

Children's Representations of Violence: Impacts of Cognitive Stimulation of a Philosophical Nature

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Summary

Violence is increasingly present in Quebec schools. Our position is that we should invest in “primary” prevention of violence by helping preschool children develop cognitive competencies. One of the aspects of cognitive development explored in this text regards children’s Social Representations (SR) of violence. Indeed, a number of psychologists have demonstrated that SR serve to regulate behaviours in relation to social norms, and that a change in a person’s SR influences her or his judgments and actions. This study consists of descriptions of children’s SR of violence, and verifying whether these SR are stable or dynamic at ages of five and six years, and whether children are or are not stimulated by the Philosophy for Children approach used throughout one school year. Firstly, the results indicate that children’s SR of violence can be grouped into four hierarchical perspectives. Secondly, the results indicate that the SR of children in the control groups hardly changed during the year, whereas those of children in the experimental groups showed a reorganization that was more marked.

This text is related to a larger research project¹, centered on “primary”² prevention of violence. Our position is that we should invest in this type of prevention by helping preschool children develop competencies at the cognitive level. One of the aspects of cognitive development explored in this text concerns children’s Social Representations (SR) of violence. Indeed, researchers have linked violence to the quality of a person’s SR, or more specifically, to their SR’s limits, since when SR are distorted, judgment may become biased, giving rise to acts of violence (Libersan, 2003; Jodelet, 1993).

The three questions we attempt to answer in this text are the following: What are preschool children’s SR of violence (concerning their manifestations, causes, consequences, ways of regulating violence, etc.)? Without specific stimulation, are children’s SR of violence stable at the ages of five and six years? With cognitive stimulation, how does the modification process of SR manifest itself in these children? To answer the third question, we introduced a

¹ The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada subsidized this Research Project from 2001 to 2005. M.-F. Daniel was head of the project, and co-investigators included Michael Schleifer (UQAM), Catherine Garnier (UQAM), Martine Quesnel (UQAM) and Emmanuelle Auriac (IUFM of Auvergne). P.-A. Doudin and F. Pons joined the team as collaborators.

² Note that primary violence prevention is intended for a healthy clientele and focuses on anticipating the ill-effects of violence.

specific educational intervention into the classroom, namely the Philosophy for Children approach (P4C).

In the following pages, we first present the problem of violence prevention. Then we introduce a theoretical framework with two interrelated components: SR and the P4C Approach. Finally, we present the results of our experimentation with preschool children and propose an interpretation.

1. Violence and Prevention

Violence is being increasingly decried, in schools and in society generally³. As defined by the *Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec*, violence presupposes the “use of power (physical, hierarchical, psychological, moral or social) in a manner that is open or concealed, spontaneous or deliberate, motivated or not, through the behaviour or structures of an individual or a group and that has the effect of compelling or destroying, partially or totally, by physical, psychological, moral or social means, an object (material goods, persons, symbols) so as to ensure a response to a legitimate need or to react to this unfulfilled need.” (MEQ, 1990) For example, among the most easily perceptible violent behaviours, let us mention physical abuse (hitting, dealing blows, etc.) and sexual abuse (touching, harassment, attempted rape, etc.). Then come behaviours that are less easily perceptible and are often invisible, such as verbal and psychological violence (depreciation, discrimination, rejection) and negligence (silence, abandon, etc.) that victimize a person. In short, no matter what its form, violence is an abuse of power that denies a person’s liberty and rights; it presupposes behaviours that transgress, to various degrees, norms of conduct usually accepted in society; it can and must be fought and overcome. However, to do so, the internal source, or sources, of violence must be known.

Already, at the beginning of the 20th century, “rupture of thought” had been identified as a source of violence (Wallon, 1925). More recently, some authors have indicated that SR influence people’s judgments and actions (Duveen, 1999; Garnier, 1999) and that SR serve to regulate their behaviours, according to the norms of their environment (Doise, 1969, 1992). Other authors explicitly situate the source of violence in SR. Indeed, for Libersan, it is all a question of perceptions or representations; an individual acts “according to what *appears* to him as reality” (2003, p. 62). For example, when prejudice, fear, incomprehension, and so on distort an individual’s SR, her or his interpretation of reality (her or his judgment) might be distorted and by being so, give rise to an act (defensive) of violence.

Within the perspective of “primary” prevention of violence, working on children’s SR therefore appears to be of fundamental importance. To our knowledge, few or no studies have linked violence prevention with the refinement of SR. Indeed, most pedagogical approaches that aim at violence prevention do so through the development of prosocial skills in children (Eddy, 1998; Hymel et al., 1990; Kupersmidt et al., 1991; Lapointe et al., 1993, 1996; Nafpaktitis et al., 1998), relegating the development of cognitive competencies to a position of secondary importance.

³ Violence exists in every person; it is innate, natural, and fundamental. Under desirable conditions, it is positive, in that it is a driving force behind love, energy, and creativity; it is a tool to ensure a person’s survival. It is only when violence is not integrated that it may give rise to aggressiveness and abuse. Thus, fundamental violence is neither good nor bad and its evolution depends on a person’s emotional maturity modalities and on the conditions in which this person moves (Bergeret, 1999; Libersan, 2003). In this text, we focus on non-integrated violence, which gives rise to abuse and disorders.

Moreover, preventive approaches used in classrooms are generally intended for school-aged children, in other words, children over the age of six or seven. Yet, studies have shown that violent behaviours appear much earlier in children (Dodson, 1972; Dumas, 2000). Our project examines the phenomenon among preschool children aged five and six years.

2.1 Social Representations (SR)

At the end of the 19th century, Durkheim put forward the notion of “collective representation” as a legitimate scientific object. Following his steps, mentality historians published many important works in this field: Ariès studied family and child; Vovelle looked into death; Foucault into madness and sexuality; Elias into mores and hygiene; Vigarello into cleanliness and filthiness, etc. (see Mannoni, 1998). Piaget was also, in his epistemological studies, drawn to the problem of representations, particularly when he studied children’s conceptions of the world (Piaget, 1982) or the changes in their ideas concerning discipline, rules, respect, cooperation, etc. (Piaget, 1932). In fact, Piaget links conceptualization and representation. He also deems that from the age of six or seven, children are able to transform memories, experiences, and ideas into concepts in order to adapt themselves to everyday life (Piaget, 1932).

The notion of “social representations” (SR) was introduced by Moscovici (1961). Subsequently, Jodelet (1989) suggests that SR are determined by the social system that surrounds an individual and by the nature of her or his relationships with that system. From this perspective, SR are a socially-elaborated and shared form of knowledge that works toward the construction of a common reality. It corresponds to the opinions of individuals and groups; it is a vision of the world developed by social actors. In sum, SR are the product and the process of a mental activity by which an individual or a group reconstructs a reality and assigns it meaning.

The theoretical foundation of SR is constructivist or socioconstructivist in that it presupposes that *objective* reality does not exist; that reality is always represented. In other words, it is appropriated by individuals or groups, reconstructed within their symbolical universe, and integrated into their value system (Abric, 1994). SR function as an organized and hierarchical system of social data interpretation regarding a given object.

In society, SR play a preventive role. A number of researchers (in particular Doise, 1969) show that SR serve to interpret situations and justify conducts in relation to the social norms that surround an individual. SR and social practice therefore enable individuals to decode expectations and anticipations. SR and social practice are correlative and co-constituent: representation guides and determines practice, and practice creates or transforms representation (Abric, 1994).

2.2 A Philosophical Approach

The Philosophy for Children (P4C) approach was put forward by American philosopher Matthew Lipman (Lipman, 2002; Lipman et al., 1980) and his colleagues from Montclair State University (NJ). P4C is used in 50 countries and its material has been translated in 20 languages. Works have shown that weekly use of P4C with youngsters aged 8 to 12 helps stimulate their cognitive skills (see among others: Cannon, 1987; Cannon and Weinstein, 1985; Gazzard, 1988; Johnson, 1984, 1989), and more specifically their conceptualization, transformation, categorization and correction skills (Daniel et al., 2004).

The philosophical material written by Lipman includes seven philosophical novels intended for youngsters aged 6 to 15 years. It draws its inspiration from philosophical fields: logic, ethics, esthetics, etc. *The Tales of Audrey-Anne* (Daniel 2002a) is a new support text that lies within the Lipmanian framework, but that is specifically aimed at primary prevention of violence in children aged 5 to 6 years. *The Tales* are considered philosophical in that they encourage the children to question open concepts for which there are no single answers and to reflect upon these concepts. The specific objectives of *The Tales* favour the development of cognitive skills (comprehending, identifying causes, anticipating consequences, making relationships, judging, etc.), and social skills (autonomy, empathy, dialogue, etc.), while raising awareness concerning various manifestations of violence. This is the philosophical support text that was used during the experiment described below.

To help children “philosophize,” a three-step educational method is proposed: 1) The adult reads a tale to the children. 2) The children are then invited to ask “philosophical” questions (Why, etc.? What does, etc. mean?, etc.) inspired by the reading and which they would like to discuss among their peers. 3) Together, the children attempt to answer the question they chose, and in so doing, are led to engage in dialogue. The purpose of the dialogue is not for the children to argue, in the rhetorical sense of the term, but to bring them to exchange views within a perspective of cooperation, each intervention serving to enrich the group’s point of view. Nor is the purpose of the dialogue for the children to relate personal anecdotes in relation to manifestations of violence (which would concern intrasubjectivity and would fall within the field of psychology). Rather, the objective is to encourage the children to reflect upon concepts related to violence as a “community of inquiry” (which concerns intersubjectivity and falls within the field of philosophy). Because the tales and questions are situated in their “proximal development zone” (Vygotski, 1985), children quickly learn to invest themselves in a dialogue centered on concepts such as violence, emotions, rights, etc. (see Daniel, 2002b; 2004).

It appears that the integration of weekly philosophical dialogues into the classroom would be relevant to foster preschool children’s cognitive competencies – which could lead to progressive structuring of their SR.

3. Method of Analysis

The study in question is exploratory and of a qualitative nature. Although part of the result comes from pre-testing and post-testing of both experimental and control groups, analysis of the overall data is inspired by the Grounded Theory Approach.

The Grounded Theory Approach (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Paillé 1994) is a form of qualitative analysis that consists in bringing to light, from ground data collected, elements likely to lead to a new comprehension of a phenomenon, or to extract meaning from a process. To do this, the analysis is subjected to categorization; an operation in which the constitutive elements of a whole are classified into analogical groupings. We performed two major analytical steps: 1) First, we coded all of the children’s answers. Then, we grouped these codes into preliminary conceptual categories. Next, we placed these preliminary categories in relation to each other, to highlight as many links as possible. Finally, from these relationships, we were able to extract four main categories with their constitutive characteristics or properties. This initial result was subsequently used as an analytical tool. 2) Indeed, in the second step, based on the matrix of the four main categories, we once again analyzed all of the children’s answers,

this time distinguishing experimental from control group data collected during pre-tests and post-tests.

One of the characteristics of the Grounded Theory Approach is the diversity of sampling, which enables the emergence of a maximum of information from the analysis. We therefore worked with eight preschool classrooms (experimental and control groups). Six were from Quebec and two from France. The socio-economic backgrounds that were represented varied between privileged and underprivileged. The first criterion we used in selecting these classrooms was the teacher's voluntary commitment to the research, and open-mindedness with regard to weekly use of P4C with the pupils. In Quebec, the classrooms had 12 to 18 children, whereas in France, they had about 27. In this text, we present only the data collected in the six groups (experimental and control) from Quebec.

Variables associated with age, gender, cultural, social and socio-economic factors were taken into account. Within the five cultural contexts, experimental and control groups were paired according to the following criteria: the minimum age of the children was five and the maximum age was six; the proportion of boys and girls neared 50%; the children were French speaking; and the children were city-dwellers.

All of the children from the experimental groups were participating in weekly philosophical discussions. Philosophical sessions lasted between 30 and 45 minutes per week, depending on the children's concentration, and took place from October to May. Control group children came from the same schools but did not benefit from philosophical discussions.

The data collection instrument used to study children's SR of violence was individual semi-directed interview with nine children per classroom for a total of 54 children. These nine children were selected by each classroom's teacher: three children were academically weak, three were average and three were academically strong. The purpose was to obtain an "average" representation of the children in each group. The interviews took place during pre-tests (end of September) and post-tests (end of April). During the post-test, one child from the experimental group and one child from the control group were absent. Our sampling was therefore 52 children.

To ensure the children's comprehension of the words used in the interview protocol, we organized a pre-meeting with some other children aged five. One word that emerged concerning "violence", and which seemed understood by all the children, was "fighting." This is therefore the word we used during the interview with the children. The semi-directed individual interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, to put the child at ease, the interviewer would ask the child to draw a picture (Galli et al., 1990, 1992): "Would you like to draw a picture of children playing in the schoolyard?" This drawing (pretext) would serve as a starting point for the interviewer's questions (Could it be that in your drawing some children are fighting? What happens then? Why are they fighting? What will happen then? What could they do to stop the fight? What can a child do to defend herself or himself? How does child "x" feel if child "y" hurts her or him? Why? How does "y" feel when she or he hurts "x"? Why?). The interviewers all followed the same protocol. They did not know which children belonged to the experimental groups and which belonged to the control groups. The children's answers were tape-recorded and videotaped.

The principal researcher first coded the children's answers. Four weeks later, the same person then blind-coded the answers. Finally, two co-researchers from the team (one from Quebec and one from Switzerland) coded them for the purpose of confronting differences and

consolidating interpretations. When a divergence occurred, exchanges took place until a consensus was reached.

4.1 First Result: Children's SR of Violence

As previously mentioned, the first question this text attempted to answer concerned the description of children's SR of violence. Individual interviews with each of the 52 children dealt with seven dimensions of violence (manifestations, causes, consequences, means of regulation, means of defence, justification of the victim child's emotions, justification of the aggressor child's emotions.)⁴ In each of these dimensions, the children's answers were very diverse. The first stage of analysis therefore consisted in grouping these diverse answers into preliminary conceptual categories. For each dimension of violence, following are the categories we assigned to the children's answers; between brackets are examples from the interview transcripts.

Dimension: Manifestations of Violence

Preliminary Categories:

- Manifestations are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Violence is physical (*hitting, pushing, striking*);
- Violence is verbal (*name calling*);
- Violence is psychological (*he says: move aside or I'll choke you. It'll hurt his heart, not him.*)

Dimension: Causes of Violence

Preliminary Categories:

- Causes are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Causes are found in material property (*the other person wants my ball*);
- Causes are found in intellectual property (*when you don't agree with your friend's opinion*);
- Causes are found in emotions (*when you're jealous*);
- Causes are found in exterior influences (*boys like violence because they often watch action films; girls are older than boys, that means that girls are calmer.*)

Dimension: Impacts/Consequences of Violence

Preliminary Categories:

- Impacts are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Impacts are found in punishment (*he'll go to the corner*);
- Impacts are found in resorting to an authority figure (*the other person will tell the teacher*);
- Impacts are found in others' ill-being (*it will hurt others*);
- Impacts are questioned (*nobody likes violence - it's hard to understand but boys they really hit you, girls (...) don't like fighting.*)

Dimension: Means of Regulating Violence

Preliminary Categories:

- Means are non-represented (*I don't know*);

⁴ Note that these dimensions, which were implicit at first, emerged explicitly from the first data analysis.

- Means are found in resorting to an authority figure (*telling the teacher who will scold the child*);
- Means are found in learned principles (*it's not nice for a girl to hit someone*);
- Means are found in magical regulation of violence (*you raise your hands like in the Wings of Peace*);
- Means are found in bilateral efforts (*we shake each other's hand*);
- Means are found in dialogue (*He says: would you please stop? And the other one asks if he wants to be his friend. He says yes and the fight stops*).

Dimension: Means of Defence

Preliminary Categories:

- Means are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Means are linked to an authority figure (*you tell the teacher*);
- Means are linked to the use of physical violence (*you kick someone*);
- Means are found in exchanging with others (*telling the other person: I don't like it when you hit me*);
- Means are nuanced and placed into context (*he can defend himself but it's better not to - it's better not to take revenge or else it gets worse*).

Dimension: Justification of the Victim Child's Emotions

Preliminary Categories:

- Justifications are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Justifications are self-centered (*sad because I hurt*);
- Justifications are linked to others (*sad because she lost her friend*);
- Justifications are placed into context (*angry because you aren't allowed to hit children your age, only younger kids are allowed to hit you*).

Dimension: Justification of the Aggressor Child's Emotions

Preliminary Categories:

- Justifications are non-represented (*I don't know*);
- Justifications are self-centered (*doesn't feel good because the other person will tell*);
- Justifications are linked to others (*doesn't feel good because he hit his friend*);
- Justifications are hypothetical (*maybe she's angry because she hit her*).

In short, for each dimension of violence, several preliminary conceptual categories emerged from the first stage of analysis. Placing these categories into relation with each other enabled us to extract four hierarchical perspectives and their constituent characteristics, which reflect the children's overall SR of violence (see table 4.1.1).

Table 4.1.1

Perspective	Characteristics
Perspective 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The child does not have a representation of the causes, consequences, etc. of violence; - The child does not justify her or his answer regarding emotions.
Perspective 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manifestations of violence are necessarily physical; - Causes of violence are found in material property; - Consequences of violence are found in resorting to an authority figure and punishment; - Means of working out fights are in resorting to the teacher or to learned principles; - Means of defence are in resorting to the teacher or in using physical violence too; - Emotions of the child victim of violence are self-centered;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotions of the aggressor child are also self-centered.
Perspective 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manifestations of violence surpass physical perception and reach more subtle forms such as verbal forms; - Causes of violence surpass physical property to apply to intellectual or emotional property; - Consequences are located in the other's uneasiness; - Means of sorting out fights presuppose bilateral efforts; - Means of defence are in exchanging with the other person; - Emotions of the victim child are in relation to the other person; - Emotions of the aggressor child are also in relation to the other person.
Perspective 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manifestations of violence are placed in their context and questioned; - Causes of violence highlight exterior influences; - Consequences are graded and placed into context; - Means of regulation are based on interaction among peers and are socio-constructivist; - Means of defence are placed into context and questioned; - Emotions of the victim child are placed into context and hypothetical; - Emotions of the aggressor child are placed into context and hypothetical.

This section provided elements of response in relation to the first question posed in this text. To answer the other group of questions that concerned us, that is, those relating to the study of the stability/dynamism of children's SR, with and without cognitive stimulation, we again analyzed the 52 children's answers. This time, we used the four hierarchical perspectives, and their constitutive characteristics as a matrix or analytical tool.

4.2 Second Result: Stability/Dynamism of Children's SR

In the following pages, we present the results of the second stage of analysis, in which we distinguish the answers of children from the experimental and control groups in relation to the pre-tests (beginning of the school-year) and the post-tests (end of the school-year).

Dimension 1: Manifestations

In the experimental groups' pre-tests, the children's answers were shared between perspectives 1 and 2. Indeed, 3 of 26 children had no representation of violence ("*I don't know*") and 23 out of 26 had a representation centered on manifestations of physical violence ("*pushing each other*", "*falling*", "*hitting*".)

In the experimental groups' post-tests, the children's answers were shared between the three first perspectives: perspective 1 (2/26), perspective 2 (21/26) and perspective 3 (3/26). Thus, although perspective 2 remained salient, a new perspective emerged in which the children's SR were no longer centered on physical violence, but rather on more subtle manifestations such as psychological violence ("*...he says: move over or I'll choke you. It'll hurt his heart, not him*".)

In sum, in the experimental groups, although the curve was similar in pre-tests and post-tests, since perspective 2 continued to predominate, we noted a slight change in the post-test, as three children moved on to perspective 3. In so doing, they showed openness toward less observable manifestations of violence.

In the control groups' pre-tests, the children's answers were shared between the first three perspectives: 8 of 26 children were situated in perspective 1, in that they had no representation of violence ("*I don't know*."); 16 of 26 were situated in perspective 2, centered on the physical aspect ("*punching*"); 2 of 26 children were situated in perspective 3, their SR were centered on another form than physical violence ("*they say things that aren't nice*"; "*they bother a friend*".)

In the control groups' post-tests, 5 of 26 children had no representation of violence; 19 of 26 were situated in perspective 2 ("*fighting*"); 2 of 26 in perspective 3 ("*yelling bad words*"). In the control groups, perspectives 1 and 2 varied a little, and the third perspective was not modified. In sum, in the control groups, SR did not evolve much between pre-testing and post-testing; perspective 2 remained salient.

Thus, concerning the first dimension, that is the manifestations of violence, SR hardly changed between pre-testing and post-testing. However, three children from the experimental groups reached perspective 3 during the post-tests, whereas the SR curve of the control group children remained similar.

Table 4.2.1

Dimension	Manifestations of Violence							
	Experimental				Control			
Group								
Perspective	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	3	23	0	0	8	16	2	0
Post-test Number of Responses	2	21	3	0	5	19	2	0

Dimension 2: Causes of Violence

In the experimental groups' pre-tests, with regard to the possible causes of violence, the children's SR were shared among three perspectives: perspective 1 (17/26); perspective 2 (8/26); and perspective 3 (1/26). The distribution is uneven, as the majority of children (17/26) had no representation of the causes of violence ("*I don't know*"). Furthermore, 8 more children placed the causes of violence in material or physical mimicry ("*because he wants the same ball as the other friend*"). Another one's representation applied to a perceived cause ("*because they're excited*").

In the experimental groups' post-tests, the children's answers were shared among all four perspectives: 8 of 26 children were situated in perspective 1, in that they still did not picture the causes of violence. 6 of 26 children were situated in perspective 2, as the causes of violence they proposed were based on material mimicry ("*they want something and they both want the same thing*") or referred to obeying authority ("*the teacher doesn't want us to fight*"). As for perspective 3, in which 9 children were situated, it refers to causes that are cognitive ("*when we don't agree*") or emotional ("*when you're jealous*") rather than material. Finally, concerning perspective 4, three children's answers brought to light exterior influences as a cause for violence ("*they like violence because they often watch action movies*"; "*for example, some kids have no manners and if a person has two kids and one has bad manners and not the other, both of them will turn out to have bad manners.*")

In short, with regard to causes of violence, we observe an evolution in the SR of the experimental groups' children between pre-testing and post-testing. Unlike the pre-test distribution, where perspective 1 clearly predominated (17/26), the response distribution in post-testing is almost equally shared among the first three perspectives, the third being slightly superior. We also note that in the post-tests, three children were situated in perspective 4.

In the control groups pre-tests, the children's answers were shared among three perspectives: perspective 1, non-representation of causes of violence, was salient (20/26); With

regard to perspective 2, 3 of 26 children were situated in a material and self-centered register (“because you’re playing a game the other person doesn’t want to play.”) As for perspective 3, 3 of 26 children leaned toward opinion and debate (“when you don’t agree with what the other says.”)

In post-testing, the same three perspectives were represented in the control groups. However, we note a change in the curve. Indeed, although perspective 1, regarding the causes of violence, remained slightly salient (12/26), a much more equal distribution took place to the benefit of perspective 2 (10/26). The latter perspective globally situates the causes of violence in material property (“because he had the ball and lost it”.). Finally, 4 of 26 children were situated in perspective 3 (“because they don’t get along”) and none in perspective 4.

In sum, SR of the causes of violence were modified in the control and experimental groups. In the control groups, there was a transition from predominance of perspective 1 during pre-testing to predominance of perspectives 1 and 2, during the post-tests. In the experimental groups, there was a distinct progression in SR between pre-testing and post-testing. There was a transition from a predominance of perspective 1 in pre-testing to an almost equal distribution between perspectives 1, 2 and 3 in post-testing; perspective 3 was slightly salient. Moreover, in the post-tests, 3 experimental group children were situated in perspective 4.

Table 4.2.2

Dimension	Causes of Violence							
	Experimental				Control			
Group	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	17	8	1	0	20	3	3	0
Post-test Number of Responses	8	6	9	3	12	10	4	0

Dimension 3: Impacts of violence

In the experimental groups’ pre-tests, the children’s answers concerning the consequences and impacts of violence were divided among three perspectives. Perspective 1, which presupposes that children do not have a SR of the impacts of violence, was hardly represented (2/26). Perspective 2, in which the children represent the impacts of violence in terms of manifest observation (“it hurts”), of punishment (“we’re going to be punished”), of resorting to a figure of authority (“we’ll tell the teacher”) or of a learned interdiction (“that’s not nice”), was clearly salient (22/26.). As for perspective 3 (2/26), it places consequences in the uneasiness of others (“people will get hurt”).

In the experimental groups’ post-tests, the children’s answers were divided into four perspectives: perspective 1 (1/26); perspective 2 (15/26); perspective 3 (8/26); and perspective 4 (2/26). The predominant SR remained linked to perspective 2; however, it was followed in number by perspective 3, in which eight children were concerned with the consequences of a violent action on the well-being or uneasiness of those involved. Moreover, two children were situated in perspective 4, where consequences of violence are represented in a reflexive manner. In other words, their consequences show nuance and are placed into context (“no one

likes violence. It's hard to understand, boys really hit you, girls don't really hit each other (...) because girls don't like fighting (...) when you're friends, it doesn't happen as often.”)

In sum, between pre-testing and post-testing, the experimental groups modified the SR they had of the consequences of violence. They went from a clear salience of perspective 2 in the pre-tests to a slightly more homogeneous distribution between perspectives 2 and 3 during the post-tests, and two children joined perspective 4.

During the control groups' pre-tests, three perspectives were unequally represented. Perspective 1 was rather important (8/26), however perspective 2 characterized the great majority of answers (17/26); the accent was then placed on obeying learned principles (“*you mustn't fight*”), on an authority figure (“*we have to tell the teacher*”) and on the consequences imposed by an authority figure (“*we'll have to go to the corner*”). Perspective 3 was minimally illustrated (1/26); it shows the consequences of violence in terms of an interpersonal relationship (“*his friend isn't his friend anymore*”).

In the control groups' post-tests, the same three perspectives as in the pre-tests were represented, and the distribution of answers was similar: 6 of 26 children were situated in perspective 1, in that they had no representation of the consequences of violence; the majority of the children (19/26) were situated in perspective 2, where the accent is placed on obedience to an authority figure; a minority (1/26) remained in perspective 3, from which the interpersonal aspect emerges. In short, in the control groups, the children's SR of consequences of violence were not modified very much between pre-testing and post-testing in that they essentially represented the impacts of violence in terms of the punishment to come.

Table 4.2.3

Dimension	Impacts/Consequences of Violence							
	Experimental				Control			
Group	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	2	22	2	0	8	17	1	0
Post-test Number of Responses	1	15	8	2	6	19	1	0

Dimension 4: Means of Regulating Violence

In the experimental groups' pre-tests, the children's answers regarding means of regulating violence were shared among three perspectives: 2 of 26 children were situated in perspective 1 since they had no representation of the subject. The majority of the children (13/26) were situated in perspective 2, where means of regulating violence are found in learned principles (“*I'm sorry*”) or in resorting to an authority figure (“*telling the teacher*”). 11 of 26 children were situated in perspective 3, which presupposes bilateral efforts or consent on the part of both parties engaged in the conflict (“*we forgive each other*”; “*let's play together*”; “*let's shake hands*”). In perspective 3, violence is not resolved unilaterally (“*because I say I'm sorry*”), but presupposes that both parties show willingness and will act towards a return to a state of peace. In sum, in the experimental groups' pre-tests, the SR of children were predominantly shared between perspectives 2 and 3, perspective 2 being slightly more salient.

In the experimental groups' post-tests, the children's answers were situated in all four perspectives. In perspective 1, 1 of 26 children had no SR of the means of regulating violence. Perspective 2, which is centered on resorting to an authority figure, included 3 of 26 children. Perspective 3 was salient, in that 17 of 26 children considered the fact that a "fight" is a consequence of a negative interrelation involving at least two people who must be active during the regulation (*"I say I'm sorry and so does the other person"*.) Perspective 4 included 5 of 26 children; it indicates an awareness of the difficulty of regulating violence and consequently highlights more than one alternative (*"He says: Would you please stop? And the other asks if they could become friends, and the other says yes and they stop fighting; another solution is that you say: "Would you stop? And the other doesn't stop, so you could tell the person watching over you."*)

In short, in the experimental groups, between the pre-tests and the post-tests, the children's SR of means of regulating violence evolved from perspective 2 to perspective 3. Moreover, in the post-tests, five children were situated in perspective 4.

In the control groups' pre-tests, all four perspectives were represented: Perspective 1, non-representation that underlies the means of regulating violence, included 7/26 children. Perspective 2, which denotes resorting to an authority figure (*"you tell the teacher"*) included 8/26 children. As to perspective 3, which was salient (10/26), it presupposes that both parties contribute to a reconciliation (*"we shake hands"*). Perspective 4 (1/26), highlights dialogue and the search for compromise as a means of regulating violence (*"talking and trying to find a game that both like"*.)

In the control groups' post-tests, all four perspectives were still represented, and their distribution was similar: perspective 1, non-represented, increased by one answer for a total of 8 out of 26 children; perspectives 2 and 4 remained the same with 8 of 26 children and 1 of 26 children, respectively; perspective 3 had one answer less for a total of 9 of 26 children. Thus, regarding means of regulating violence, there was very little change in the control group children's SR between pre-testing and post-testing.

In sum, concerning the fourth dimension, the SR of the experimental group children evolved. They went from equilibrium between perspectives 2 and 3 in pre-testing, to clear salience of perspective 3 in post-testing. Furthermore, five children were situated in perspective 4 in post-testing. In contrast, the SR of the control group children remained almost static.

Table 4.2.4

Dimension	Means of Regulating Violence							
	Experimental				Control			
Group	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Perspective	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	2	13	11	0	7	8	10	1
Post-test Number of Responses	1	3	17	5	8	8	9	1

Dimension 5: Means of Defence

In the experimental groups' pre-tests, children's answers concerning means of defence were shared between two perspectives. A good number of children (9/26) were situated in

perspective 1, as they had no representation of the means that could be used to defend themselves against a child aggressor. However, perspective 2 dominated (17/26), in that a majority of children situated means of defence either in resorting to the teacher (“*tell the teacher then the other will be scolded*”), or in using reciprocal physical violence (“*kicking*”). None of the children’s answers were situated in perspective 3 or 4.

In the experimental groups’ post-tests, the children’s answers were shared among all four perspectives: perspective 1, non-representation, included 4 of 26 children. Perspective 2 was salient with 15 of 26 children; it emphasizes resorting to an adult. Perspective 3, which is manifested within an authentic exchange with others (“*Tell the other: I don’t like it when you hit me.*”) included 3 of 26 children. Perspective 4, which is manifested either in thinking about alternatives (“*He can defend himself but it’s better not to. It’s better not to take revenge or else things get worse*”), either in contextualization (“*At school it’s not allowed, so we’ll tell the teacher but if it’s a big girl, she’ll take care of it herself because bigger kids take care of things themselves.*”) reflected the SR of 4 of 26 children.

Thus, concerning means used to defend oneself against a child aggressor, the SR of children in the experimental groups retained the same salience as perspective 2. Furthermore, the distribution of responses was better balanced, in that the SR were shared between the four perspectives in the post-tests (rather than concentrated in two perspectives, as in the pre-tests.)

In the control groups’ pre-tests, the children’s SR were shared among three perspectives: perspective 1 with 9 of 26 children; perspective 2 with 16 of 26 children; and perspective 3 with 1 of 26 children. Perspective 2 was most salient, followed by perspective 1.

In the control groups’ post-tests, the children’s SR were about the same. Perspective 1, relative to non-representation, diminished slightly (6/26). Perspective 2, which concentrates on resorting to the teacher and using physical force, increased from 16 to 18 of 26 children. Perspective 3, oriented toward interpersonal relationships, increased from 1 to 2 of 26 children. These changes did not affect the curve from the pre-tests, since perspective 2 was most salient, followed by perspective 1. Thus, between pre-testing and post-testing, the children’s SR of means of defending themselves remained similar.

In sum, in the experimental groups, between the pre-tests and the post-tests, the children’s SR remained concentrated around perspective 2. However, in the post-tests, SR were shared among the four perspectives, whereas they were grouped within the first two perspectives during the pre-tests. As for the SR of the control group children, perspective 1 diminished slightly in favour of perspectives 2 and 3. Even so, between pre-testing and post-testing, the control group children’s SR retained the same nucleus, centered on perspective 2, and the same curve regarding the four perspectives.

Table 4.2.5

Dimension	Means of Defence							
	Experimental				Control			
Group	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Perspective	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	9	17	0	0	9	16	1	0
Post-test Number of Responses	4	15	3	4	6	18	2	0

Dimension 6: Emotions of the Victim

In the experimental groups' pre-tests, regarding the emotions of children victims of violence, the answers were distributed among the four perspectives. 5 of 26 children were situated in perspective 1, that of non-representation, 17 of 26 children were situated in perspective 2, which is manifested in a self-centered relation between the emotion and the pain felt by the victim (*"feels sad because it hurts"; "feels angry because it hurts"*.) In perspective 3, where the accent is placed on reciprocity, (*"she feels angry because she lost her friend"*), there were 3 of 26 children. In addition, 1 child out of 26 was situated in perspective 4, which presupposes placing things into context (*"Depending on whether the girl is big or small, I'll be afraid or not"*.) In spite of the presence of the four perspectives, the answers were grouped mainly in perspective 2.

In the experimental groups' post-tests, the four perspectives were still represented: perspective 1 (1/26); perspective 2 (20/26); perspective 3 (2/26); and perspective 4 (3/26). Hence, a decline in non-representation brought out the salience of perspective 2. In this perspective, the children's justification is focused on self-centered emotion or on fear of authority (*"she's afraid because her father is going to be angry with her"*.) In contrast, in perspective 3, which included two children, the emotions of the victim child are connected to negative consequences concerning interpersonal relationships (*"feels sad because he lost his friend"*.) As for perspective 4, which included three children, it offers a contextual rather than a categorical justification, and it is based on seemingly integrated principles (*"I would be angry because you aren't allowed to hit children your age. Only smaller kids are allowed to hit you."*).

Thus, the children's SR of the victim's emotions became a little more refined between the pre-tests and the post-tests. Although perspective 2 remained salient, perspective 1 almost completely disappeared, perspective 3 decreased slightly and perspective 4 increased slightly.

In the pre-tests with the control groups, three perspectives emerged: perspective 1 (7/26); perspective 2 (18/26); and perspective 3 (1/26). Perspective 2, based on authority (*"isn't angry because the counselor took care of it all"*) was salient. Perspective 3, based on interpersonal relationships (*"sad because they are friends and he doesn't like that"*), was only slightly important.

In the post-tests, the control groups were still situated in the same three perspectives: perspective 1 (2/26); perspective 2 (22/26); and perspective 3 (2/26). Perspective 1 became minimal; perspective 2 dominated the children's SR regarding the emotions of victim children (*"angry because she was hurt"; "angry because her mom will be told."*). Perspective 3 increased slightly (*"sad because the other person isn't her friend anymore"*). None of the answers were situated in perspective 4. Thus, there was a change between the pre-tests and the post-tests, particularly regarding the decrease of perspective 1; however, perspective 2 remained salient in both tests.

In sum, in the experimental groups, all four perspectives emerged. Moreover, between the pre-tests and the post-tests, the curve remained similar: perspective 1 diminished in favour of perspectives 2 and 4, although perspective 2 was still salient. Concerning the control groups' SR, these were shared among three perspectives. Between the pre-tests and the post-tests, the curve showed little variance: perspective 1 decreased, mostly in favour of perspective 2, which remained salient, although perspective 3 increased very slightly.

Table 4.2.6

Dimension	Emotions of the Child Victim of Violence							
Group	Experimental				Control			
Perspective	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	5	17	3	1	7	18	1	0
Post-test Number of Responses	1	20	2	3	2	22	2	0

Dimension 7: Emotions of the Aggressor

In the experimental groups’ pre-tests, answers concerning an aggressor child’s emotions were divided as follows: perspective 1 (16/26); perspective 2 (2/26) and perspective 3 (8/26). Concerning this dimension, perspective 1, or non-representation, was salient. Perspective 2 is linked to a self-centered feeling (“*doesn’t feel well because it hurts his hand*”); whereas perspective 3 presupposes awareness of the other person, (“*he’s sorry because he didn’t mean to hurt the other person*”).

In post-tests with the experimental groups, all four perspectives emerged: perspective 1 (10/26); perspective 2 (10/26); perspective 3 (5/26); and perspective 4 (1/26). Thus, perspectives 1 and 2 were equally salient, followed by perspective 3. A single child was situated in perspective 4, in that his statement was not formulated as a closed conclusion but as a hypothesis to be verified (“*maybe she’s angry because she hit him*”).

In short, the children’s SR in the experimental groups improved. Salience went from perspective 1 in the pre-tests, to perspectives 1 and 2 in the post-tests. However, perspective 3 decreased between the tests, and perspective 4 appeared in one case, in the post-tests.

In the control groups’ pre-tests, three perspectives were represented: perspective 1 (12/26); perspective 2 (12/26); and perspective 3 (2/26). Perspectives 1 and 2 were salient in this case as well.

In the control groups’ post-tests, the same three perspectives were represented, with an identical curve: perspective 1 (13/26); perspective 2 (12/26); and perspective 3 (1/26). Thus, in the post-tests, perspective 3 decreased slightly in favour of perspective 1. None of the children were situated in perspective 4. In short, regarding the dimension of the aggressor child’s emotions’, the control groups’ SR did not vary between pre-testing and post-testing.

Table 4.2.7

Dimension	Emotions of the Aggressor Child							
Group	Experimental				Control			
Perspective	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pre-test Number of Responses	16	2	8	0	12	12	2	0
Post-test Number of Responses	10	10	5	1	13	12	1	0

Summary

Overall, we note that the SR of the experimental groups' children were situated at the perspective 2 level in the pre-tests, except regarding two dimensions, namely the causes of violence, where perspective 1 was salient, and the emotions of the aggressor child, where perspective 1 also dominated. In the experimental groups' post-tests, perspective 2 remained salient, except regarding two dimensions, namely the causes of violence, where perspective 3 was salient, and the means of regulating violence, where again perspective 3 dominated. Therefore, in general, perspective 2 prevailed, in both pre-testing and in post-testing. However, in post-testing, perspective 1 decreased materially across every dimension, and perspective 3 became salient in two dimensions (causes of violence and means of regulation.) We will take a closer look at these elements.

Firstly, perspective 1 decreased in the seven dimensions, particularly concerning causes of violence (decrease from 17 answers in the pre-tests to 8 answers in the post-tests), means of defence (decrease from 9 to 4 answers), emotions of the victim child (decrease from 5 to 1 answer), and emotions of the aggressor child (decrease from 16 to 10 answers).

Secondly, the increase in perspective 3 was felt in all dimensions except for the last two, concerning the victim's and the aggressor's emotions, and where the children were required to provide justification to classify their answers into one of the last three perspectives. If not justified, the answer was classified as being in perspective 1. In perspective 3, we particularly note the following changes: manifestations of violence (increase from 0 to 3 answers), causes of violence (increase from 1 to 9 answers), consequences of violence (increase from 2 to 8 answers), means of regulating violence (increase from 11 to 17 answers), and means of defence (increase from 0 to 3 answers).

Finally, although perspective 4 was not very salient, it did emerge in six of the seven dimensions, namely, causes of violence (3 answers), consequences (2 answers), means of regulating violence (5 answers), means of defence (4 answers), emotions of the victim child (3 answers), and those of the aggressor child (1 answer). In all of the dimensions except that of the victim's emotions, where one answer had been noted in the pre-tests, this was the first time that perspective 4 was manifested.

In sum, in the experimental groups, although the majority of SR remained at the perspective 2 level, SR were refined between pre-tests and post-tests for each of the seven dimensions, particularly due to a decrease in perspective 1 in each of the seven dimensions, to an increase in perspective 3 in five dimensions, and to the appearance of perspective 4 in six dimensions.

Overall, in the control groups, we note that the children's SR were situated at the perspective 2 level in the pre-tests except in two dimensions, namely the causes of violence, where perspective 1 prevailed, and the aggressor's emotions, where perspectives 1 and 2 were equal. In the post-tests, we did not note any change in SR, since perspective 2 remained salient, except in the same two dimensions, namely the causes of violence and the emotions of the aggressor, where perspective 1 dominated slightly. As for perspective 3, it remained marginal except with regard to means of regulating violence, where we observed 10 and 9 answers in the pre-tests and post-tests, respectively. Perspective 4 was manifested only in the dimension related to means of regulating violence (1 answer in both pre-tests and post-tests.)

A detailed analysis reveals that, in the control groups, perspective 1 showed an increased number of SR linked to means of regulating violence and to the emotions of the aggressor (increase from 7 to 8 answers and from 12 to 13 answers, respectively), and that this

number decreased in five dimensions: manifestations of violence (decrease from 8 to 5 answers); causes of violence (decrease from 20 to 12 answers); consequences of violence (decrease from 8 to 6 answers); means of defence (decrease from 9 to 6 answers); and emotions of the victim child (decrease from 7 to 2 answers).

Perspective 2 evolved between pre-testing and post-testing in the following dimensions: manifestations of violence (increase from 16 to 19 answers); causes of violence (increase from 3 to 10 answers); impacts (increase from 17 to 19 answers); means of defence (increase from 16 to 18 answers); and emotions of the victim (18 to 22 answers).

Perspective 3 remained underrepresented in both pre-tests and post-tests, except with regard to means of regulating violence, where we observed 10 and 9 answers in pre-tests and post-tests, respectively. Moreover, this perspective remained relatively stable between the pre-tests and the post-tests: causes of violence (increase from 3 to 4 answers); means of regulating violence (decrease from 10 to 9 answers); means of defence and emotions of the victim (increase from 1 to 2 answers); and emotions of the aggressor (decrease from 2 to 1 answer).

In perspective 4, no children's answers were registered, except for the dimension related to means of regulating violence, where one answer is included in both the pre-tests and the post-tests. Thus, no change occurred in this perspective.

In sum, it appears that in the control groups, the SR were hardly modified between the pre-tests and the post-tests. In both tests, the salient nucleus remained centered around perspective 2, followed by perspective 1, which however showed an increase in five dimensions in the post-tests. Perspective 3 remained stable and quite marginal between both tests. Perspective 4 was absent in both pre-tests and post-tests, except in the dimension related to means of regulating violence (1 answer in both the pre-tests and the post-tests).

5. Interpretation of Results and Conclusion

In order to further guide us in our comprehension of the modification process of children's SR of violence, it is appropriate at this point in the analysis to specify the four hierarchical perspectives; in other words to name them. The objective of nomination is not to introduce biases, surplus, or rejects in the material. It aims instead to bring to light evidence that is invisible at the raw data stage, while respecting the hierarchy. Nomination must respect the following conditions: a) mutual exclusion of categories (each element can only refer to one perspective); homogeneity of categories (the same principle must govern the organization of all four perspectives); relevance (in relation to the chosen theoretical framework, in this case, children's cognitive development through the use of P4C); and productivity (a categorization is productive if it provides results that are rich in inferences, hypotheses, and accurate and reliable data) (Bardin, 1991, pp. 153-154).

The nomination we suggest is related to epistemology and, more specifically, to its developmental process (see Daniel et al., 2004; King and Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1970): the first perspective is associated with *non-representation*; the second perspective with *egocentricity*; the third perspective with *plurality*; and the fourth perspective with *intersubjectivity*.

As understood here, *non-representation* (perspective 1) refers to incomprehension of the subject questioned or to inability to justify one's representations. *Egocentricity* (perspective 2), in this context, is based on the certainty of what is concrete and observable, whether this be the manifestations (physical violence), the causes (material property), or the consequences of

violence (punishment). Moreover, in this perspective, justification is elaborated in relation to the adult, who represents the ultimate authority figure. *Plurality* (perspective 3) removes itself a little from certainty and, in so doing, surpasses the observable character of the previous perspective to concentrate on more subtle actions (verbal violence) or on causes of violence that are more difficult to grasp (intellectual property and emotions). From that point on, a degree of logical reasoning is included in the children's representations of violence. In doing so, the children gradually become competent in providing reasons for their beliefs (justification); these reasons indicate a growing awareness toward peers (other person's uneasiness; awareness of the other's emotions), who become part of the conflict-resolution process (bilateral efforts; exchanges with others). Also, within this perspective, autonomy asserts itself: the child resorts less often to an authority figure, choosing instead to resort to her or his own competencies or peers' competencies. *Intersubjectivity* (perspective 4), as manifested in this study, is based on children's ability to justify their beliefs and to use complex thinking skills to interpret dimensions of violence. In other words, the children do not represent the latter as established facts grounded in certainty or "Truth", but rather as events that must be placed into context, nuanced and questioned.

By linking the previous section's results to the epistemological perspectives as we have just described them, it appears that the children's SR in both groups (experimental and control), within one school year, remained in the egocentricity perspective. Overall, this result confirms traditional links that are established between children's age and their epistemology (among others, see Piaget, 1932). However, a closer examination of the results brings to light a restructuring process of the SR, for certain dimensions of violence, among children who experimented with the philosophical approach. This process is put forward in the following paragraphs.

Restructuring Process of the SR in "Philosopher" Children

At the beginning of the year, for five of the seven dimensions of violence that were studied, a majority of children were situated in the egocentricity perspective. In other words, the children were only aware of the more physical manifestations of violence (*hitting*). Their SR of the consequences of violence were found in punishment by an adult (*he'll be put in the corner*) and their SR of means of regulating behaviours (*tell the teacher who will scold the child*) and means of defence (*we tell the teacher*) indicated that for the children, violence is a phenomenon over which they have no control, no power. Within a context of primary prevention of violence, children must surpass the egocentricity perspective, since their lack of power when facing a violent situation is in turn likely to engender violence. Indeed, some children's SR of means of defence are too often found in revenge (*you kick the person*).

At the end of the school year, egocentricity still prevailed in the group of children as a whole; however, for many children, the plurality perspective progressed in five of the seven dimensions – for example, the causes of violence. At the end of the school year, the children's epistemology was more open to peers, in whom they recognize different beliefs and points of view. Thus, their SR of the causes of violence were no longer solely oriented toward material property, but toward divergence of opinions (*when you don't agree with your friend's idea*). Since openness towards others favours knowledge of self, awareness of one's emotions is represented as another possible cause for fighting (*when you're jealous*.) This extended comprehension of causes is fundamental in violence prevention. It enables children to grasp the basis of reality and to understand what is happening within themselves and in the world that

surrounds them. Comprehending causes empowers the children in their own social practice – in which they are beginning to actively participate. However, this perspective removes the children from certainty in their beliefs, placing them into the insecurity engendered by plurality.

Another example is means of regulation. At the end of the school year, for a majority of children, SR of means of regulation were tinted with the plurality perspective in that they no longer represented the end of the “fight” as a “magical” act that occurs at the very moment they want it to end, but rather as a process that requires both parties’ participation (*we shake each other’s hand*). In other words, the SR of children situated in the plurality perspective loses slightly with respect to self-centeredness (and to certainty) and acquire a more open, more active, and more social character. Since SR reflect social practice (Abric, 1994), we can assume that, inasmuch as children include their peers in their problem-solving, “abuse of personal power” inherent in the violent act (see MEQ, 1990) is, *a priori*, likely to be replaced by “power sharing”. In short, instead of searching for power (negatively) in abuse and violence, children will search for it (positively) in their relationships with others.

In the post-tests, the intersubjectivity perspective, although not predominant, appeared in the SR of a few children (between one and five) for six of the seven dimensions of violence that were studied. For example, these children were able to analyze the relationship between the actions they observed and exterior influences (*boys like violence because they watch action films a lot*). Or, means of regulating a fight are found in co-constructing an agreement through dialogue (*He says: Would you please stop? And the other person asks if they could become friends, and the other says yes and they stop fighting*), rather than by resorting to an authority figure or sharing with another person. Means of defence are no longer situated in revenge, but are analyzed after being placed into context (*he can defend himself but it’s better not to, it’s better not to take revenge or else things get worse*). In the intersubjectivity perspective, SR are tinged with reflexive judgment, which means there is a good possibility that reality is not biased by incomprehension or prejudices, and consequently, that the act does not become violent (see Libersan, 2003). In fact, in this perspective, where children are more autonomous and apt to manage the uncertainty produced by social practice, their SR reflect a mental activity through which they are likely to co-construct a healthy, non-violent reality.

In sum, inasmuch as SR are oriented toward pluralism, children’s behaviour will be more inclusive and tinted with awareness of others; their behaviour will be more in keeping with the social, moral and ethical norms of their environment (see Doise, 1969, 1992; Duveen, 1999; and Garnier, 1999), and therefore less violent. Moreover, inasmuch as their SR are situated in intersubjectivity, the children have a greater tendency to replace instinct by reflection and to replace the “Truth” by co-construction of a temporarily satisfactory reality. Indeed, children whose SR are situated in this perspective are inclined to nuance their interpretation of reality, to question prejudices, to surpass incomprehension and to act in a well-thought-out manner.

Although these two epistemological perspectives do not dominate among “philosopher” children’s SR of violence, we must remember that analysis of the data enabled us to observe a movement in this direction – a movement that was not noted among the control groups. This can be explained by the fact that the philosophical material, the *Tales of Audrey-Anne*, aims at the global development of the child, in other words, it aims to develop sensorimotor, cognitive, affective, and social aspects. Various discussion plans and exercises in the Teacher’s Manual are based on cooperative games and physical activities (sensorimotor level). In addition, the

Manual provides discussion plans and exercises to help children become aware of their strengths and limits, and to better accept themselves as perpetually-evolving distinct beings (emotional level). Finally, the material is intended to foster the cognitive and social levels in children. Indeed, the *Tales of Audrey-Anne* offers no “correct answers” that the child must memorize or “proper behaviour” that must be integrated. The children, together, must search for elements of answers, construct tools, elaborate strategies, specify processes, choose relationships, criticize ideas, suggest various contexts, etc., to solve problems that are meaningful to them in a manner that shows autonomy, empathy and criticism. Within the philosophical “community of inquiry”, the child gradually learns to pay attention to others. In addition, since respect and confidence are conditional on a community of inquiry dialogue, the child acquires the necessary self-confidence to express herself or himself before the group. Dialogue stimulates children’s complex cognitive skills, which are related to conceptualization, transformation, categorization and correction, which are in turn linked to logical, creative, responsible and metacognitive thinking, respectively (see Daniel et al., 20002, 2004).

Other interventions in preschool classrooms, as well as additional research, are needed to verify the relationship between the practice of philosophical dialogue in the classroom and the evolution of children’s SR. Indeed, a number of other factors may also influence the modification process of children’s SR. Firstly there is maturity, having experienced a first year in school with a large group (rather than at home or in daycare), and having grown up from age five to age six. Secondly, overall cognitive development (I.Q., schooling, language skills, etc.) is likely to make a difference in SR. Finally, emotional characteristics (abuse, neglect, attachment relationships, etc.) are known to play a fundamental role in children’s development.

Also, in this study, groups rather than individuals were analyzed. A quantitative analysis of each child’s evolution, between the beginning and the end of the school year, would enable us to better understand the evolution process of children’s SR of violence, as well as the causes of this evolution. To this end, an additional research project, with a larger number of subjects, more diversified data-collection instruments and mixed analytical methodology (quantitative and qualitative), is planned.

Finally, in a perspective of primary prevention of violence, we have yet to verify the incidence of a modification of SR on the evolution of children’s behaviours. A proposal for a research project based on the study of a possible transfer between the evolution of children’s SR of violence and their cooperative or uncooperative behaviour has been submitted for funding.

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