

REFLECTING (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

lighting more their personal sphere or questions troubling them (e.g. “Do soldiers have freedom?”).

One card caught my attention. It represented a large snake at the center of the page, with a caption in capital letters: “DO SNAKES THINK ABOUT THEIR HUNTING HABITS?” The snake was roughly drawn but the question was quite refined. What disturbed this child was animal consciousness: do animals have a self awareness? Do they think of their habits or is it instinctive?

Without Descartes, without Bentham, without any help from great philosophers, this child was able to speculate about a philosophical question charged with many issues.

The animal was not rejected as savage but became a subject for reflection. The fear and attraction have given way to the desire to decipher his environment.

Philosophizing with children not only allows them to further their knowledge of the world through the formulation of questions, but also helps them to build bridges between different fields. In fact, it is doubly profitable, since this practice also forces adults to reevaluate their presumptions on childhood.

Laure Gillot Assayag is a graduate student in Philosophy at Panthéon-Sorbonne (Paris, France.) This paper is the result of a fieldwork in Germany on how to teach philosophy to children.

6

Reading Jane Thayer, *The Puppy Who Wanted a Boy*

Kristine Noack-Reeves, The University of Texas at El Paso



Topic/Question: Metaphysics/What is a pet?

Age Group: Pre-Kindergarten and up

Time: About forty minutes

The *Puppy Who Wanted a Boy* is a book about a puppy who wanted a boy for Christmas. His mom couldn't find a boy, so she offers a few different pet options, but Petey only wants a boy. He searches all over town for a boy. He asks many different dogs around town if they are willing to give away their boy so he can have him. In the end, Petey finds an orphanage with fifty boys.

After reading the story, have the children ask a few “why” questions. Some of the questions presented during my lessons were:

- Why did the dog want a boy?
- Why did all of the boys like the puppy?
- Why didn't Petey want a rabbit, canary, or guppies?

Have the children vote on the question to start the discussion with. I found that the children wanted to start with, “why did the dog want a boy?” and then quickly moved to, “why didn't Petey want a rabbit, canary, or guppies?”. The discussion usually ended with the students coming to a conclusion about what is a pet and who can have a pet.

My six- to eight-year-old group concluded that a pet is the animal that an animal or human gets to love, play with, feed, and take care of. They made it clear that an animal can be the pet of a human or another animal, but a human cannot be the pet of an animal. They said this was important because an animal could not properly care for a human; therefore, humans cannot be a pet of an animal. When I shared these findings with college students in The Philosophy Club, they immediately questioned whether children can be considered the pet of their parents since they are “the ‘animal’ that a human gets to love, play with, feed, and take care of.”