they are understandable, challenging and stimulating to children between the ages of eight and eleven. The problems are divided into four sections, relative to *natural phenomena* (“Philosophy of Nature”), *human beings* (“Philosophy of Humans”), *language and reasoning* (“Philosophy of Language”), and other *activities for changing perspectives* (“Changing Perspectives”).

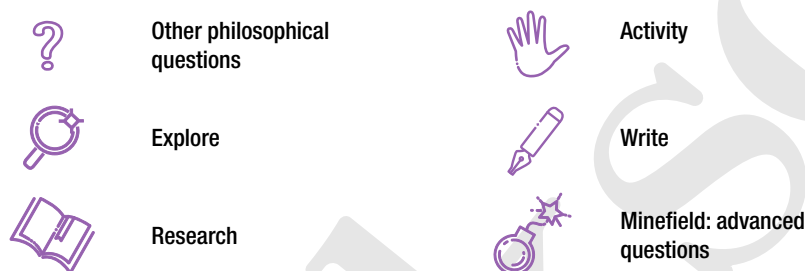
Every problem is set out in this way:

1. A first page is dedicated to the formulation of the question (or questions) in the form of an enigma, paradox or mental experiment;
2. A section dedicated to the philosophers’ point of view follows. The most curious readers will find a brief presentation of the philosophers in reference to the theme in question, along with their hypotheses;
3. The next section presents the *points of view of the children*, that is what children between the ages of six and eleven have said about the proposed questions. Through their words, teachers will get a preliminary idea about some possible trajectories for initiating conversations starting from the individual problems. Here they will find, as it were, a kind of guide to conducting the conversation and interpreting what the children say. Children, on the other hand, will have the opportunity to compare their answers with what their peers have said, reflecting on their intuition and hypotheses;

¹ Robinson K. e Aronica L. (2016), *Creative School. A Manifesto for New Education*, Trento, Erickson.

4. Finally, a section dedicated to ideas for continuation is proposed, where teachers will find useful suggestions to (a) connect the topic to the subjects and activities of the class; (b) relate the philosophical questions with other experiences, observations, readings; and (c) continue the philosophical conversation with other questions related to those just discussed.

The *ideas for continuation* are accompanied by icons that allow you to quickly identify the proposed activity:



In each section, one of the proposed problems is linked to the original materials for an in-depth analysis. There is also a downloadable game available online. These suggestions offer ideas and examples for interpreting the philosophical activity in an open way, showing how some problems can be discussed by involving both hands and minds, having fun. The dynamic of playful reflection is applied in the game “The Island of Utopia” found at the end of the volume (for indications see pp. 165-170).

The book, the attached game, and the online materials are designed primarily to inspire and support primary school teachers in testing out philosophy paths with children, providing examples and ideas taken from a long experimentation activity conducted by a philosopher in schools throughout Italy while constantly keeping the history of philosophy in mind.

At this point a crucial question arises: *who is entitled to conduct philosophy workshops with children?* In this regard, there are many conflicting points of view and many different practices, some of which consist of offering philosophy diplomas *for or with* children who attend special paid courses, of varying intensity and with differing pre-requisites. Without going into the details on the controversies related to these courses, this book aims to be a useful tool for anyone who wants to put themselves to the test in this area. A good teacher - with experience both in the nursery school and in primary school - gave me a useful analogy: nothing prevents a primary school teacher from proposing philosophical questions and conversations to children; but facing the same conversation with a good philosopher is like learning to speak a language by practicing with a native speaker. There is an important intuition in this analogy: even those who are not native speakers can try to teach the English language to a child, but if they do not do it with care and if they have not been pushed by their passion for the subject to a high level - in other words, if they teach more or less by improvisation and with a lack of preparation – they risk passing off something that is not English for English, causing others to make the same grammar and pronunciation mistakes that they do. This book takes into account these difficulties and was also created to help address them.

The activities proposed as expansions of the workshops are designed to give a “hands on” approach to the ideas in a playful way, stimulating that peculiar kind of reflection that springs from action and shared experiences. Thus, they simultaneously put logic and imagination into motion by training “critical thought”, and its relation to philosophy, while keeping the following in mind:

“ *The fundamental discipline that today goes under the name of “critical thinking” or “critical thought” - explored by world-renowned scientists such as James Flynn, but certainly not sufficiently studied (and applied) in Italy - was already being practiced by the philosopher par excellence, Socrates in the 5th century B.C. in Athens. At the time, critical thought was called “dialectic”. The great revolution of philosophical dialogue, which is the first great revolution in the history of thought, as well as its incredible effectiveness and power, was contained in the fact that the *dialegein* was not a sterile repetition of notions to memorize, but a path made of subsequent attempts to determine a concept. It was continuous research. Errors that, once overcome, could even put one on the right track. To quote the very famous maxim by Samuel Beckett: “Try again. Fail again. Fail better”.³*

These philosophical games have been designed with the objective of training the skills necessary to critically interpret and consciously enhance the experience. To this end, after playing (regardless of the outcome) it is good to spend time analyzing how things went, wondering if and under what conditions they could have gone differently.¹

² Legrenzi P. and Massarenti A. (2015), *Good Logic. Learning to Think*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina, pp. 13-14. See also Flynn J. (2013), *How to Improve Your Mind. Twenty Keys to Unlock the Modern World*, Milan, Mondadori.

IMAGINING OTHER WORLDS

Imagine discovering an uninhabited but **habitable** .

An island that has remained unknown until today, with everything necessary for living: streams with drinking water, fertile soil, a good climate, and neither too big nor too small.

Would you be able to agree on the basic choices to be made in order to found a new country there where one can live well, to the best of your ability?

Attention: this is not about making a place to spend a nice holiday, but about making a place so beautiful that the people who come to know about it feel the desire to move there permanently.

This is the problem of the Country or the ideal City.

A very old problem ...



So then:
let's construct
a just city in speech



Among «ideal cities» let's not forget about the
Greek philosopher **Plato's** «kallipolis» («beautiful city»)
and Englishman **Thomas More's** island of «Utopia»

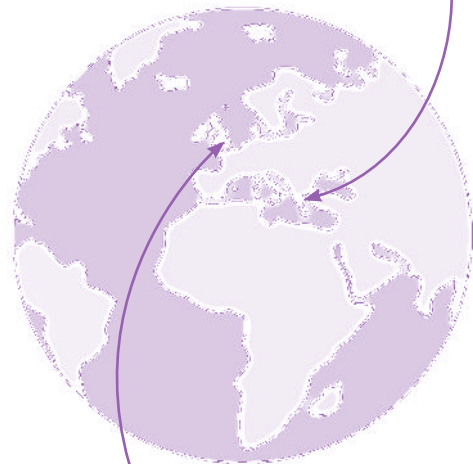


Plato (427-347 BC): Along with Aristotle, he is considered the greatest philosopher of antiquity. He was born in Athens from a noble family shortly after the outbreak of the war between his city and Sparta. At age forty he founded a school called the Academy in Athens. His writings have arrived to us in the form of many dialogues, whose main protagonist is Socrates, Plato's teacher.



Thomas More He was a British politician and philosopher, born in London in 1477. He died in 1535. He worked in different and important political offices. He invented the word "utopia" as the name of an imaginary island, and the title of a book published in 1516. The word "utopia" arises from the combination of the Greek words "topos" (= place) and "ou-" or "eu-", respectively "not" and "good". In essence, the name therefore refers to a place that is not there, in which one could live well.

Atene
(Grecia)



Londra
(Inghilterra)



The Philosopher's Point of View

We find imaginary places in stories from all around the world. To mention a few of the most famous places, all we have to do is think of the enchanted lands from fairy tales or the idyllic settings found in fables: Dante's After-life, Heaven on Earth, Atlantis, The Land of Toys, Tolkien's Middle Earth, comics (Mousetown, Duckberg, and so on), and science fiction universes.¹¹

The open-ended question provides an invitation to imagine a particular place: a place in which one can live *well*, ideally *to the best of one's possibilities*. Technically, children who face this task start thinking about *utopia*.

As far as we know, the idea of utopia originated in Greece, associated with the need and opportunity to found colonies. In fact, each new colony served as an invitation to re-think the fundamental elements of a city and the conditions for good living (see also "Philosophy of humans: *Forms of government*"). Urbanist and sociologist Lewis Mumford, author of a fundamental study on the history of the city, underlined the fact that "as long as there were new cities to found, there was no shortage of possibilities and attempts at change".²

One of the first versions of the mental experiment of utopia, and certainly the longest and most complex one to come from the ancient world, can be attributed to Plato. In his dialogue entitled *The Republic*, Socrates addresses this exhortation to his interlocutors, engaged in the attempt to define the concept of justice: "So then [...] let's construct a just city in speech".³³ Through Socrates, Plato also invites the reader to reason about how to found a new city, more just, happy and united than all other cities already in existence. The verb in Greek used by the philosopher is the same one that indicated the founding of a new colony, a business well known to the Greeks of the time. While the task of imagining a new city is proposed as an expedient similar to that of those who, unable to distinguish small letters from afar, find a way to read them by enlarging them with an appropriate support: "it would seem, I think, a stroke of luck to be able to begin reading those, so as to examine then whether the smallest [ones] are identical" (*Republic*, II, 368d). In Socrates' case, more precisely, it is a matter of defining justice by passing from what it seems to be worth to individuals to what it is worth to the city. The philosophical "pre-tending" becomes the starting point for the practice of an analytical-combinatorial knowledge related to politics and its constituent elements, which must take into

¹ For an introductory guide to some of the places cited and many others, cfr. Eco U. (2013) *The Book of Legendary Lands*, Milan, Bompiani.

² Mumford L. (2008), *The Story of Utopias*, Roma, Donzelli Editore, p. 23.

³ Cfr. Platone, *The Republic*, II, 369c (trad. It. by M. Vegetti, 1998, vol. II, books II and III, Napoli, Bibliopolis).

account the actual conditions and the needs that lead human beings to live together, and the ideal conditions that should be followed to live a just, happy and healthy life. The invention of the word “utopia”, however, lies with Tomas More, who thus entitled a book published in 1516.

Let's take a look at the description of the central landscape in his book (from the second book):

The island of Utopia is in the middle 200 miles broad, and holds almost at the same breadth over a great part of it; but it grows narrower toward both ends. Its figure is not unlike a crescent: between its horns, the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay, which is environed with land to the compass of about 500 miles, and is well secured from winds. In this bay there is no great current; the whole coast is, as it were, one continued harbor, which gives all that live in the island great convenience for mutual commerce; [...]

More then goes on to describe the defenses, the difficulty to access the island from outside, the natural protection systems, and those made by art and ingenuity of the inhabitants.

He that knows one of their towns knows them all, they are so like one another, except where the situation makes some difference. [...]. Amaurot lies upon the side of a hill, or rather a rising ground: its figure is almost square, for from the one side of it, which shoots up almost to the top of the hill, it runs down in a descent for two miles to the river Anider; but it is a little broader the other way that runs along by the bank of that river.[...]. There is a bridge cast over the river, not of timber, but of fair stone, consisting of many stately arches; it lies at that part of the town which is farthest from the sea, so that ships without any hinderance lie all along the side of the town. There is likewise another river that runs by it, which, though it is not great, yet it runs pleasantly, for it rises out of the same hill on which the town stands, and so runs down through it, and falls into the Anider. The inhabitants have fortified the fountain-head of this river, which springs a little without the town; so that if they should happen to be besieged, the enemy might not be able to stop or divert the course of the water, nor poison it. [...]. The town is compassed with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch, set thick with thorns, cast round three sides of the town, and the river is instead of a ditch on the fourth side. The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. Their buildings are good, and are so uniform that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses; these are large but enclosed with buildings that on all hands face the streets; so that every house has both a door to the street, and a back door to the garden. Their doors have all two leaves, which, as they are easily opened, so they shut of their own accord; and there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At every ten years' end they shift their houses by lots.¹

⁴ More T. (2007) *Utopia*, trad. It. by T. Fiore, Rome-Bari, Laterza, pp. 50-60.

On the island of Utopia imagined by More, “he that knows one of their towns knows them all, they are so like one another, except where the situation makes some difference”. There are many others, and it is not possible to summarize here the characteristics of the utopias imagined over the centuries.⁵²

² For those who are curious about the utopias imagined by children in Italy, refer to Mori L. (2017) *Children's Utopias. The World Redone by Children*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS.



The Children's Point of View

By giving children the time and the way to evaluate what the most important things to decide upon would be, one can begin analyzing the structure of the problem with them. While traveling around Italy in search of the imaginary utopias created by children between the ages of five and eleven, I posed questions like the following: *What immediate needs should be taken care of upon arrival at the island? What things are we used to that would be better for us to do without? How can we distribute the houses on the island?* For example, would it be *better to live close to each other, making a common residence area and settling a village, or should we spread out around the island, leaving everyone to live where they prefer, even if it is far away from the others? Should there be laws? If so, which fundamental laws? What should be done if someone doesn't respect the laws? What form of government should be adopted (assuming that there must be one)?* In other words, *how are the decisions that affect everyone made?* Furthermore, *how should education be organized on the island? What should be done with the landscape?* In this regard, shared choices on the organization of public and private spaces, on the economy, on the energy policy, on the management of the pollution problem and so on become necessary. Again: *can adults live on the island of Utopia created by the children? If, one day a ship appears on the horizon with strangers on board – women, men, children – clearly headed toward the island, what should be done?*

In summary, I asked the children to work out the necessary and sufficient conditions for creating a place where human beings could live well, significantly reducing causes of suffering and pain, which they must first deal with themselves with their own decisions. We soon realized that talking about utopia became an expedient through which to talk about ourselves and the world, in an unusually rich and exciting way. In this way, the children felt the pleasure of exercising their political imagination together. When conducting the conversation, it is very important to have a non-judgmental attitude and to enhance any doubt or hypothesis put forth by the children, giving them time to mutually objectify and discuss, while seeking more deeply motivated and broader agreements. It is not given that you always succeed, but what matters above all is that you *train* yourself to do it.

Traveling around the children's utopias I have discovered that they are very different from each other: some have flowers and playgrounds as borders, others are surrounded by high walls armed with weapons and security cameras while drone-spies fly overhead, others are covered with indestructible and impenetrable glass domes, with tiny little holes that let the air and rain pass for those inside (in such a way that some children realize that they have been imprisoned by their own hands in a kind of cage). The images and metaphors that children invent offer cues for countless comparisons between the happenings in utopia and their knowledge of

human beings. Traveling through these utopias I also noticed that starting from the age of eight, children begin to question the adult's ability to change habits and imagine valid alternative worlds. In other words, they question the ability of adults to live up to their utopias: the better world that children want and that they are able to imagine.

Taking the time to invent a utopia and thinking about *other worlds* can then become an engaging way to train your political imagination and to practice seeing the possibilities available to you with new eyes. There was no lack of conflict between points of view and proposals, sometimes it was even impossible to create something without convincing others to change their opinions, or by changing their own. But this is the game of democratic deliberation, in which it seems necessary to practice starting in childhood, because one learns by practicing. The same way one learns to swim and run by swimming and running, one also learns to hypothesize, to (ex) change ideas and to decide with others, transforming the room for discovery that the conversation makes available into one creative area. The assumption of this laboratory is that utopia is necessary for democratic imagination. Above all, it is necessary to practice thinking about it together with others, in a participatory game. Why is it necessary? Because when thinking of utopia, one enters into a gap, into the space between what already exists and what still does not, but appears desirable and advantageous. In doing so, we can conceive of alternatives to the existing system, and consequently see what we usually see with different eyes. By establishing a comparison and soliciting a judgment between what is there (for better or for worse) and what could be done better, one "awakens" from that kind of anesthesia caused by the usual actions and behaviours which are often repeated, even when you realize and openly proclaim that they should be changed.



Ideas for Continuation

Reflecting on the ideal city can become an excellent starting point for integrating various curriculum subjects.

Geography



The mental experiment of utopia can accompany every other initiative of landscape education, as it allows us to reflect on the deep and constant intertwining of nature, artificiality and culture that human beings establish whenever they inhabit a place. This is what the children themselves do as soon as they set foot (and word) on the imaginary island of Utopia. You could also ask the children to put what they have learned about geographical maps to good use by inviting them to create an imaginary map of utopia, specifying details useful for those wishing to explore it (real dimensions and a map scale; recognizable symbols to identify aspects of the territory and so on). You can also suggest that they describe what could happen in the different landscapes on the island (mountains, hills, beaches, etc.). For example, in the city (polis) described by Plato in *The Republic*, the implicit point of view was that of the city-region, as Lewis Mumford again notes::

"Let us stand on a high hill and take a look at this city region; the sort of view that Plato himself might have obtained on some clear spring morning when he climbed to the top of the Acropolis and looked down on the sleeping city, with the green fields and sear upland pastures on one side, and the sun glinting on the distant waters of the sea a few miles away. It is a mountainous region, this Greece, and within a short distance from mountain top to sea there was compressed as many different kinds of agricultural and industrial life as one could single out in going down the Hudson valley from the Adirondack Mountains to New York Harbor. As the basis for his ideal city, whether Plato knew it or not, he had an "ideal" section of land in his mind — what the geographer calls the "valley section." He could not have gotten the various groups which were to be combined in his city, had they been settled in the beginning on a section of land like the coastal plain of New Jersey. It was peculiarly in Greece that such a variety of occupations could come together within a small area,

beginning at the summit of the valley section with the evergreen trees and the woodcutter, going down the slope to the herdsman and his flock of goats at pasture, along the valley bottom to the cultivator and his crops, until at length one reaches the river's mouth where the fisher pushes out to sea in his boat and the trader comes in with goods from other lands".

Citizenship, Landscape Education



By linking utopia with other landscape education activities, it becomes very stimulating to combine the ordinary landscapes of one's life with the mental experiment of utopia in mind. Children could be asked, as an individual task, to photograph habitual landscapes that in their eyes could be "adopted" in, or absolutely "excluded" from utopia (because they are ugly, unlivable and unsuited to the ideal of a good life). Once the individual task has been performed, the images can then be shared and discussed in groups.

History



It might be very useful for the inhabitants on the island of Utopia to know about the history of some cities invented in other times and in other places. One could therefore ask them (possibly divided into groups) to draw up a summary guide on the cities in history, collecting the principal information about their citizens and social organization (Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, and so on). A further exercise consists of comparing the typical structures of the cities of the past with those of their current countries or cities (possibly using the analysis of online maps).

History, Citizenship Education



Imagine writing the fundamental laws of the island and preparing *The Constitution*. To do so, take inspiration from parts of the *Italian Constitution* and possibly others, considering the fact that the comparison between different texts can help one see as many points of view as possible when addressing the task.

Science



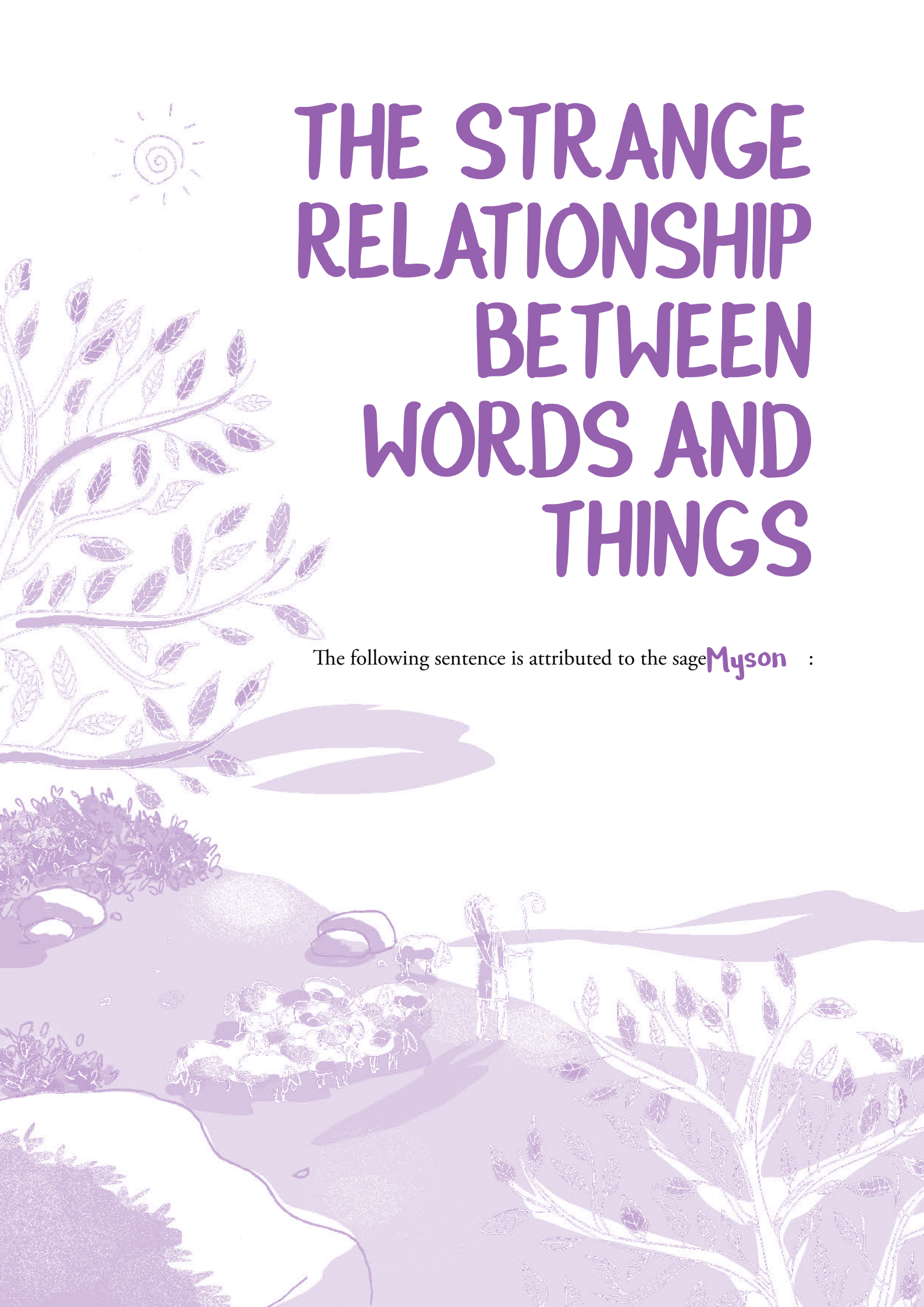
The island of Utopia needs an energy policy. Children are often very sensitive to the issue of pollution. Thus, it becomes necessary to ask them how to produce and distribute energy on the island. By making use of what they know, children can illustrate their energy project for the utopia they have imagined (with detailed explanations and descriptions of the reasons that support their choice). In doing so, *they will probably realize that they do not know some things and will need additional information*. The fact that this happens is important,

because it is a way of learning to learn (*you do not know that you do not know some things, and this is the way to escape from the condition of not knowing you do not know*).



The American philosopher John Rawls (1921-2002) believed that to establish the fundamental principles of a just society, it was not enough to imagine a utopia. When imagining it, in fact, everyone considers their own position and interests (which change according to social position, being a man or woman, rich or poor, and so on). As a result of this, Rawls devised another mental experiment, which is a matter of *imagining a just society under a “veil of ignorance”*. What does this mean? It means imagining a situation such as this: we are planning together with others a just future society in which we will have to live, but we wear a veil of ignorance because we do not know what we will be. We do not know if in the future society we will be men or women, we do not know what our religion will be, we do not know if we will be rich or poor, we do not know if we will have a healthy or a sick body, and so on. Under these conditions, *how does the way of dealing with the mental experiment change* compared to what happened with the previous experiment on utopia? According to Rawls, “this [veil of ignorance] ensures that in the choice of principles, no one is advantaged or disadvantaged by the natural cause or contingency of social circumstances. Since everyone has an identical condition, and no one is able to propose principles that favor his or her particular situation, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargaining.” So try to elaborate the principles of a just future society, putting yourself under the veil of ignorance.

The attached game “The Island of Utopia” (described on pages 165-170) is dedicated to the theme of the Country or the Ideal City.

The background of the slide features a stylized, monochromatic illustration in shades of purple and pink. In the upper left, a simple sun with a spiral center and radiating lines is visible. Below it, a shepherd stands on a hill, holding a long staff and looking over a flock of sheep. The sheep are depicted as small, fluffy animals. To the left of the shepherd, there are some bushes and a small, dark, rounded object, possibly a hat or a bag. In the foreground, there are more bushes and a large, dark, rounded shape that could be a rock or a large bush. The overall style is minimalist and artistic.

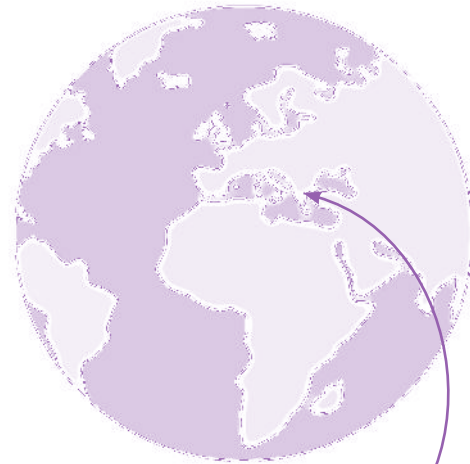
THE STRANGE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORDS AND THINGS

The following sentence is attributed to the sage **Myson** :





Myson lived in the VI century B.C. and was one of the Seven Sages of Greece. Born in Cheneae, a village in the Greek region of Laconia, where the capital was Sparta. He is also said to be from the area near Mount Oeta, further north.



Chene
(nell'attuale Grecia)

All sources agree that he was a farmer.

One day, Chilon of Sparta found him fixing his plow. Since it was the middle of summer, Chilon was very surprised and said to him, "Mysone, don't you think this period is not suitable for plowing?" And Myson answered, "Of course, it is not the right time to plow, but it's the perfect time to prepare the plow!"





The Philosopher's Point of View

In his precious book *on Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laërtius (180- 240 A.D) recalls that Myson appears on the list of the Seven Sages written by the philosopher Plato. Exemplary phrases of moral wisdom from ancient Greece are attributed to the Seven Sages. Myson probably lived in the VI century B.C. but does not appear in all of the lists of wise men that we have record of. In the aforementioned quote, Myson perhaps meant that, in order to judge someone, one must first look at the work and then at the words, evaluating the words according to the work and not vice versa. Perhaps he was referring to the relationship between words and things in a more general sense, inviting one to investigate what is said based on the observation of things (while we sometimes run the risk of faithfully trusting someone's words, judging things based on what is said, without having directly considered "how things are").

Since ancient times some philosophers have questioned the nature of the relationship between words and things: why do we give names to things? How were the first names given?

The philosopher Aristotle brought attention to the differences in the ways that animals and human beings communicate. Animals have the ability to "show" certain things using sounds, but these sounds are inarticulate (in Greek "agrammatoi": not separable in elements such as letters). So, there are animals that can signal their conspecifics by emitting different sounds to communicate the arrival of a predator, the presence of food, and other relevant information regarding environmental situations. These sounds, however, are limited and animals can not combine them to form words and phrases, as human beings can. Being able to combine sounds to compose *words, verbs and complex clauses* allows us to communicate about the world, about us, about our actions and relationships, and about our way of communicating, but also about imaginary worlds and about things that *do not exist*.

Thanks to words, verbs and clauses we can refer to absent things and events as if they were present, even describing them in great detail. If I say "elephant", I cause those who understand my language to recall the image of an animal that at this moment is probably absent from the space in which we find ourselves. With words we can enter the worlds of fairy tales and fables, and retrace the travels and battles told by Homer, and so on.

Our marvelous ability to refer to things that are absent or invented does not fail to create problems for us, because thanks to this we can tell or believe true stories, when instead they are stories that are only seemingly true, or even improbable, thusly deceiving others or being deceived.

It is also for this reason that the relationship between words and things must be treated very carefully. To give you an idea, the American philosopher Willard van Orman Quine invented an "extreme" translation situation. Imagine him and a

linguistic scholar arriving in a remote place and running into a people unknown to the rest of the world, whose language is obviously unknown. Suppose the scholar wants to make a translation manual between the language of the natives and his own. How should he proceed? One day it may happen that a native says “Gavagai” while a white rabbit runs past a bush. The scholar makes his hypothesis: “Gavagai” could mean “rabbit”. On second thought, however, it might mean “white rabbit” or “rabbit (or animal) that runs”, or “look!”. The first translation hypothesis will be reviewed by taking into account subsequent experiences. Seeing a rabbit pass again, the scholar might ask the indigenous “Gavagai?” Assuming that the scholar has learned to distinguish “yes” and “no” in the indigenous language, the indigenous could answer “yes” referring not to the rabbit, but to an aspect of the rabbit or to other related events that the scholar is not considering. Perhaps “Gavagai” refers to a stage of growth of the rabbit (puppy, mother, adult male rabbit, etc.). With this strange mental experiment, Quine wants to point out that translating the single words of a language is a task that must take into account the language in its entirety. The meaning of each word is related to the use and the meanings of the other words, to the understanding of the behavior of the other speakers and to the sharing of life experiences with them.

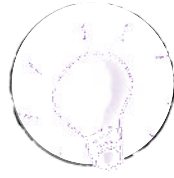


The Children's Point of View

Mysone's sentence can be very enigmatic. In fact, what does it mean that "we must start from things and not from words"? According to some nine-year-olds, it means that "first we have to know what things are for, then we need to know their name". According to others, perhaps Mysone found himself faced with things he did not know the name of and he had to invent words to name them. Others try to interpret Mysone by recalling the topics tackled when studying the passage between prehistory and history. Words were born as "signs to remember things" and painting "started from things", as did writing (if we consider pictograms). Perhaps Mysone intended to draw attention to the fact that we should prioritize things over words.

Let us ponder the children's first hypothesis: does it make sense to know the name of things, if you do not know what they are for? We might add: what can we know about the meaning of words that refer to things we have never seen, touched, or used? How does the meaning we attribute to words change after experiencing the things to which the words refer? The question is not trivial. I can know what "ship" and "sailing" mean without ever having sailed. Einstein was very impressed by a compass which he received as a present when he was five years old, and in particular by the fact that the needle moved without being "touched" by something—moved by an invisible "force". How does the meaning of the word "compass" change after having learned to use one and after having understood which force moves the needle?

Come to think of it, anyone who studies new things (the way children do at school) often encounters words that refer to objects and phenomena that are not directly "used" or experienced. What does it mean to learn the meaning of the words in this case? Fortunately, imagination comes to our aid because we do not have the time to directly experience everything that we learn to name. Some children discussing Mysone referred to one of their lessons from school about "mineral salts". Knowing that they had to learn about the subject, some admitted that they were "starting from words". "From the words it seems to be salt, but when you see it, it's a completely different thing". Observation with a microscope, along with a series of experiments, made it possible for the students to better understand the meaning of the new expression, which initially evoked an incorrect meaning. This testament could be transferred to other scientific terms encountered during the school years. The use of new words helps to define and distinguish more things, while observation and experience give meaning to words, helping to distinguish their meaning.



Ideas for Continuation

Mysone's sentence, although very enigmatic, can become a great starting point for reflection on the relationship between things and the words that represent them in various curricular areas.



History

Mysone's sentence can accompany a comparison study of the first forms of writing between Mesopotamia and Egypt, where the images of things had the function that would then be assumed by words, written with signs that were no longer realized as the images of things.



Science, Italian

How many new words that indicate previously unknown (or little known) things have the children discovered during the last year of school? You can prepare a list by reviewing the books studied and, for each word, specify whether the indicated thing has been used, viewed, touched or experienced directly. You can also ask the children to associate an explanation of each word «in their own words».



Italian

By dividing the class into two groups and then into pairs (or sub-groups), give one person in each pair some images (for example, a work of art, an object which cannot be named) and the other person some sheets on which to draw. The child with the images will have to guide his/her partner in drawing the image (this is done blindly, as the drawers will not be able to see the image, but can only imagine it and try to reproduce it starting from the words used by their partners). The task can be completed several times, using images that become increasingly difficult to describe and reproduce. Questions: To what degree can words succeed in "describing" images to another person? Which exposure strategies help the most? We could also create a gallery of outcomes (associating the original image with the image created together), reflecting on how the words used (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.) influenced the outcome in a positive or negative way.



How do we give meaning to words or names that refer to things which do not exist? How do we understand each other when we talk about those non-existent things? Think, for example, of names and words such as “Santa Claus”, “Donald Duck”, and “Golden Mountain” in the phrase “The Golden Mountain does not exist” ... Find other names and words that indicate things that do not exist.

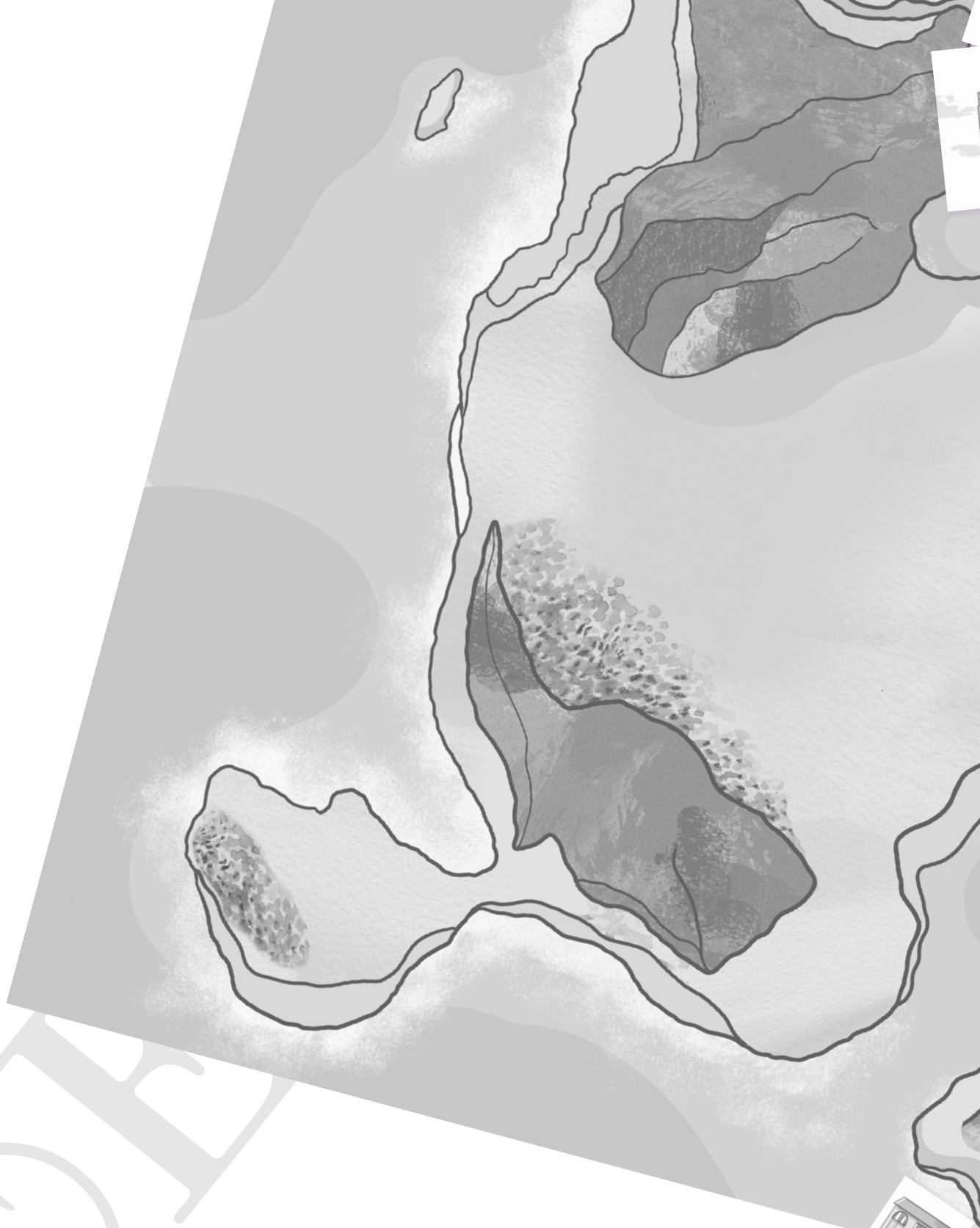


The Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) has imagined the following, rather unlikely, situation:

I fly to a certain part of the world in which men only have very inaccurate information, or have no information at all, about the possibility of flight. To these men I say that I just flew there starting from ... They ask me if I cannot be wrong. - It is clear that they have a mistaken idea of how things go. (If I had been packaged in a box, I could very well be mistaken about the way I was transported there). If I simply tell them that I cannot be wrong, maybe this will not convince them; but they can be convinced by the facts that describe the whole process. Then they will certainly not come up with the possibility of an error. At this point, however - even if they trust me - they may believe that I have dreamed, or that a sorcerer has deceived me.¹

We can use this scene to elaborate one of our mental experiences: what words and what things should the philosopher use to convince those men not to be deceived? What could you get by using only words? What could you get by using only things? In order to increase the number of hypotheses generated, it is useful to first elaborate strategies individually (or in sub-groups) and then compare them.

¹ Wittgenstein L. (1978), *On Certainty*, trad. It. by M. Trinchero, Torino, Einaudi, p. 109.



Building Utopia





© Erickson

Game

The Island of Utopia

The workshop proposes a **simulation game on utopia** designed to stimulate reflection on the deeply social and political dimensions of landscape transformations. Observing the effects of one's own choices on the same environment of reference (the island) and following the rules of the game (which will allow the distinction between “private” and “public” choices), participants will see some traits of the utopian landscape that they imagine and agree on together emerge before their own eyes.¹

Game Basics

View of island from above
Red and green tokens
Predefined elements of the landscape

Action cards: to be drawn during the first phase of the game, indicate the actions to be taken by those who draw the card
Predefined landscape elements² (to which groups can add their own ideas, making copies of those provided or inventing new ones)

Buildings

House
Skyscraper
Castel
Condominium

¹ The activity proposed in this chapter constitutes a reduction and an adaptation of a workshop, entitled Utopian Landscapes, which the author initially set for the Trento Science Museum (MuSe). More specifically, we thank TSM-Step (School for the Government of the Territory and Landscape of the Autonomous Province of Trento) and MuSe (Museum of Sciences of Trento) for encouraging the first realization of this activity (in particular Maria Bertolini, Gianluca Cepollaro, Lorenzo Guagliardo, Corrado Perini and Ilaria Perusin).

² The list includes some of the most cited elements (because they are shared or controversial) by the groups that the author met during the trip to discover the utopian and political imaginary of Italian children (recounted here: Mori L. (2017), *Utopias of children. The world rebuilt from childhood*, Pisa, Edizioni ETS).

Treehouse
Tent
Straw hut
Fencing

Energy

Oil refinery
Wind turbine
Dam
Hydroelectric power plant
Solar panel field

Vegetation

Fruit tree
Conifer
Chestnut/oak tree
Olive tree

Public Places

School
Hospital
Art Museum
Natural Science Museum
Town square
Playground
Library
Park
Garbage dump

Business and Economy

Bank
Supermarket
Video game store
Farm
Cultivated field
Pasture
Open air market
Hotel
Restaurant
General store
Heavy industry with smoke
Smoke free industry
Beach resort



Gas station

Infrastructure and defense

Element walls to protect the island [interlocking]
Cannons
Traps
Spy drone
Non-firearm weapons (bows, spears)
Barbed wire
Security camera
Prison
Hunting plane
Military ship
Military base with guards
Airport
Port
Railway station
Parking area

Action Cards

Add 1 element card (optional)
Add 1 or 2 elements card (optional)
Remove 1 element card (optional)
Remove 1 or 2 elements card (optional)
Remove 1 element card (obligatory)
Swap 1 element with another of your choice card
Move 1 element to another place card
Add up to 3 elements card
Sovereignty cards: *whoever draws this card can, for the next three turns, “prevent” the moves of the others, if they wish, and replacing them with their own moves (if in the next three turns someone draws another sovereignty card, the previous one is cancelled)*
Dictatorship card: *whoever draws this card immediately has the possibility to make 10 moves in a row if they wish (each move consists of adding, removing, or moving 1 element). They can also intervene in areas of exclusive ownership*
Exclusive property cards: *those who draw this card can “fence off” an area of the island for themselves with a special string, and decide what to do with it (if the owner does not agree, the others cannot perform actions in this area)*
Cancel exclusive property cards: *whoever draws this card can “cancel” the exclusive ownership currently in place or add 3 elements on the island.*

Phase 1 – Card Game

Each participant is entitled to draw a card from the deck (taking turns, for example going clockwise if the players are placed in a circle). The card drawn indicates the action to be taken. Everyone is free at this stage to do what the card allows, even jokingly because he/she is doing it without the others being able to comment or interfere. You start the game and continue until all the participants have drawn at least one card. If time allows, you can start a second turn.

Phase Intermedia

The teacher gives each participant a *red token* and a *green token*. Everyone is asked to place the 2 tokens in 2 points on the island: the *green* one in the point considered *best*; the *red* one at the point that seems *worst* (critical, with something wrong). Tokens that indicate the same point must be placed one on top of the other.

Nota bene!

At this point, a picture is taken of the results.

In this way, the distribution of preferred points and those that appear most critical emerges in an easily perceptible way.

Phase 2 - Free Proposal Game + Vote

(to be played within a given time: ex. 30 minutes, 1 hours, etc.)

Now the rules change. Participants can make their own proposal by making a reservation to speak (for a maximum of 2 minutes). They can propose actions to be performed on the landscape, trying to be convincing and direct in the short time available.

In this case, the moves proposed by individuals can be made if, and only if, they obtain the majority ($\text{half} + 1$) of the votes of those present.

Nota bene!

Now, the final result is photographed. Has much changed compared to the intermediate stage?

There are some general considerations to be made about the process. Has anything changed between phase 1 (single choices in succession, without the possibility to speak/explain the reasons for their choice) and phase 2 (choices proposed and voted on together)? Does the overall result appear acceptable to the class? Did you miss something? Are there some elements of the landscape more cared for than others? It should be emphasized that this simulation game concerns the different dynamics and different results visible in the landscape, which first derive from sequences of individual choices, then from collective choices. This is the “political” problem of the landscape. That is, the fact that the forms of the landscape in which we live are the result of good or poor political management, of the interaction between individual choices and collective choices (agreed upon to a greater or lesser degree), and the good or bad processing of conflicts between points of view, interests, preferences, etc. of different participants. The landscape is made up of politics and history, of men and their conflicts. From those conflicts remain traces that make it more or less habitable for those living there today and for those who will live there tomorrow.