EDUCATING WITHOUT BANNISTERS:

HANNAH ARENDT ON THINKING, WILLING, AND JUDGING

by

Jill Michelle Jensen

B.Ed., The University of Alberta, 1992

M. Ed., The University of Victoria, 2005

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Educational Leadership and Policy)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

January 2020

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the dissertation entitled:

Educating Without Bannisters: Hannah Arendt on Thinking, Willing, and Judging

submitted by   Jill Michelle Jensen   in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of   Doctor of Education

in   Educational Leadership and Policy

Examining Committee:

David Coulter
Supervisor

Deirdre Kelly
Supervisory Committee Member

Anne Phelan
Supervisory Committee Member

Michelle Stack
University Examiner

Karen Meyer
University Examiner

Additional Supervisory Committee Members:

Bendina Miller
Supervisory Committee Member

Abstract

As a school principal I make explicit and tacit judgments that affect (often vulnerable) other people each day, a responsibility for which I have little preparation or institutional encouragement. Indeed, exercising judgment has become especially difficult in modernity because of the absence of secure traditions for guidance. Here I draw on Hannah Arendt's ideas about judging developed in response to the Holocaust that—while not consistent, congruent, or even complete—point to powerful ways to think and judge in a world that lacks ethical bannisters.

I begin by outlining Arendt's efforts to reimagine the ancient Athenian *vita activa* for a modern pluralistic democratic society. In *The Human Condition* Arendt describes its destruction and begins to develop democratic remedies based on reconceiving the relationship between public and private spaces—an effort that was severely challenged by the trial of Adolph Eichmann. Particularly alarming to Arendt was the Nazis' success at destroying the public and private realms, eliminating the conditions she deemed essential for ethical-political judging.

In response, Arendt begins to reimagine the *vita comtemplativa* based on her iconoclastic interpretations of Aristotle and Kant. She drafts the first two sections of *The Life of the Mind*, *Thinking* and *Willing*, before succumbing to a heart attack in 1975. Instead of thinking as searching for answers, she understands thinking as continuous questioning or wondering and as introspectively searching for meaning. Instead of willing as implementing self-sovereignty (as in will-power), she develops the idea of a non-sovereign Will that exercises freedom understood as responsible autonomy in a plural, contingent world.

While Arendt never wrote the final section on judging, she did leave various pieces that point to important considerations involved in making ethical-political judgments in "dark times,"

that is, when the required private and public spaces for democratic action are absent. Some

considerations include: Seeing the individual person; judging as a spectator; choosing our

company carefully; finding suitable examples; and imagining possible appraisals. Throughout

my thesis I use Arendt's ideas to understand my own experience and point to implications for my

practice.

Lay Summary

As a school principal I make judgments that affect (often vulnerable) other people each day, a responsibility for which I have little preparation. Indeed, exercising ethical-political judgment has become especially difficult in modernity because of the absence of secure traditions for guidance. Here I draw on Hannah Arendt's ideas about thinking, willing and judging in her unfinished *Life of the Mind.*

Instead of thinking as searching for answers, Arendt understands thinking as wondering and searching for meaning. Instead of willing as in will-power, she argues for willing as exercising responsible autonomy. While Arendt never wrote the final section on judging, she did leave work that points to important considerations including: seeing the individual person; judging as a spectator; choosing our company carefully; finding suitable examples; and imagining possible appraisals. Throughout my thesis I use Arendt's ideas to understand my own experience and point to implications for my practice.

Preface

This dissertation is original intellectual work by Jill Jensen.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

There are people who enter our lives and help us to live more fully, people who listen and whose presence enriches, awakens, and inspires us. There are those who engage in dialogue for the sake of dialogue and who encourage depth of thought, questioning, and wonder at what is. There are those who illuminate what is good, what is worth knowing, and what might be. I would like to thank Dr. David Coulter for his generosity of spirit, for his patience and support, for allowing me to make mistakes, take my time, and find my voice. I am a different, and better, person than when I started this journey.

I would like to express my enduring gratitude to my committee members Anne Phelan, Deirdre Kelly, and Bendina Miller. I truly appreciate their wisdom and insight, their willingness to read and reflect on my writing, their ability to draw on both practical experience and research, and their tireless commitment to and care for education. They are exemplary teachers with whom it has been a privilege to work.

I would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to colleagues and friends (Stacy and Mark in particular), who were willing to read my work, listen, engage in discussion, and allow me to test my thinking as I tried to make sense of why Arendt's life of the mind—thinking, willing, and judging—matters for education.

And finally, thank you to Hannah Arendt herself, for her never-ending love of the world, and her ongoing ability to incite perplexity, curiosity, and wonder; good company indeed.

Dedication

For those who struggle to make good appearances and too often remain invisible.

For those who have challenged me, forced me to question and doubt, and ultimately enabled me to look for the good, to care deeply, to consider what it means to act wisely, and to find joy in educating…every day.

For my students, my children, Toni and George, and Mark.

Chapter 1: (Re)thinking What We Are Doing

Nor is wisdom only concerned with universals: to be wise, one must also be familiar with the particular, since wisdom has to do with action, and the sphere of action is constituted by particulars. This is why sometimes people who lack universal knowledge are more effective in action than others who have it—something that holds especially of experienced people.

—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Judgment in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal (the rule, principle or law) is given, then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is *determinate*…. If, however, only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it, the judgment is simply *reflective*.

—Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*

The crumpled piece of paper sat accusingly on my desk, demanding attention. I smoothed it and read it again, both scribbled sides; I knew it had been written by Melanie and Joelle[1], two girls in my grade seven class. I was suddenly part of this story and knew that I needed to act. It was 4:30 pm. I contemplated writing suspension letters before going home—it would save me time in the morning. I considered calling the parents and setting up appointments for the morning, but decided to talk with the girls first. The only information I had was the note. I had learned from experience it is best to know as much as possible before jumping to conclusions.

---

[1] The stories that begin chapters 1, 2, and 6 are fictional, composites based on my own experience as a school administrator; they are intended as ongoing illustrations of the conceptual resources I try to develop.

(Though at this point I could not imagine any way this situation might improve with more information.) I called and left a message for the youth drug and addiction counselor, Eliza, asking her to meet me at school in the morning, and hoped that she would be available. I read the note again. I sat for several minutes and then went home. This appeared to be a straightforward case, but I learned long ago that "straightforward" is almost always an illusion.

I was preoccupied throughout the evening, as I knew I would be, thinking about the girls and how I would manage the encounters the following morning. The consequences were clear— drugs were never acceptable in schools and students using, buying or selling, were not welcome. Suspensions would be necessary. My experience with our school board had shown me their commitment to "safe" and "drug-free" schools. I agree. We cannot have children exposed to drugs at school; it would be irresponsible and negligent. How many days should they be suspended? For some reason, my thinking and my questions began to change at this point, and I started to consider what the girls might learn from this experience? What if I did not suspend them? (I should.) What were the alternatives? Suspension does not change behaviour, it only sends a message about what behaviours will not be tolerated and that those who engage in those behaviours will not be tolerated. They will be removed. We know that suspension does not work, and yet we continue to suspend, and so I struggled to see how exiling the girls would be useful or helpful in any way. How could I, and other adults, support them if we simply pushed them away? Who is suspension really for? I needed to make a decision. I did not feel good about following the expected course of action, but what was the "right" thing to do? My evening (and I believe even my sleep) was spent in internal-conversation and debate. I woke the next morning feeling irritated and without answers.

I knew that Melanie would find me. She often came into the office in the morning to "check in." She has a lot going on—her life is beyond fiction, a story few would believe—and we spend a lot of time together. She came in, sat down, and I handed her the note. She looked at me, and I told her I was not mad. She furrowed her brow. I sat across from her and told her that I was concerned and we needed to talk. Melanie started talking. (It is one of her gifts!) She poured out her heart, telling me far more than I wanted or needed to know, including that she was buying for a girl from out of town. We talked about trafficking. She had only "kind of" used once; she had not inhaled much; she just wanted to fit in. I did not believe her about the girl from out of town, but she needed the story she was telling not to be all about her. She told me about Anne, another student in our class who was involved, and I struggled to maintain my impassivity even though I was surprised. I should have known better. There is always more.

I talked with Anne. She is new to our school this year, and while she also has a complex life outside of school, she seems (or so I thought) to manage well. She sat nervously on the edge of a chair, her hands clasped and her eyes moist. As with Melanie, I told her that I was not angry, but I needed to know. She gave me a quizzical look, and began to talk. She also, told me everything. She knew it was wrong to buy and use drugs, and had never done it before, but her sister had just moved in with them and asked her to get some marijuana. Apparently her sister (15 years old) had struggled with drugs and that was why she had come to live with Anne, her father (who was away working for weeks at a time) and her stepmother. She was worried about her sister and wanted her sister to accept her. Anne's story was far less tangential and more fact-centered than Melanie's, but the stories matched.

Eliza, our drug and addiction counselor, arrived. She already had a relationship with Joelle as they had been meeting for several weeks to discuss Joelle's concerns about alcoholism

and addiction in her family. Her mother had recently asked her step-father to choose between the family and the bottle. He chose the bottle. (Mom had come in to let me know about this a few weeks earlier.) Joelle's family was perpetually in crisis and so was Joelle. She was struggling, wanting to do and be different (good/more/better), but did not know how. I showed Eliza the note, and we brought Joelle in to talk with both of us. It was a long conversation and more difficult in many ways than the other two. Joelle volleyed between anger and denial, defiance and acceptance. It was a conversation filled with a range of emotions, and it was difficult for Joelle to understand that there was no anger from the adults, only concern and care. Her story fit, more or less, with Melanie's and Anne's, though she admitted to less, a form of self-preservation.

I made arrangements to meet with the parents. Joelle's mom does not have a phone so Kathy (our support worker) went to find her. I had still not decided what to do. I had as much information as I needed, and I knew I had to act. Instead, I sat. I drank tea. I indulged in some more time to think.

I did not suspend the girls. I could not bring myself to exile them from our school. How would I know they were okay, if they were not here? How can I exercise responsibility for others if I (r)eject them? I remembered suspending Joelle's brother John in grade seven at the end of the year. I'm not sure that was the right thing for me to do; he did not return to our school before starting high school. Looking back, I wish I had found an alternative that kept him with us rather than turning away and excluding him.

I met with Melanie, her mother, and Eliza. Melanie's mother nodded frequently and agreed with everything Eliza and I said. Yes, the consequences were reasonable. I met with Melanie's dad two weeks later.

Kathy arrived with Joelle's mom and aunt and sat in on the meeting. Joelle told her mom she needed to step up and be a mother, standing up to what she saw as hypocrisy. Joelle continued to turn the conversation toward her mother, effectively diverting attention away from her own responsibility and the situation we needed to discuss. Kathy and I gave them some time alone. Emotions continued to escalate. Eventually, we were able to discuss Joelle's connection to drugs, the consequences for her actions, and the expectations we had for her at school.

Anne's stepmother and sister came in the following morning. Her step-mother was angry that I had not suspended Anne from school: She wanted more serious (and traditional) consequences. We talked through what Anne had been asked to do, with support from home. She needed to meet weekly with Eliza, check in with me every morning, she would not participate in certain year end activities, and she needed to be at school every day. While not happy with my decision, Anne's step-mother agreed.

Kathy thanked me for not sending Joelle home.

So, it was done and the girls stayed at school. I waited to hear from someone (other than Anne's mom) telling me that I had exercised poor judgment, violated common practice, and not done my job. I felt uneasy but was willing to stand behind my judgment.

Educating without Bannisters

Whether or not I made the "right" decision with respect to the girls is open to challenge. Indeed, I am unlikely to ever know with certainty if I made the right judgment in this particular situation—or in my practice generally. I have come to appreciate that as a school principal, and as a teacher, I make explicit and tacit judgments that affect (often vulnerable) other people each day. Even before I truly recognized the depth and obligation of my responsibility in educating, I, like every educator that I know, wanted to do the right thing. I have always wanted to be a good

teacher and principal, to make a difference for children and inspire hope for our world. I have, however, come to understand that a desire to educate is not so simple. What we *do*, what we *say*, and how we interact with others matters. Judging is ubiquitous in the lives of educators and our judgments affect students and staff, as well as parents and community—including judgments *not* to act, that is, to be selectively ignorant (Stack, Coulter, Grosjean, Mazawi & Smith, 2006, pp. 12-14). Moreover,

> [n]early everything that a teacher [or principal] does while in contact with students carries moral weight. Every response to a question, every assignment handed out, every discussion on issues, every resolution of a dispute, every grade given to a student, carries with it the moral [judgment] of the teacher. (Fenstermacher, 1990, p. 134)

Though charged with making numerous daily, minute-to-minute judgments that affect others, little attention is given to how we might render sound *educational* judgments that include epistemological (knowledge), ethical (how people treat one another), and political (how people live alongside one another) dimensions. In a society that aims to be pluralist and democratic, all of these dimensions are open to debate: What counts as knowledge? What is worthwhile knowledge? What does it mean to do the right thing? How much scope do we provide for people to determine their own lives? Who decides? On what basis? Though there is little (if any) consensus on either the questions or the answers, educators are generally expected to know what it means to judge well and then act accordingly.

Based on my experience working in schools over two decades, most teachers and administrators fall back on the "bannisters" of schooling: the conventional rules, policies, and practices that aim to make judging *educationally* unnecessary. The consequence is that judging,

and the thinking it requires, are often discouraged in schools in such a way that many of us continue to believe that we are doing the right thing, rather than actually "thinking what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5). Our attention is focused on sustaining a narrative of schooling that includes delivering curriculum to students using "best practices", "managing student behaviour", and attaining "high assessment results"—indicators of "successful" classrooms and schools. In striving to be "effective," we become mechanical and functional, caught up in following prescriptions, accepting a singular vision of what counts as "good" teaching and learning, and trying to emulate it. As we passionately search for answers and seek to execute these practices, we indulge in the dangerous belief that we might succeed. Though we want to be good teachers and to do what is best for students, we can get distracted by the endless answers to what we feel we ought to become. We keep ourselves safe and comfortable within our "educational" discourse, frequently working ourselves to distraction as we search for what is best, expect perpetual progress, and anticipate a holy grail that will proffer our success. Our accepted narratives of what it means to teach and to learn are so impressively entrenched that we can (and do) become purposely inattentive to anything other than existing ideologies, lost within them, and consequently mistaking what we do in schools for educating.

Crucially, education is often conflated with schooling, that is, what happens within specifically and deliberately structured organizations. This is understandable since "education" in English has both normative and descriptive definitions: Education involves the kinds of valued learning that might help someone lead a good and worthwhile life (Coulter &Wiens, 2008) and education is also the institutionalization of some view of education as schooling. Here I focus on the normative meaning of *education* and use *schooling* for the descriptive meaning. Education so understood is a complex, contested notion of what it means to understand our world and to live

well in it with diverse other people. Schooling is about achieving a particular end—graduation—and contributing to society—getting a job. The narrative of schooling with its need for "progress" and its steady focus on "accountability" increasingly prevails and overpowers education and, as a result, the ends of school are largely taken for granted and rarely questioned; only the means to achieving those ends are debated, leaving teachers, principals, and others who work in schools, playing a role in the perpetuation of a less than educational schooling system.

Maxine Greene (1978) recognizes the inadequacies of schooling, explaining that it has become "far too easy for teachers, like other people, to play their roles and do their jobs without serious consideration of the good and the right" (p. 46). Greene (1978) calls for attentiveness to the ethical-political dimensions of schooling, insisting that wide-awakeness "accompany every effort made to initiate people into any form of life or academic discipline" (p. 47). The reality within our schools, our districts, and our province, however, is that the continued acceptance and entrenchment of a narrative of accountability keeps the primary focus of schooling on economic matters rather than on ethical-political concerns.

Biesta (2004) contends that the economic language of accountability has eroded relationships and made it more difficult to be "responsible for our responsibility," allowing us to lose sight of education for the common good, as well as corresponding democratic ideals. The British Columbia School Act reflects the ongoing struggle between schooling as a means for economic prosperity and schooling as essential to sustaining democratic ideals, as the mission of and vision for schools shifts depending on who is running government. Presently, the School Act claims a central goal for schools is to educate for democracy in a pluralistic society—a significant challenge when "efficiency, competence, and stability used as standards seem to have eaten away the ideal of citizenship" (Greene, 1995, p. 64). While we give lip service to the

importance of the educated citizen and the need to safeguard democracy, practice and the reality

in schools (often) reflects a different story, one of socialization, credentialing, and commitment

to sustaining government: Osborne (2008) explains:

> As historians of education have shown us, the creation of compulsory public
>
> schooling in which students followed an officially prescribed curriculum, using
>
> officially authorized textbooks, taught by officially licensed teachers, and
>
> supervised by officially appointed inspectors, had little to do with the education in
>
> any real sense of that word, but much to do with the socialization and training of
>
> the young. (p. 24)

Accountability and commodification are central features of the "educational" agenda in

British Columbia. Additionally, Nussbaum (2010) points out that "education systems all over the

world are moving closer and closer to the growth model without much thought about how ill-

suited it is to the goals of democracy" (p. 24). Biesta (2004) adds: "The culture of accountability

makes it very difficult for the relations between parents/students and educators/institutions to

develop into mutual, reciprocal, and democratic relationships, relationships based on a shared

concern for the common educational good (or goods)" (p. 249). Instead, the economic language

of accountability positions the government as provider and parents and students as consumers

(Biesta, 2004, p. 237). Yet, even as schooling becomes accepted as a commodity, we somehow

still believe that our schools are educational, doing and teaching the "right" things.

> Today we still maintain that we like democracy and self-governance, and we also
>
> think that we like freedom of speech, respect for difference, and understanding of
>
> others. We give these values lip service, but we think far too little about what we
>
> need to do in order to transmit them to the next generation and ensure their

survival. Distracted by the pursuit of wealth, we increasingly ask our schools to turn out useful profit-makers rather than thoughtful citizens. (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 142)

As Nussbaum and Biesta suggest, there is little evidence that democracy, which depends on ethical and political ideals, "counts" in our schools. What we find instead is a quest for quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, revealed in an incessant and cyclical pursuit of progress and success. "The 'promise' of the school is understood to be the promise of credentialing and the gaining of some kind of status as a result" (Greene, 1978, p. 93). With this promise much is lost, and the opportunity to educate founders. If it is acknowledged that education "entails a willingness to tune into the never-ending conversation about what it means to be human" (Osborne, 2008, p. 34), the "educational-ness" of schooling cannot be taken for granted. As it so often seems to be.

One of the unfortunate consequences of the supposition that schooling is educational, is a reliance on judgments that are determinant, that is, judgments that apply "accepted standards and given rules to a particular circumstance" (Fine, 2008, p. 166). Because such judgments are logical and cognitive, they simplify decision-making, but they also make it difficult to see anything new; Zerilli (2016) explains, "Armed with rules and their correct application, we tend to take refuge in our own criteria, 'denying that we saw anything new at all…pretending that something similar is already known to us'" (p. 183). As human beings, we take comfort in predictability, certainty, and answers, and try to bind and contain the world, to place parameters and exert "control" over our environment. Determinant judgments provide us with a sense of control, allowing us to feel that the world is as anticipated and that we have no alternative but to act in expected ways. We convince ourselves that this is how things need to be. Unfortunately,

this grasping for stability and assurance too often prevents us from considering other possibilities and can prevents us from truly seeing and engaging with each other.

Much of the discourse about judging focuses on determinant judgments, that is, assessing and deciding which rule, principle or process applies to a particular case confronting us. Some of the rules are explicit: Boards of Education and the Ministry of Education create legislation and codes of conduct that aim to prescribe practice. The *Standards for the Education, Competence and Professional Conduct of Educators in BC*, for example, includes the exhortation that educators "value and care for all students and act in their best interests" and be a "role model who act[s] ethically and honestly." In daily interactions with actual students, educators make judgments about what to *do* with the students in front of them, how to teach them, and how to treat them. What is in the "best interests" of the hypothetical and imagined students of the *Standards*, however, is usually far removed from a particular student in a particular classroom in a particular school in a particular situation. The gap between the general "student" and the individual child is wide and fails to recognize the complexity of what is being asked. To begin with, how might educators even be sure about what a child's "best interests" might be? Who gets to decide what is "best"? On what basis? Every day in my work as an educator, I strive to act "ethically and honestly," but there are times I find myself struggling to determine what would count as ethical action in *these* circumstances with *these* people.

Other rules are implicit, often stemming from common practice. Informal policies and routines become taken for granted ways of thinking about good or accepted practice in a school, department, or grade. "This is how we do things here" is a claim to goodness that is seldom interrogated. In schools, common practice often determines what will count as appropriate action and to do otherwise would be a violation of what is deemed acceptable. Student discipline is a

common example: If a child behaves in a certain way, predictable consequences follow. If you call out without raising your hand, you get a tick beside your name; after three ticks, you spend time in at recess; if you use drugs or are under the influence while at school, you are sent home and suspended.

In my experience, ethical-political judging is rarely, if ever, discussed in any explicit way and is not an expected component of teacher or leadership training. Ethics may be mentioned or included in masters level training and conversations about ethical practice may arise in our work, but certainly not frequently. Politics has generally come to mean organized partisan politics or the informal politics of gaining some kind of advantage. Ironically, judgment seems to play a trifling role in educational discourse, yet educators are called on to exercise "good" judgment in all of their interactions with students, colleagues and parents. When we neglect developing the ability to judge independently and to think for ourselves, we live what Baumann (2000), terms an "adiaphorized existence" that "renders social action…neither good nor evil, measurable against technical (purpose-oriented or procedural) but not moral values (p. 215). When we exist adiaphorically, our lives lose meaning and significance. Eighty-five years ago, T.S. Eliot captured the essence of the problem of judgment that I wish to explore:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

—T.S. Eliot, "The Rock"

In Search of Bannisters

Eliot's interest in wisdom or judgment2 is prescient. The problems of understanding, developing, and exercising good judgment are endemic to the human condition, but have become critical in modernity; secure resources for making ethical-political judgments have been lost, and the consequences of making poor or evil judgments have been dire for humanity. The precipitating phenomenon is the Holocaust, the most horrifying failure of ethical-political judgment of the twentieth century. It is difficult to comprehend how one of the most "advanced" Western societies with deep cultural, ethical, and political resources was so vulnerable to Nazi ideology, a weakness that led to the systematic murder of millions of innocent people.

The resources available were considerable, yet they proved inadequate to explain how the Holocaust happened or suggest how it could have been prevented. Crucially, for the last 200 years, the dominant approach to making ethical judgments in Western thought has emphasized determinant judgment, specifically Kant's deontology, a model that is concerned with the duty to adhere to certain ethical principles or rules and is judged by actors' intentions, and not the consequences of their actions. Following Kant, the goodness of one's actions must be judged by how consistent they are with one of the three versions of his Categorical Imperative, chiefly: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law without contradiction" (Kant, 1785/1964, 4.421).

As an Enlightenment thinker, suspicious of the external authority of the state and of the church, Kant contends that autonomy and morality are connected: With the acceptance of human freedom to choose our own actions comes the responsibility to choose well; conversely, moral action depends on the possibility of acting autonomously. Kant explains that a person judges

---

2 Neither word captures precisely what I mean—both lack the obligation to *act* on one's understanding. Other languages include this requirement (e.g. the Cree word *yipwakawatisiwin* means "wisdom in action").

"that he can do something because he knows that he ought, and he recognizes that he is free—a fact that without the moral law, would have remained unknown to him" (Kant, 1996, p. 30). Kant answers his own central question, "What ought I do?" by explaining that a "pure morality … is not grounded on any anthropology, no empirical condition" (A 842/B870), but instead focuses on intentions unencumbered by considerations of particular people or circumstances. Kant aims to respect human autonomy by advocating the use of practical reason to respect the autonomy of others and the Categorical Imperative becomes an ideal against which to assess our intentions and actions. Kant fails, however, to envision an empirical condition where people would choose to reject their own freedom and deny that some people are indeed human beings.

Concerned about Kantian abstraction many scholars have returned to the approach that dominated Western ethical-political thinking before Kant: Aristotle's teleology. Aristotle, in an effort to respond to Plato's privileging of the *bios theoretikos* over the *bios praktikos,* reconceived the relationship between theory and practice by reimagining the relationship between intellectual virtues and moral virtues. His intellectual virtues (none of which have exact English equivalents) included basic understanding (*nous*), skill or art (*techne*), systematic knowledge or science (*episteme*), theoretical wisdom or intellectual accomplishment (*sophia*) and practical wisdom, or practical judgment (*phronesis*). His list of the moral virtues valued in ancient Athenian society included courage (*andreia*), moderation *(sōphorosunē)* and open-handedness (*eleutheriotēs*). The opening quote of this chapter captures Aristotle's central claim that learned people (*sophos*) with universal knowledge (*episteme*) can often fail to act wisely (i.e., be *phronemoi*) because they lack the requisite experience needed to develop both the moral virtues and *phronesis*. Much of the *Nicomachean Ethics* details his argument.

According to Aristotle, in order to act well, the *phronemoi* or wise person is able to select and exercise the appropriate moral virtues depending on the specific time, situation and people involved, that is, she does the right thing the right way in the right context for the right reasons. *Phronesis* is therefore an executive or "architectonic" virtue (1141b 23) that is, it attends to various particulars and then selects the requisite moral and intellectual virtues. Beiner (1983) explains:

> Without *phronesis* one cannot properly be said to possess *any* of the virtues, and to possess *phronesis*, conversely, is to possess *all* the virtues, for *phronesis* is knowledge of which virtue is appropriate in particular circumstances, and the ability to act on that knowledge. (p. 72)

Aristotle has much to say about the development of virtue and the movement from natural virtue (the qualities we inherit), to habituated virtue (those qualities we learn from our family and friends), to full virtue (phronetic action guided by reason). He believes that some of us have a propensity to be "just, moderate in our appetites, courageous, and the rest from the moment we are born" (1144b6-7); however, these excellences must be cultivated by learning to recognize situations as inherently ethical, and by seeing others model the appropriate virtues in context. Learning to do the right thing requires spending time around others who model the intellectual and moral virtues. Aristotelian explanations for people lacking *phronesis* includes people who may have natural inclinations to be generous or courageous, but have had those dispositions stifled by a life spent in the company of people who lack these excellences of character. Given such surroundings, people might not even be able to see the moral character of their experience. Such explanations are still incomplete, though, because people with natural virtue can have rich and diverse experience living alongside others who model wise behaviour

and still be unable to act well themselves, lacking full virtue. Aristotle explains that "excellence [of character] makes the goal correct, while [*phronesis*] makes what leads to it correct" (1144a8-9), pointing to a central concern for his modern critics: Aristotle assumes a society that pursues some kind of ethical *telos*. What happens when that society is Nazi Germany and virtue centres on loyalty to the Führer? In sum, what resources help determine the goodness of a community?

Over the last fifty years, many scholars have recognized the inadequacies of relying on either deontological or teleological approaches to judgment. Their diagnosis of the problem of ethical-political judgment in modernity is consistent: They lament the lack of secure and reliable universals or generals in plural, democratic societies that can be used to assess a broad range of particulars in order to make justifiable ethical-political judgments. Neo-Kantians appropriate Kant's work to develop critical *spectators* who develop and use defensible ethical principles to assess possible action (e.g., O'Neill, 1996; Korsgaard, 1996). Neo-Aristotelians attempt to reconceive *phronesis* and its concern for developing ethical-political *actors* who are able to accurately discern particular people and situations (e.g., Gadamer, 1975; Nussbaum, 2001), acquire and practice a range of and virtues (e.g., MacInytre, 1981) and connect to other people in communities (e.g., Taylor, 1989). The divide between neo-Aristotelians and neo-Kantians is not as glaring as it might appear, and many scholars consider both perspectives (e.g., Beiner, 1983, 2001; Dunne, 1997; Phelan, 2001, 2005). One scholar, however, explores both perspectives in such depth that she is often accused of advocating antithetical conceptions of judgment privileging first the political actor and then the political spectator (e.g., Beiner, 1982, p. 140): Hannah Arendt. In subsequent chapters I examine Arendt's iconoclastic interpretations of Aristotle and Kant and argue that Arendt's ideas about judging—while not consistent, congruent, or even complete—point to a complementary relationship: Acting well depends partly on the

ability to see the world as a spectator; testing the goodness and rightness of the spectator's

appraisal depends on acting in some form of public arena.

Hannah Arendt: Judging in Dark Times

Arendt's (1906–1975) youth was exceptional. Born in Konisberg, Hannah Arendt lived

through years of political unrest, crises, and war. Despite political instability in Europe, Arendt

experienced a somewhat traditional German-Jewish upbringing where she found herself initiated

into intellectual culture, supported in academic pursuits by her mother who encouraged Hannah

to always think for herself. Despite difficulties and disenchantment with school, Arendt's

intellectual force was evident; she was well read in German, French, and Greek and enjoyed

poetry and philosophy. Considering where to pursue her university studies, Arendt was drawn to

rumours about a professor in Marburg, Martin Heidegger, who was revitalizing the idea of

thinking: "Thinking has come to life again…. People followed Heidegger in order to learn

thinking" (Young-Bruehl, 2004, p. 49). Arendt found her way to Marburg, immersed in the

realm of thinking and philosophy, her 'first amour'.[3]

> When Hannah Arendt encountered Martin Heidegger everything changed. He was
>
> a figure out of a romance—gifted to the point of genius, poetic, aloof from both
>
> professional thinkers and adulatory students, severely handsome, simply dressed in
>
> peasant clothes, an avid skier who enjoyed giving lessons. Hannah Arendt was
>
> much more 'taken aback' than her retrospective account reveals by this union of
>
> aliveness and thinking. (Young-Bruehl, 2004, pp. 49-50)

---

[3] Speculation persists around Arendt's relationship with Heidegger, which lasted in various iterations throughout her life. That the relationship affected her personally and intellectually is evident in her work where Heidegger's influence is omnipresent. Whether Heidegger or philosophy was her 'first amour' however, is a conclusion left unresolved. Perhaps philosophy was Arendt's first amour and Heidegger was philosophy embodied, philosophy in the flesh/personified. For Arendt, the two are knotted, entangled together.

Arendt seemed on course to a comfortable life as a philosopher herself; she wrote a dissertation on Saint Augustine's concept of love with Karl Jaspers at Heidelberg and prepared to settle into a career as a professional academic. When the Reichstag burned in 1933, however, Arendt found herself stilled and unable to manoeuvre. She "was no longer of the opinion that one can simply be a bystander" (Arendt, 1994, p. 5). She needed to act. Arendt fled Germany, moving through Prague, Geneva, and eventually Paris, and after spending time in an internment camp at Gurs, France in 1941, she escaped Europe for the United States, where she lived for the rest of her life. Stateless for eighteen years, Arendt became an American citizen in 1951 and focused her efforts on the challenges of expressing human freedom in all dimensions.

The touchstone for her work was always the Holocaust. Arendt began by dedicating herself to understanding the rise of totalitarian governments and the corresponding disintegration (in every sense) that occurred in Europe, striving to make sense of how such a collapse had been possible amongst a "civilized" people. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), she describes the emergence of a new and unprecedented evil that targeted the very conditions that made it possible to live and think together with others in a common world, threatening what it meant to be a human being. Her efforts to develop strategies to address totalitarianism led to efforts to reconceive Aristotelian deontology for modern pluralistic democratic societies by recovering and rethinking the Athenian *vita activa*. In *The Human Condition* (1958) she describes how we might protect and sustain the political realm and its requisite conditions; Arendt continued to develop her ideas on political action in essays such as "The Crisis in Education" (1958), "What is Authority" (1958), "Reflections on Little Rock" (1959), and "Society and Culture" (1961), most of which were revised for *Between Past and Future* (1993). Arendt did not claim to offer answers, but simply (though never simply) to offer possibilities. She was always searching for

new ways to understand, often questioning and clearing out ossified concepts, recognizing that too often "human beings live by simplified ideas and distorted reductions" (Kateb, 2010, p. 32).

The arrest and trial of Adolf Eichmann disrupted Arendt's thinking much like the burning of the Reichstag had, and she soon found herself revisiting her understanding of the world, particularly how we understand evil. Prior to the Eichmann trial, Arendt saw judging as a way to link what she understands by acting in the world (being an Aristotelian actor); after the trial, she recognizes that judging also involves retreating from the world and from action in order to understand and to see what is good and right (being a Kantian spectator) (Coulter & Wiens, 2002). The texts that most powerfully capture Arendtian views on judging are *The Human Condition* (1958), with its division of the *vita activa* into labour, work and action, and *The Life of The Mind* (1978), with its division of the *vita contemplativa* into thinking, willing, and judging. Arendt never finished writing *The Life of the Mind* so a complete exegesis of her thinking on judgment is impossible, but I believe that enough of her preliminary writing is available to point to important relationships between the actor and spectator that can help me in my own efforts to become a better educational judge. Below I sketch my argument in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2: The *Vita Activa*

In this chapter I focus on Arendt's efforts to reimagine the ancient Athenian *vita activa* for a modern pluralistic democratic society. Arendt was well aware of the challenges of adapting a 2400 year old model, but she believed in the democratic ideal of a *polis* as an arena where equal and distinct people could exercise their political judgment together, an activity she calls "action." In *The Human Condition* Arendt tells the story of the loss of the political in the West largely by describing the destruction of the *vita activa* as a valued form of life alongside the *vita contemplativa*. Private and public spaces are gradually replaced with an amorphous "social"

space where people *behave* rather than act. "The real danger in contemporary societies is that the bureaucratic, technocratic and depoliticized structures of modern life…[make people] less capable of critical thinking and less inclined to assume responsibility" (Beiner, 1982, p. 113). Arendt's response is to develop remedies based on her understanding of the democratic norms of plurality and natality that, in turn, rely on rethinking public and private spaces as required and interdependent conditions of communication.

Six years after publishing *The Human Condition* her thinking was challenged when she covered the trial of Adolf Eichmann for *The New Yorker*. Arendt (2006) was confronted by someone who seemed to challenge the usual conceptions of evil: While his "deeds were monstrous, [Eichmann]…was quite ordinary, commonplace and neither demonic nor monstrous" (p. 4); indeed, "It was sheer thoughtlessness—something by no means identical with stupidity—that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of the period" (p. 288). While Eichmann certainly demonstrated a refusal to think what he was doing, even more startling to Arendt was the Nazis' overwhelming success at systematically destroying "the public realm as a common world of values, beliefs, orientations" (Benhabib, 2003, p. 128). If the public and private worlds can be so thoroughly repressed, the conditions required for plurality and natality—and for democracy, action and freedom—can be destroyed.

Chapter 3: The Wind of Thinking

Prompted by the Eichmann trial, which revealed the vulnerability of the public and private realms to totalitarianism, Arendt returns to another form of life valued in ancient Athens: The *vita comtemplativa*, that is, "the life of the philosopher devoted to inquiry into, and contemplation of, things eternal" (Arendt, 1958, p. 13). She begins to reimagine this form of life as the beginning of a pathway to "think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1958, p. 5) and drafts the

first two sections of *The Life of the Mind—Thinking* (1978a) and *Willing* (1978b)—before

succumbing to a heart attack in December 1975.

Arendt identifies "thinking" as something notably different from common usage; however,

what she does mean is far from clear or consistent. Kateb (2010), for example, identifies at least

eight different ways that Arendt employs "thinking" in her work; ironically one of the most

common usages of thinking, as the process of using the mind to solve problems (research) is not

included. In *The Life of the Mind*, however, two meanings are crucial: Thinking as continuous

questioning or wondering and thinking as introspectively searching for meaning.

Chapter 4: Unanchoring the Will

If, as Arendt (1978a) suggests, "the wind of thinking…has shaken you from your sleep and

made you fully awake and alive, then you will see that you have nothing in your grasp but

perplexities" (p. 175); addressing the resulting chaos becomes her next challenge. Arendt

reimagines the Will, a concept that was originally developed in Christian theology to achieve

faith and is now used to describe the effort to control the self, i.e., self-sovereignty. Simply put,

we accept that human beings should be held responsible for their actions because they are

capable of making judgments about what is good and are then able to act accordingly. In *Willing*,

Arendt traces the history of the development of the sovereign Will as an instrument of control

from St. Augustine to Nietzsche with particular attention to its unanchoring from ethical-political

foundations.

Arendt, however, also discovers resources in her historical research that she uses in her

efforts to re-anchor the Will: From Augustine she finds a conception of freedom as the

expression of natality, that is, the capacity to begin anew; from Duns Scotus, she recovers links

between the Will and freedom in a plural, contingent world. It is important to note that Arendt

does not understand freedom as the absence of constraint ("freedom from"), but as the capacity to begin something new and unforeseen ("freedom to"); however, while individuals may be able to begin something new and unprecedented, they are always one of many, and so true freedom involves other people.

Chapter 5: Judging in Dark Times

When Arendt died suddenly of a heart attack in December 1975, she had just finished drafting *Thinking* and *Willing* and was preparing to write the final section about another form of thinking distinct from thinking as wondering or thinking as two-in-one dialogue: thinking as political judging or appraising. While Arendt left some evidence of her possible direction for "Judging"— e.g., her 1970 *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* and several essays such as "Thinking and Moral Considerations" (1971)—projecting a coherent conception of ethical-political judging is not feasible. Instead, I search her writings to find significant considerations involved in making ethical-political judgments under conditions of worldlessness, that is, when the required private and public spaces for action are absent. My efforts draw on a source often neglected, *Men in Dark Times*, Arendt's 1968 profiles of early 20th century figures who struggled to provide illumination under the most hostile conditions. I refer to Arendt's profiles of Karl Jaspers, Walter Benjamin, and Bertolt Brecht as portraits of people attempting to exercise the kind of ethical-political judgment that Arendt seeks to understand. Some considerations that I explore include: Seeing the individual person; judging as a spectator; choosing our company carefully; finding suitable examples; and imagining possible appraisals.

Chapter 6: Pearls of Illumination

Throughout my thesis I test my understanding of Arendt's ideas against my own practice as someone aspiring to educate in schools; I use her work to see and appraise my experience,

some of which is captured in the stories I create from my practice. In my concluding chapter I argue that despite having little to say about schooling or educating, Arendt's admonishment to think what we are doing stands as a summons to enter into an unending quest to understand and love the world as it is, knowing that there are no answers, but only imperfect, unique, and miraculous human beings living in a world we create together. Arendt provides conceptual resources along with powerful examples or "pearls"—including how she lived her own life—of what it means to accept our freedom to think and to judge in a plural and contingent world. "Arendt was not only *of* the world, but *for* the world…actively engaging with the uncertainty and contingency of the world in all its plurality" (Nixon, 2015, p. 85). Although I understand that there are no simple "answers" or solutions to the problem of schooling's commanding and singular narrative, I persist in my efforts to educate and am inspired to do so by noticing and discerning lost pearls—those examples, those stories that illuminate the educational. As Arendt (2006) reminds us, even during the darkest times there are always bursts "of light in the midst of impenetrable, unfathomable darkness" (p. 231).

Chapter 2: The *Vita Activa*

Thought…is still possible, and no doubt actual, wherever men live under

conditions of political freedom. Unfortunately…no other human capacity is so

vulnerable, and it is in fact far easier to act under conditions of tyranny than it is to

think. (Arendt, 1958, p. 324)

I entered the quiet sterility of the board office and found a seat in the reception area. The

administrative assistant walked in carrying a bundle of mail. "Ms. Finn, hello. Mrs. Jones will

be right with you. She is just on a phone call," the assistant cheerily informed me. The hearing

had ended only three hours ago and Mrs. Jones had asked me to come to the board office to

discuss it, saying only that it went well. I still felt anxious. As I waited, I could not keep a

particular encounter with Chris from my mind. He had not been in school this week because of

the impending hearing, but we ran into each other on the street one afternoon and the

unexpectedness of his eyes drew my attention. He was wearing mismatched contact lenses—one

an eight ball and one a devilish red—making his eyes impossible to ignore. We looked at each

other, but the interaction ended quickly as I nodded and walked away, unable to sustain the

connection. The image of Chris' eyes however, lingered.

I gazed around the reception room, hoping for distraction. The school district motto—

"Excellence in Education"—hung with authority on the wall behind the assistant's desk; the

other walls held paintings of local landscapes. A handful of children's books were scattered on a

side table, along with the district newsletter, a compilation of school activities and teacher

practices, that celebrated our accomplishments. I picked it up and stared at the students and

teacher beaming happily across the front page as they enjoyed an outdoor learning experience.

The caption said something about students and staff feeling safe and valued, connected within their learning community, one of our district goals. It certainly appeared to be that way. My contemplation was interrupted as Mrs. Jones entered the room and warmly welcomed me to her office. I took a seat in one of four standard, blue covered, armchairs as Mrs. Jones sank into her high-backed, black leather desk chair, swirling to face me. The room was lined with bookshelves of policy-filled binders and the wall with degrees, certificates, and awards. A smile spread across Mrs. Jones' face as she informed me that the hearing had gone as anticipated, Chris was expelled. She expressed her gratitude and thanked me on behalf of the board for my professional conduct and management of the situation. (As a beginning principal this was reassuring, I regularly questioned my ability to do the job, knowing I was lacking in both experience and qualification—I was in the process of completing my masters degree. I made a mental note to find achievement-focused wall hangings of my own.)

I first came to Mrs. Jones for advice on how to handle this unusual disciplinary situation the week before, filling her in on the content of the message that Chris (a high school student) had left on Mr. and Mrs. Brown's (both teachers in my school) voicemail late one evening. She sat calmly, looked at me with genuine interest and concern, and listened carefully. The phone message was sexually explicit and threatening, to such an extent that both teachers felt uncomfortable being at work. The message attested to a number of other boys (four of them) laughing and cheering in the background while Chris spoke. Nearly every staff member had somehow become aware of this situation and had spoken to me about it, sharing opinions, anxiety, and concerns. That something needed to be done, and that I needed to do it, was clear. The parents and the boys involved were likewise anxious as they awaited my decision about

consequences (which I had been slow deciding). Mrs. Jones took in the details as I explained

them and agreed that the situation was complex, one about which I was right to seek guidance.

How I chose to "resolve" it would, in many ways, influence how staff, students, parents, and

community perceived me as a principal, and what they could expect from me in this role. Could I

act swiftly and resolutely, making "good" and just decisions? Could I speak to and defend those

decisions publicly, explaining what had happened to the boys and why? What Mrs. Jones said

made sense to me. I wanted to serve my school community well and I wanted to be a good

principal. Mrs. Jones outlined the support she and the school board could offer, as well as the

support that was available through our established policies. In referencing the School Act, the

district's student conduct policy, and our school's code of conduct, I would have more than

enough information to direct my decisions. We discussed the powers of a principal to suspend

students for up to five days or recommend expulsion to the school board. We discussed Chris'

direct participation versus the other boys' bystander status, merely being present when the

wrong occurred. We discussed incidents that happen off school property and outside of the

school day and the importance of schools being safe places for staff and students.

Mrs. Jones talked and I did my best to absorb all she said. There was much I needed to

learn. She knew how the system worked and seemed well versed in managing educational

problems/situations like this; it made me feel better knowing that she had answers and was

confident and assured in those answers. In the end, Mrs. Jones offered suggestions about what I

should do, which, with relief, I happily accepted. The four boys who were bystanders ought not

to be punished too harshly simply because they were present—an apology to the teachers and a

two or three day suspension would suffice. The length of the suspensions was left to my

discretion as I knew the boys and was aware of previous infractions, attendance, academic

achievement, and usual behaviour patterns that might warrant consideration. Chris, however, required more serious consequences because he had directly threatened two staff members, negatively affecting the school's learning environment. Removal from school indefinitely seemed sensible.

Thanks to Mrs. Jones, I had a clear understanding of what I needed to do. Armed with long-established templates, I wrote suspension letters (three days) for the bystander boys, followed by a letter to Chris and his parents recommending expulsion and explaining the process for the hearing. With the decided consequences communicated, I began to compile information about Chris that would be required for the hearing, including his attendance (not great), academic achievement (low), and previous behaviour incidents (few).

The hearing was held at the school with members of the board sitting mid-room as a panel. At the front of the room there was an empty chair for whoever was being questioned (mostly me), and opposite that chair sat Mrs. Jones' assistant who busily kept notes. Mrs. Jones and the assistant superintendents sat along the side wall between the empty chair and the school board. Behind the board, chairs were set up for the rest of us. As Chris and his parents entered they were directed to their seats, clearly the least comfortable people in the room, sitting quietly, heads bowed. Members of the school board reviewed the details of Chris' school record and asked me questions about his academic performance, attendance, and behaviour. They asked about Mr. and Mrs. Brown and how they were managing. They did not ask my opinion, but relied only on the evidence presented. They asked Chris' parents questions about Chris' goals, his interest in school, his involvement in extracurricular activities, and his peers. When Chris' parents were asked if they had any questions, they said they wanted Chris to graduate and asked when they would know the board's decision. The board chair explained that they would

deliberate until a decision was reached, at which point, the superintendent and parents would be contacted. (The superintendent would then inform me.) Chris and his parents thanked everyone for their time and walked out.

Chris never returned to our school or district, though arrangements were made for him to attend school in a neighbouring community where he stayed until he quit high school sometime in grade eleven. The school staff relayed their relief and gratitude, expressing confidence in my capacity to lead our school. I felt reassured and also more knowledgeable about my role as principal, believing that the next time I was faced with a difficult and unusual situation I would know what to do. I had no idea how helpful policy and process could be in guiding my decisions. I returned to school after my meeting with Mrs. Jones feeling for the first time, like a principal, the unsettling image of Chris' eyes gone.

Fulfilling Our Roles

My respite from seeing Chris' eyes with their mismatched contact lenses was short-lived. In fact, Chris regularly interrupts my thoughts, often when I'm walking to or from school and anticipating or reliving my day. I still remember looking away from Chris—and not from anyone else and am struck by the irony that my first major public "success" as a school principal was linked so tightly to the end of Chris' school career. I relive each of the events in the process, wondering if I missed something or should have done things differently. The universal praise I received did not prevent me from seeing Chris' eyes or lessen my ongoing unease with what happened, but it was not until I began my doctoral studies that I was able to find a way to articulate the source of my disquiet: Consistent with my new role in the schooling bureaucracy, I had shifted from educating Chris to adiaphorizing him.

"Adiaphorization" is a term created by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman—based on his reading of Hannah Arendt--to describe how Western organizations manage behaviour that threatens the consistency and predictability that are vital to modern bureaucracies—and most especially ethical action. Bauman contends that "from the organization's point of view morally inspired conduct is utterly useless, nay subversive: It cannot be harnessed to any purpose (Bauman, 2000, p. 214). In response, rather than provide scope for individual actors to make ethical judgments, organizations employ networks of law and policy to limit permissible action to that which is in harmony with instrumental and procedural rationality: "Actions that fail to meet the criteria of goal-pursuit or procedural discipline are declared non-social, irrational" (Bauman, 2000, p. 215) and all subsequent action is rendered "adiaphoric" (from *adiaphoron*, that is, something rendered neutral—neither good or evil—by the Church). Mrs. Jones, the trustees and I were all fulfilling our roles within the schooling system: We were following school board policy and school law and no one could fault us for how we met our responsibilities. We were certainly doing things right; I am not sure we were doing the right thing.

Conspicuously absent from my story was its central character. After making the offending call, Chris largely disappears and Bauman helped me understand why: Bauman explains that adiaphorization depends on three complementary arrangements that he labels: effacing the face, the dissembling of the person, and disconnecting action and consequence. The first step required defining Chris so that all involved would know the focus and scope of the relationship: Chris was not a fourteen year old boy who left an obscene telephone message on the voicemail of two adult community members; Chris was a grade ten student who called two teachers at home, making it a concern for the school principal, the district superintendent, and trustees. Once Chris was defined, we knew what aspects of his background were relevant: his

attendance, his grades and his disciplinary record. Then, with a clear understanding of both our

relationship and the subject matter, the people who knew the least about Chris were in a position

to objectively determine what was to happen. We succeeded in "neutralizing the disruptive and

deregulating impact or moral behavior" (Bauman, 2000, p. 215), but what happened to Chris was

never discussed by us again—except, of course, by me with myself.

Chris's story embodies what I take to be the central educational challenge of those who

work in schools: Schooling too often gets in the way of educating. If education entails helping

other people learn what they need to live well in the world in the various dimensions of the

human condition, then what counts as education can only be determined *with* others. Deciding

what counts as education is therefore fundamentally an ethical- political problem—understood in

a democracy as people determining how they will treat other people and live alongside others. As

Bauman describes—and Chris' story demonstrates—modern organizations often elide ethical-

political questions in efforts to efficiently accomplish their ostensible purposes without regard

for either the legitimacy of those purposes or the impact of that effort on particular people. The

legitimation crisis in modernity is hardly a new problem for Western scholars (e.g., Habermas,

1973, 1992), but I believe some resources that speak to the problems of education have been

neglected and I hope to recover some of those ideas here. In particular, I am interested in

following Bauman's example and using Hannah Arendt's work to recover the political for

education.

The Human Condition

In *The Human Condition* Arendt tells the tragic story of the loss of the political in the

Western tradition. She begins by describing the *vita activa* of ancient Athens with its hierarchy

of sustaining human life by 'labour', securing fame or immortality via 'work' (both created in

the private of the household) and action, the exercise of human freedom by thinking with others in public. She then traces the decline of the *vita activa* and its replacement by versions of the *vita contemplativa* after the death of Socrates—only to be revived under conditions of modernity in misshapen form: public and private spaces disappear into an amorphous worldless 'social' and labour with its concern for survival rises to the apex of the *vita activa*. Labour, work, and action become "equally subject to the necessity of present life" (Arendt, 1958, p. 316). What emerges is worldlessness, an "occluding of the political by the social and the transformation of the public space of politics into a psuedospace of social interaction, in which individuals no longer 'act' but 'merely behave'" (Benhabib, 1994, p. 112). Worldlessness is reinforced through the bureaucratic, hierarchical structures of contemporary organizations, which demand conformity, compliance, and accountability, all normalizing behaviours that support the ideals of the institution (invariably tied to economic ends). Beiner (1982) suggests: "The real danger in contemporary societies is that the bureaucratic, technocratic, and depoliticized structures of modern life encourage indifference and increasingly render men less discriminating, less capable of critical thinking, and less inclined to assume responsibility" (p. 113). Everything becomes "enframed—ordered, organized, arranged, and accounted for—by technical, productive, and instrumental knowing" (Harvey, 2010, p. 190). We begin to see society as if it could not be other than it is. Ideologies further enclose us in habit and routine, shutting down our ability to question what is. "As long as we live only by habit or tradition, unaware that they mask an implicit choice, there is something about ourselves as actors in the world that we are not seeing and for which we are not acknowledging our responsibility" (Pitkin, 1981, p. 279). Mass society/culture has an anaesthetizing effect on our lives. We find ourselves moving through the world holding tightly to the guiderails—established practices, policies and rules—that guide our actions.

Thinking becomes unnecessary except as it supports the means necessary to achieve uncontested ends.

The implication for education is a dedication to schooling and the means-focused thinking it encourages. The consequences are often distressing and disturbing, as demonstrated in Chris' story where Mrs. Jones, the Browns, members of the school board, and even Chris' parents, comply with expectations and fulfill their roles in the disciplinary cycle. Those with the most power—Mrs. Jones, the school board, and I—made the decisions about what would happen, trusting policy, practice, and established rules, and focusing on the needs of adults (the Browns and teachers). There was no space for anyone to appear, no space for dialogue. Certainly, there was conversation, but it was concentrated on presenting information about Chris' attendance (decent), academic achievement (low), and previous behaviour incidents (some). Everyone did her/his job. No one questioned the process or the outcome. No one thought to do so. The end was determined (more or less) before the process began. (Chris' voice was neglected. Unsought. Silent. He had no power.)

When thinking is focused on achieving unchallenged pre-determined ends, like Chris' expulsion, everything we do becomes targeted toward those ends; anything outside of or beyond them becomes increasingly difficult to imagine. "It is in the nature of ends that they justify the means necessary to achieve them" (Arendt, 2005, p. 196) regardless of the devastation. "As long as we believe that we deal with ends and means in the political realm, we shall not be able to prevent anybody's using all means to pursue recognized ends" (Arendt, 1958, p. 229). Politics and thinking, understood in this means-ends way is non-political and the consequences are dire. We are left worldless—disconnected from each other, so busy in the frenzy of doing our jobs that we fail to think about *what* we are doing and *why* we are doing it. We lack space to engage

in dialogue, to think and debate together. Though, even if the space were available, we might find ourselves at a loss, grasping for meaningful topics so comfortable are we with focusing on the functional and the mundane. Arendt hopes to remedy worldlessness and recover the political, human freedom understood as acting and thinking together with equal and distinct others in public. She returns to ancient resources, the *vita activa* of Athens with its three forms of human activity—labour, work, and action—to begin her reclamation.

Labour

Labour is "an activity in which man is neither together with the world nor with other people, but alone with his body, facing the naked necessity to keep himself alive" (Arendt, 1958, p. 212). Labour confronts human mortality by aiming to secure our physical survival as individuals and as a species by, for example, providing nourishment, shelter, protection. Focused on our biological needs, labour must continue as long as we live: meals are consumed almost as quickly as they are prepared, leaving nothing behind and the process repeats indefinitely. "Laboring always moves in the same circle, which is prescribed by the biological process of the living organism and the end of its 'toil and trouble' comes only with the death of this organism" (Arendt, 1958, p. 98). Because labour is "unending, progressing automatically in accordance with life itself and outside the range of willful decisions or humanly meaningful purposes" (Arendt, 1958, p. 106) the thinking it requires is likewise automatic, functional, and means-focused, resulting in routine, predictable, and repeated behaviour. Labour addresses only the necessity of sustaining life and life's processes and consequently has nothing to contribute to the political (public) realm. Indeed, in ancient Athens, labour took place in the privacy and protection of the household, or *oikos*. The success of labour was easily determined: people

survived. Though labour is a necessary activity in the *vita activa*, independently, it is not sufficient.

Labour is manifest in many ways in our schools today. Ask any teacher about 'survival' in the classroom and she will provide examples of management, organization, engagement, and planning. "Indeed, learning to teach is largely an activity of learning to labour and organize the labour of children, that is, a continuous effort to keep them engaged" (Coulter & Wiens, 2002, p. 195). In addition to the labour of "teaching" and "learning", teachers often find themselves mired in routines of domesticity, or labour, where they care for and sustain the emotional and physical lives of others (Grumet, 1988, p. 85). To focus on the expectations of learning, children must be fed, rested, and well. While this sustenance and care is (or should be) primarily generated in the home, it continues, in varying degrees, in the classroom. If a child has not eaten breakfast, we feed him; teachers regularly attend to the basic needs of children and though this responsibility lessens with the age and maturity of the child, it is never absent. Maintaining the physical settings of schools is a further form of laboring. Classrooms need to be suitable environments for students and school staff to work; this involves daily cleaning, tidying, and attention to ensure that the environment is clean, warm, dry, and safe. When our classrooms and schools become almost exclusively labour-focused, we find ourselves lost in the busy-ness, overwhelmed by the daily demands, always feeling pressed for time (there never seems to be enough) and feeling pressure to complete tasks, such as covering the curriculum. We each perform our role in the organization (ie. teacher, student, parent, principal) and come to know each other in this flat way, disappearing as unique individuals.

Work

Work, unlike labour, is about the creation and fabrication of objects that endure and serve humans in either usefulness or beauty. Because these objects are not consumed they contribute to stability, permanence, and durability in human life:

> The reality and reliability of the human world rest primarily on the fact that we are surrounded by things more permanent than the activity by which they were produced, and potentially even more permanent than the lives of their authors.
>
> (Arendt, 1958, p. 96)

These objects—houses, furniture, vehicles, books, works of art, etc.—make our lives more secure because they are always there. We may no longer remember the sculptors who created the works on the Parthenon's frieze more than 2400 years ago, but we live alongside their creations. *Homo faber* uses tools and earth's resources to create these use objects, often relying on a plan or model to guide the work. Making, or fabrication, like labour, takes place in the private realm, even though its products are made for the public world. When the process of creation is accomplished and a new thing exists "with enough durability to remain in the world as an independent entity" (Arendt, 1958, p. 143), work is complete and its end achieved—a new object has been added to human artifice. The thinking demanded of work is means-ends thinking with a focus on the ends. Because the ends of work are never in doubt, their legitimacy is never questioned.

Multiple examples of work are present in contemporary schools and the ends are largely uncontested.

> Work, in the sense of producing a product for further use, is no stranger to schools and school systems. School buildings themselves are a product of work, as are the

furniture, books, equipment and other physical resources that inhabit them.

(Pamer, 2010, p. 75)

Apart from the many physical structures (buildings, desks, chairs, textbooks, pens, pencils, and notebooks) that contribute to our classroom and school spaces, teachers create products for use, always with a definite end in mind. We use these creations to support teaching and to meet the various demands of our jobs. Artifacts, which remain and can be passed on after we leave, include such items as curriculum documents, text books, unit plans, lesson plans, and projects. That these artifacts are "good" is simply assumed and rarely challenged. For instance, in generating a unit plan, teachers will refer to curriculum objectives for the concepts and learning outcomes that should be included. In daily practice, curriculum, like the use of textbooks, is taken for granted as an acceptable and appropriate guide to instruction. The work we produce in schools is created in private with the intent of inserting and using it in the school and classroom.

Action

Action, in contrast to labour (which aims at securing human survival), or work (which focuses on the fabrication of enduring objects), is Arendt's third form of human activity in the *vita activa* and aims at the intangible: the exercise of human freedom. Athenians recognized that a human life involves living alongside and with other people, creating meaning together (though who counted as equal other people was severely limited). Arendt explains that, for the Greeks, a truly flourishing human life (*eudaimonia*) was primarily a political concern, that is, a concern for legitimacy in determining how people ought to live together. The expression of political freedom could occur only through a form of collective activity that Arendt labels "action." Obviously, what Arendt means by "action" is not simply "doing something" such as preparing meals (Arendtian labour) or erecting a building (work). Instead, she is interested in ethical-political

action, an expression of human freedom that is integral to leading a "good" and flourishing life. "Men *are* free…as long as they act, neither before or after; for to *be* free and to act are the same" (Arendt, 1960, p. 153). Action so understood is not a product of a means-ends activity as are labour and work. In fact, action's ends and means are enmeshed; they "lie outside action and have an existence independent of whatever action is taken" (Arendt, 2005, p. 193). While action always has a goal or aim, because it occurs within the complexity of life lived amongst others, each of whom is capable of acting in unique and unexpected ways, action rarely achieves its goal. Indeed, action's end may never come, but emanate outward indefinitely as threads of its consequences are picked up and acted upon by others. In many ways, action is more like a kind of public political performance (much like improvisational theatre) involving the integration of acting and thinking, or as Arendt characterizes it in her intellectual journal, "wakeful thinking" (*Denktagebuch, I*, 12). Maxine Greene (1978) interprets 'wakeful thinking' as "wide-awakeness", an attentiveness and interest in things that "is the direct opposite of the attitude of bland conventionality and indifference so characteristic of our time" (p. 42) and extends Arendt's understanding of action to education. Both education and action can perhaps be best understood as a kind of thinking *with* other people about how to live well together, exercising our freedom and creating meaning, recognizing that our goals and the ends we pursue may never be reached.

Two features of the Athenian public made action as the expression of freedom possible. First, the *polis* was a common world that "gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak" (Arendt, 1958, p. 52). Through speech and language (and especially through stories) citizens could engage one another and create a common reality, a shared world. Arendt (1958) explains that, "the presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves" (p. 50). Second, the *polis* was "a space of

appearance where [men] could act, a kind of theatre where freedom could appear" (Arendt, 1960, p. 34). People belonged to a collectivity, yet retained their autonomy, their individual freedom. Identity could be developed only when people were able to come together politically and reveal 'who' they were.

Arendt's descriptions of the public as a common world and a space of appearance point to the two features of the public that make democratic legitimacy possible: plurality and natality. Political life requires living alongside different other people and by "plurality" Arendt signals the importance of others in both making our lives together and understanding ourselves. She explains, "No man can be sovereign because not one man, but men, inhabit the earth" (Arendt, 1958, p. 234). Political life is therefore contingent on taking other people into account: "Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves" (Arendt, 1958, p. 4). "Natality" embodies Arendt's (1958) conception of freedom; she explains that with the creation of humans, "the principle of beginning came into the world itself, which, of course, is only another way of saying that the principle of freedom was created" (p. 177). Each person has the potential to make a unique appearance in the public world:

The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world. (Arendt, 1958, p. 178)

Action in the *polis* with concerns for respecting plurality and natality is not a "thing" or even an "action" in the usual sense. Arendtian action is better understood as intangible connections among people, a "web of human relationships" that "is no less real than the world of

things we visibly have in common" (Arendt, 1958, p. 183). Living politically alongside others in a complex web of relations allows us to show "faith in and hope for the world" (Arendt, 1958, p. 247), for ourselves, and for others, despite action's irreversibility. "It is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose" (Arendt, 1958, p. 184). Unpredictable and boundless, action offers no security or reliability. However, it is only in and through action that we can be free, that we can know our selves, others, and the world.

> If, then, we understand the political in the sense of the polis, its end or *raison*
>
> *d'etre* would be to establish and keep in existence a space where freedom as
>
> virtuosity can appear. This is the realm where freedom is a worldly reality,
>
> tangible in words which can be heard, in deeds which can be seen, and in events
>
> which are talked about, remembered, and turned into stories. (Arendt, 1960, p. 35)

Action, as the exercise of freedom, contributes to the creation of meaning and significance in our lives and demonstrates our care for the world.

Education, with its political and ethical dimensions, is, like action, outside the realm of means-ends thinking; it is about freedom, how we choose to live in the world together, what stories we choose to tell, and the webs of relationships that result. Like action, education relies on plurality and the coming together of equal and distinct others. It is, primarily, I believe, about protecting the possibility of the new which is only conceivable if, and when, people have the space to appear to each other, where "anyone through their appearance is capable of changing 'the game'…. Out of the blue" (Knott, 2011, p. 113). Chris' story is an example of how schooling reduces education. There was no space for anyone to appear, to be seen and heard, to tell her story, or to 'change the game'. There were no 'conflicting wills' or 'intentions'. The end,

and the means to accomplish it, were uncontested. Unfortunately, Chris' story serves as evidence of education and freedom lost. Chris was silenced and his fate determined by non-thinking adults. For the sake of the children in our schools we need to be more aware, more cognizant, more attentive and awake to what education is and ought to be. Education, as the exercise of freedom, involves the creation of meaning and significance in our lives, and demonstrates our care for the world and for our children.

One of the primary responsibilities of Canadian schooling is to prepare people for democratic citizenship, living together with other people, an aim that aligns well with action. Almost all teachers, schools, and districts claim to educate for democracy, but evidence of sustained effort is minimal, and what is meant by democracy remains unclear. "If we remain vague in our definition of democracy and are, therefore, unclear about our strategies for working toward it, then we render the ideal of democracy itself more vulnerable to evisceration and neglect" (Kelly, 2014, pp. 383-384). Examples that might be offered are generally contrived, "or glossed as self-governance, inclusion or belongingness, participation, accountability, fairness, or social equality" (Kelly, 2014, p. 384), such as allowing children to vote on the game they will play in gym, or more significantly, establishing practices like the disciplinary hearing Chris experienced, that seem to allow for due process and participation, but essentially suppress the potential for the unknown to emerge. Chris was expelled from school, but he was also expelled from the larger world. He did not count. Democracy, and the public space it requires, is not a ready fit for the mandate of schooling despite the fact that the BC School Act (1996/2015) claims—

WHEREAS it is the goal of a democratic society to ensure that all its members

receive an education that enables them to become literate, personally fulfilled and

publicly useful, thereby increasing the strength and contributions to the health and

stability of that society;

AND WHEREAS the purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable

all learners to become literate, to develop their individual potential and to acquire

the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic

and pluralistic society and a prosperous and sustainable economy…

Though the notion of democratic responsibility might be present in schools, and though

examples and stories of inspiration exist, in practice, its strength is exhausted. Chris' story serves

as an example of this exhaustion, an example of the lack of attention and opportunity for

appearance and dialogue. What seems to matter more is accountability to the system, rather than

responsibility to each other. Documents that guide practice, such as the BC Education Service

Plan (2016) and the BC Education Plan (2015), fail to recognize democracy as a priority of any

kind and instead focus on developing "individual potential" and contributing "to a prosperous

and sustainable economy". British Columbia's quest to be competitive within the global

economy is clear; it requires moulding "learners" (children) to meet desired ends. The thinking

behind such goals, and the subsequent planning that goes into achieving them, is utilitarian and

procedural, resulting in prescriptive accountability measures and a constant urge toward

efficiency, effectiveness, and continual progress and improvement. The language we use offers

further evidence of the primacy of place held by the economy—high standards, improved

achievement, quality, choice, accountability, outcomes, and flexibility are "ideals" that recur in

government documents and drive schooling. Both the practices and language of schools are

evidence of labouring. Ends are assumed and the focus is entirely on means—how we might

create and produce citizens (students) who are able to contribute to our economy and keep BC

globally competitive. Our schools and the people in them become adiaphorized, as Bauman (1991) suggests, always subject "to either *instrumental* or *procedural* criteria of evaluation" (p. 213).

Reversals and Realignments

There is little evidence of Arendt's concern for the *vita activa* in contemporary schools. That our schools have emerged as paragons of labour, reflections of our labouring society, captures the essence of the problem that Arendt responds to in *The Human Condition*: the absence of strategies to decide goodness or legitimacy in modern Western societies, a crisis that she contends contributed to the Holocaust. Some people in schools are clearly more powerful than others, a feature of most Western hierarchical organizations. Arendt is certainly not so naïve as to argue for perfect equality, but she does argue that the resources both to allow people to think together in public (action) and to judge the goodness of that thinking have been lost to Western ethical-political thought and need to be reclaimed through historical artifacts, an exercise she calls "pearl diving". This practice, the search for fragments from our past that might help us live better in the present, involves freeing concepts, ideas, and stories "from their historical moorings and traditional environments" (Knott, 2011, p. 99). Examining ideas outside of their accepted and conventional context allowed Arendt to see and understand them in new ways.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt tells the story of the Western intellectual tradition over the last 2400 years, a tale that begins with two viable approaches to leading a good human life— the *vita activa* (the life of acting and thinking in the world with other people) and the *vita contemplativa* (the philosophical life of the mind, thinking in solitude)—and shows that one or the other became preferred at various times under certain conditions. We have inherited

deformed and inferior versions of each in modernity. The twists and turns of her plot with various heroes and villains are fascinating (and largely beyond my purposes here), but important aspects of the story can perhaps be captured by focusing on Arendt's first hero, Socrates, and her first villain, Plato.

Socrates has the deserved reputation as the archetypal Western philosopher and practitioner of the *vita contemplativa*. Both Socrates' student, Plato, and Plato's student, Aristotle, follow Socrates in understanding that all philosophy begins with "*thaumazein,* or shocked wonder at the miracle of Being" (Arendt, 1958, p. 302). Plato describes what this looked like for Socrates who would suddenly be "overcome by his thoughts and thrown into a state of absorption to the point of perfect motionlessness for many hours" (Arendt, 1958, p. 302). Often missing from descriptions of Socrates, however, was his insistence on living the *vita activa*. The son of a stone mason and a midwife, Socrates was traditionally educated, took his turn in Athenian civic government, and made a comfortable living as a stone mason himself until a modest inheritance allowed him to devote himself entirely to teaching. Unlike Plato and Aristotle, however, Socrates founded no school, but wandered the *agora*, or city marketplace, engaging all who were interested in what he believed were the serious issues of the day. His very insistence on remaining in the public world precipitated his downfall. Socrates was eventually accused of disrespecting the gods of the city and corrupting the youth of Athens. He went on trial before a jury of 500 where he was, of course, found guilty and sentenced to death. Rather than attempting escape and accepting exile, Socrates drank hemlock, becoming the best-known educational martyr in the West.

In *The Seventh Letter*, Plato describes his reaction to the trial of his mentor, "the most upright man of that day." Deeply disturbed, Plato determines not to follow his teacher into martyrdom. He writes:

> Finally, it became clear to me, with regard to all existing communities, that they were one and all misgoverned…. There will be no cessation of evils…till either those who are pursuing a right and true philosophy receives sovereign power…or those in power…become true philosophers.

With Plato, the schism between knowing and doing—between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*—opened wide, and has stayed so ever since. Arendt (1958) explains: "By sheer force of conceptualization and philosophical clarification, the Platonic identification of knowledge with command and rulership and of action with obedience and execution overruled all earlier experiences and articulations" (p. 225). Philosophy quickly became the realm of the few and relied upon a turning away from the world, avoiding the "nonsense" and distractions of life amongst others and withdrawing from the "reality" of the world of men, in order to become enlightened, to know truth. With the rise of the *vita contemplativa* to a place of near reverence, entirely removed from and above the base ordinariness of daily existence and human affairs, came the descent of the *vita activa*. The *vita contemplativa* replaced the *vita activa* in esteem in such a way that it never recovered.

With action transformed into simply doing, "into ruling and being ruled—that is, into those who command and those who execute commands" (Arendt, 2005, p. 52)—the hierarchy within the *vita activa* was altered and work replaced action. Moreover, with the rise of Christianity, glory, that had once been attainable only through action between persons, was now

part of a spiritual, otherworldly realm. Life, rather than the world (or the body politic) became the greatest or highest good and politics essentially became government rule. *Eudaimonia*, or what it meant to live a "good" life became equivalent to living in accordance with, or obeying, religious maxims. Eternal life was guaranteed and desirable if one lived in compliance with the teachings of the Church. Not living in obedience to the Church was cause for imminent concern as the eternal life guaranteed would be eternally miserable. Either way, eternal life was a given, and the individual was left to choose eternal happiness or eternal misery.

The rise of modernity further changed how we understand the natural world and our place in it in significant ways, leading to another reversal between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*. Arendt (1958) identified three distinct world-changing events, which "are still happening in unbroken continuity" (p. 248) that marked the beginning of modernity: the "discovery" and exploration of the world, the Reformation, and the invention of the telescope.

> The exploration and mapping of the world was revelatory. Precisely when the
>
> immensity of available space on earth was discovered, the famous shrinking of the
>
> globe began until eventually in our world…each man is as much an inhabitant of
>
> the earth as he is an inhabitant of his country. (Arendt, 1958, p. 250)

People were no longer destined to remain in the place they were born, but were able to travel anywhere on earth within a matter of days; the digital age further increased our access to information and to other people. More than ever before, the world and its people are available to us, and vast amounts of knowledge are at our fingertips. The world has shrunk.

The Reformation led humans to doubt and question religion, authority, and tradition, giving rise to secularity and the disappearance of moral bannisters to guide decisions. No longer able to rely on conventional precepts for guidance, humans are left ungrounded. "Without the

sanction of religious belief, neither authority nor tradition is secure. Without the support of customary tools of understanding and judgment, both religion and authority are bound to falter" (Arendt, 2005, p. 51). The loss of tradition, authority and religion, and the rise of secularity left humans not thrown back on the world, but upon self. Subsequently, life, though mortal once again, remained the highest good.

The development of the telescope created the realization that the tools humans built could generate a new kind of knowledge—empirical, scientific knowledge—*independent of moral considerations.* As human's horizons expanded across and beyond the earth, we sought to know and command this space through the use of tools and instruments (technology), which appeared to confirm and demonstrate truth. Trusting in means-end conclusions and processes established confidence in the "empirical evidence" of science. "[T]he deductive but disastrous tendency to identify thinking with the insatiable quest for scientific knowledge" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 284) led humans to trust *doing* rather than contemplation as invented tools helped us "prove" and be certain about the world. Truth was accepted only as a result of testing, experimenting and "proving", rather than from and through contemplation, "the reading of an instrument seemed to have won a victory over both the mind and the senses" (Arendt, 1958, p. 274). The purpose of work shifted from the product, to how and through what means and processes, it had come to be and could be reproduced.

With doing understood as the only way to truth and knowledge, largely removed from ethical or normative concerns, the *vita contemplativa* lost its authority. The *vita activa* once again rose to dominance, but now with labour at the apex, leaving a society that

demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning, as though individual life

had actually been submerged in the over-all life process of the species and the only

active decision still required of the individual were to let go, so to speak, to

abandon his individuality, the still individually sensed pain and trouble of living,

and acquiesce in a dazed, tranquilized, functional type of behavior. (Arendt, 1958,

p. 322)

Thinking remained important, but only in the service of doing; it narrowed and focused on means

and ends. "Contemplation itself became altogether meaningless" (Arendt, 1958, p. 292). The

thinking we are left with is non-thinking: We live automatically, behaving and doing what we are

expected and required to do; our thinking is understood to be relevant only as (and if) it serves

doing, knowing, and sustaining the "needs" of society.

As thinking becomes more means-focused (and ends always assumed), thinking with

others outside the framework of ends and means becomes less viable, and public and private

spaces, in many cases, disappear. Without space to think together we rely on standards and rules

to guide our decisions. We want to know what past practice has been, what policies exist, what

the guide or manual suggests, or what "research" tells us. Villa (1996) recognizes that

there is a broad-based decline in our capacity to 'think without rules'.... With this

decline comes an increasing reliance on the various 'bannisters' (ready-to-hand

principles and value judgments) that enable us to navigate everyday life without

having to stop and think. (p. 184)

As we fail to exercise our capacity to think, we distance ourselves from the possibility of

determining the legitimacy with which we live our lives and instead behave as members of mass

society. We acquiesce. "Society is also the realm of behavior, and excludes the possibility of

action...imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to normalize its members, to

make them behave" (Pitkin, 1981, p. 267). The loss of public-political space means the loss of

thinking with others, the loss of action. We are left with sameness and conformity. This state of

non-thinking functioning and acquiescence is the cornerstone of worldlessness, the problem

Arendt seeks to contest.

Consequences for Understanding Schooling as Labour

In many ways schools are worldless institutions, reflecting the worldlessness inherent in

modern society. Not unlike other bureaucratic, hierarchical contemporary organizations, schools

pursue assumed ends, focusing on the means necessary to achieve those ends. Schooling in

British Columbia, as already mentioned, is focused, with very little resistance or contention, on

continual progress and student success in service of economic ends. Our Education Ministry's

ultimate aim is "a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy" (Service Plan

2016; BC Education Plan 2015; Rocky Mountain School District purpose statement) which we

attempt to achieve through system-wide accountability and data driven decision-making. Success

is determined through a variety of evidence-based measures, such as graduation rates, grade-to-

grade transitions, course completion, and report card grades. As we regularly review data

(information), we adjust practice and strategies in an attempt to become more efficient and

successful in achieving our goals. At a glance this may seem sufficient. However, contributing to

a "democratic and pluralistic society" (BC School Act) is conveniently and consistently omitted

from planning and reporting documents at the school, district, and ministry level. For example,

the Superintendent's Report on Achievement (2014) includes the following purpose:

- Ensure transparency and accountability for each school district in terms of its

responsibility for improving student achievement; and

- Provide information that will facilitate subsequent planning for continuing

improvement of student achievement at the school and school district levels

Consequently, when we talk about how (and what) we are doing as a school, a district, or a system, we talk about what we can assess and measure; there is little space to talk about democratic citizenship—how we believe we ought to live and be together. Even asking questions becomes difficult and is commonly discouraged. A colleague was recently directed by his supervisor not to ask any questions during meetings. Should he not understand something, he was to go to his supervisor privately to seek clarification. Asking questions in front of others could be interpreted as an affront to the supervisor's power, and as "the captain of the ship" she needs to know that everyone is "on board". Apparently, being "on board" means unquestioning compliance. This silencing speaks to the power of systems thinking and the impenetrability of hierarchical organizations; it is also reflective of a labouring society.

When questions are not permitted or we can no longer even think of questions to ask, we are caught in the cycle of labour and come to understand our classrooms and schools, and the people who are part of them, as things we can control and manage, assess and measure. When we start defining

> what matters in education only by what we can measure, we are in serious trouble. When that happens, we tend to forget that schools are responsible for shaping character, developing sound minds in healthy bodies…and forming citizens for our democracy…. We even forget to reflect on what we mean when we speak of good education. (Ravitch, 2010, pp. 166-167)

Alignment of accountability measures and system expectations from Ministry to districts to schools to classrooms creates a system that is nearly impregnable.

The means-focused thinking required to achieve "success" leaves teachers and principals always busy—planning, assigning, assessing, reporting, managing, organizing, preparing

materials, tidying up and then starting all over the next day, the next week, the next term, and eventually the next year, replacing one set of students with another—a form of batch processing. The cyclical busy-ness and constant doing of teaching, combined with almost exclusive attention to means, is indicative of labouring. It is easy to get caught up in the expectations of schooling and not notice how education is overlooked. Teachers spend their days striving to achieve the goals put before them, searching for ways to help students "grow", "develop" and become "better learners"—to be "successful," seldom questioning the ends of their labour. The thinking required for schooling, and for teaching as labour, is limited at best, relying on set parameters and guidelines—detailed curriculum guides, assessment practices, ministry mandates, district policies, and school rules. Students, teachers, and principals learn to conform, to accept ideas and behaviour patterns as "good" or "right," in order to fit in and to seek personal success. For students this includes the obvious end of schooling: graduation and its credential.

Schooling and its efforts are rarely questioned, but rather taken as self-evidently "good" and desirable. The bannisters of precedence, policy and practices are firmly anchored. If the data shows improvement, we are doing well and moving in the "right" direction. There is little space for reflective thought or contemplation because we are too busy complying with schooling's expectations. Subsequently, we lack tools to question the legitimacy and goodness of what we are doing. We lack a world where we can think together. Instead we rely on data and empirical evidence to guide us. We fail to recognize that we are following empty, meaningless ideals that become placeholders in creating goals, mission statements, and visions around schooling's purpose. Most importantly, we lose each other and may not even realize it. Teachers and students become less visible, appearing to each other only in their roles, not in their unique human-ness. We cannot expect schools to be educational if there is no space for appearance, no space for

knowing each other and thinking together, no space for solitude (thinking with myself) and where the focus is on narrowly defined success and the expectation of continual progress. When the structures of classrooms and schools limit both public and private space, failing to allow people to appear, it can only ever be a space devoted to schooling. Education is exiled, as was Chris.

Chris was fifteen when he was removed from my school and from the community in which he had grown up. He travelled to school in another community for more than a year, but did not complete high school. No one who participated in his discipline acknowledged or recognized Chris (except his parents). Rather, he appeared only as a problem to be solved. There were many factors contributing to Chris' behaviour that no one even attempted to understand at the time. Those factors were exacerbated by Chris' expulsion. Eventually (quite quickly), the disciplinary incident was largely forgotten, except by Chris and his family, who continue, many years later to deal with the consequences. Had there been space for Chris, and everyone else who was involved to appear, this story may have had a very different ending (though it is not yet ended). Nixon (2015) offers insight into the problem of dis-appearance and its consequence for identity and action.

> If there is no one to recognize us we remain unrecognized, and— in remaining unrecognized—we lack the conditions necessary for individual freedom and self-realization: we may be part of the visual field that constitutes the world of appearances, but remain undifferentiated within it. Our value—insofar as we are deemed to have any – is a function of the category that we are perceived to represent. (p.69)

In Chris' case, he was simply seen as the "problem" to be solved; everyone involved was seen in their roles, rather than in their individuality.

Fostering Action in Schools

Despite action's improbability, Arendt (2005) does not completely despair, nor should we. While she describes "the modern growth of worldlessness, the withering away of everything *between* us…as the spread of a desert" (p. 201), she also points to spaces of freedom that are oases, "life-giving sources that let us live in the desert without becoming reconciled to it" (Arendt, 2005, p. 203) and cites examples of how action can erupt: the American Revolution, the Paris Commune of 1871, the creation of Soviets during the Russian Revolution, the French Resistance to Hitler in the Second World War, and the Hungarian revolt of 1956. More recent examples might include Greenpeace, the Feminist Movement, the Orange Revolution, the Arab spring and the Peoples Climate Movement—all of which began at the periphery of society (Coulter, 2002, p. 38). In education, an example would be the lobby for the inclusion of special needs students in schools that originated with parents.

While public schools are labouring systems that foster economic ends and priorities, they also have an explicit democratic mandate (even if largely ignored). All are welcome and children must learn to live with very different other people. Though action, thinking with others, is not necessarily welcome in the realm of schooling, it is possible, albeit temporarily, for educators who intentionally and consciously create spaces of freedom by stepping away/back from schooling. Action in schools is invariably about finding ways to see each other in our human-ness, seeing *who* rather than simply *what* we are, and this can happen in seemingly insignificant or minor ways. Teachers who include children in creating and organizing classroom space and encouraging dialogue around how they will be together in that space are aware of power

imbalances and are deliberate in finding ways to minimize the effects. Teachers who believe that children are able to contribute (and teachers are not the all-knowing leaders) understand action. They understand they can learn from children as much (perhaps more) than children learn from them. Administrators with concern for action will find ways to open up space for dialogue among adults (staff and parents), which is more difficult than simply providing time or bringing people together. Trust and respect are preconditions of this space; there needs to be a sense of safety if people are going to speak freely and openly, knowing that there will be disparate ideas and opinions and often disagreement.

Educators can create public and private spaces and promote action in schools in various ways: narrative, story-telling; the development and examination of language; opportunities to engage in aesthetic experiences; fostering a sense of wonder, imagination, and questioning. Ultimately, all of these strategies can nurture "democratic eruptions" (Wiens & Coulter, 2008) to contest what we might assume is given. They can provide "new perspectives on the lived world," and can "lead to a startling defamiliarization of the ordinary" (Greene, 1995, p. 4). Stories and art can disrupt and cause us to wonder. Once we are able to see differently, in new ways, and from other perspectives, the possibility of action arises.

Though there are possibilities for peripheral disturbances in schools and sparks of these disturbances exist, examples are too few. In my own experience I can think of few instances where I have participated in a political public space or witnessed it in schools. Hierarchy counters action, and there seems to be frustratingly little interest in resisting power structures or in having conversations about what we are doing and what might count as "good" and worthwhile in schools. It seems that those who attempt to disrupt the certainty of schooling are either ignored or silenced, as was my inquisitive, question-asking colleague. Any attempt to open

space, and to engage in dialogue that is not simply "professed consultation," with already determined outcomes, is often expeditiously dismissed. Children, teachers, principals, and parents become trapped within the system and its expectations, accepting, for the most part, that this is "just how it is." It is clear that for too many of us "there is a feeling of being dominated and [these] feelings of powerlessness are almost inescapable" (Greene, 1978, p. 43).

In *The Human Condition* Arendt provides her diagnosis of the problem of the loss of the political and consequences of the loss of ethical bannisters, and even points to a few islands of freedom in the desert of worldlessness, but doesn't supply the resources to get to those islands. Any possible efforts in that direction were waylaid, however, by an event that helped her realize that the task would be far more daunting than she understood: the problem of worldlessness was much more severe than she realized: She learned the requisite resources for exercising both political freedom and ethical action can be destroyed. The event was the arrest and trail of Adolf Eichmann.

In Irons4

In Argentina on May 11, 1960, Adolf Eichmann was captured and extradited to Israel to be tried for crimes against the Jewish people. Arendt offered her services as a reporter to *The New Yorker* and went to Jerusalem to attend the trial. She felt that

> to attend this trial was an obligation she owed her past. She was interested in
> understanding Eichmann's mind and, through the testimonies at the trial, to
> explore 'the totality of the moral collapse the Nazis caused in respectable
> European society'. (Arendt, 2006, p. xii)

The report Arendt wrote was eventually published as *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report*

---

4 A term in sailing that signifies a loss of maneuverability—when a sail boat is bow headed into the wind and stalled, trapped and unable to maneuver or steer.

on the Banality of Evil, an unconventional and still contested contribution to our understanding of evil and the Holocaust. Arendt was "primarily concerned with characterizing Eichmann's criminality" (Bernstein, 2016, p. 151), a focus that put her at odds with the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, who concentrated on "what the Jews had suffered, not what Eichmann had done" (Arendt, 2006, p. 6). Certainly, Arendt recognized the highly emotional and complex content and context, but condemned any diversion from the obligation of the court to judge Eichmann's actual deeds. Both the approach Arendt used and the conclusions she offered were offensive to many. Her tone was often acerbically sarcastic and her words insensitive, as if she was deliberately provoking her audience, was unaware of who they might be, or simply did not care. Arendt could have presented the report with more sensitivity, but did not and as a result *Eichmann in Jerusalem* was highly criticized and widely rejected. Many of the criticisms were connected to errors in historical research on the Holocaust, documentation of which was still emerging when Arendt wrote her report, and continues to emerge today. Jacob Robinson, an influential critic, identified many of Arendt's factual errors in *The Crooked Shall Be Made Straight* (Young-Bruehl, 2004, p. 348). The inconsistencies, tensions, and factual errors combined with her tone resulted in outrage against Arendt and her views: "No book within living memory had elicited similar passions. A kind of excommunication seemed to have been imposed on the author by the Jewish establishment in America" (Arendt, 2006, p. *vii*). Arendt's most contentious and provocative claims involved both the character of the criminal and the nature of his crimes.

An Efficient Administrator

Sitting in a glass box, built for his protection, Eichmann seemed ordinary; indeed, "half a dozen psychiatrists had certified him as 'normal'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 25)— a man who fulfilled

his duty, obeyed the law, and had done nothing directly to harm the Jews. Eichmann claimed that "he 'personally' never had anything whatever against Jews; on the contrary, he had plenty of 'private reasons' for not being a Jew hater" (Arendt, 2006, p. 26). Repeatedly he avowed that he never killed anyone: "With the killing of Jews I had nothing to do. I never killed a Jew, or a non-Jew, for that matter—I never killed any human being. I never gave an order to kill either a Jew or a non-Jew; I just did not do it" (Arendt, 2006, p. 22). Arendt, unlike most others, "took seriously Eichmann's own understanding of himself as a man without base motives, a man who had conscientiously done his duty" (Young-Bruehl, 2004, p. 342); she did not accept that he was simply lying (which was of course a possibility) and believed that there seemed to be some truth in how he saw himself, reporting that

> he was perfectly sure that he was not what he called an *innerer Schweinehund*, a dirty bastard in the depths of his heart; and as for his conscience, he remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not done what he had been ordered to do—to ship millions of men, women, and children to their death with great zeal and the most meticulous care. (Arendt, 2006, p. 25)

For Eichmann, living according to conscience was about living according to established and accepted rules, obeying German law, following orders, and sustaining his fidelity to the Fuhrer. He had always been a law-abiding citizen who was not alone in failing to see how Nazi Germany had turned the law on its head. "Since the whole of respectable society had in one way or another succumbed to Hitler, the moral maxims which determine social behaviour and the religious commandments—'Thou shalt not kill!'—which guide conscience had virtually vanished" (Arendt, 2006, p. 295). To Eichmann, it appeared that everyone supported the Third Reich; he witnessed no opposition, which seemed sufficient justification for participation. Eichmann's

"conscience was indeed set at rest when he saw the zeal and eagerness with which 'good society' everywhere reacted as he did" (Arendt, 2006, p. 126) and followed the Fuhrer. It was simply impossible for Eichmann to believe that "respectable" society might be wrong.

Repeatedly during the trial, Eichmann showed "his utter ignorance of everything that was not directly, technically and bureaucratically, connected with his job" (Arendt, 2006, p. 54). Organizational efficiency and administrative effectiveness were Eichmann's strengths. He was successful in his role, responsible for the transportation and deportation of Jews (likely the first time in his life he had ever felt success). He was not only good at organizing transportation to ensure the greatest efficiency, but also at negotiating the means necessary to make transportation possible. Knowing exactly what was expected of him and understanding his function within the Nazi bureaucracy, offered security and comfort. His conscience was connected to a sense of duty and loyalty, to being a "good citizen." Arendt concluded that Eichmann,

> except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal
> advancement…had no motives at all. And his diligence in itself was in no way
> criminal; he certainly would not have murdered his superior in order to inherit his
> post. *He merely,* to put the matter colloquially, *never realized what he was doing*.
> (Arendt, 2006, p. 287)

Not that Eichmann was unaware of what was happening in the Nazi government or that he was not responsible for sending millions to their death.

> In principle he knew quite well what it was all about, and in his final statement to
> the court he spoke of the 'revaluation of values prescribed by the government.' He
> was not stupid. It was sheer thoughtlessness—something by no means identical

with stupidity—that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of

the period. (Arendt, 2006, pp. 287-288)

Arendt concluded that Eichmann refused to think for himself, that is, he had no evil motives and simply did not know what he was doing, a determination that in no way absolved him of responsibility for his heinous crimes. Arendt rejects the excuse that Eichmann was simply a 'cog' in the Nazi bureaucracy with the possibility of exoneration due to ignorant compliance—as did the Israeli court that judged him guilty and sentenced him to death. Eichmann was hanged May 31, 1962 for crimes against the Jewish people—the price he paid for choosing to participate in the Nazi bureaucracy.

Eichmann appeared to be disappointingly and problematically unexceptional to Arendt, representing many hundreds of thousands of bureaucratic types who implemented policies of atrocity or otherwise. It was startling that "so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal" (Arendt, 2006, p. 276), leaving Arendt to conclude that Eichmann was not a "villain" in the traditional sense: "The deeds were monstrous, but the doer…was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 4). Eichmann "was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III 'to prove a villain'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 287). What startled Arendt (2006) was that Eichmann was so "banal"; indeed he "had no motives at all" (p. 287). He had ceased to be a thinking human being.

An Unprecedented Crime

While the character of the criminal seemed mundane, even banal, Arendt believed that the nature of his crime was unique in human history. Bernstein (2002) explains:

Torture, humiliation, massacres, pogroms, sadistic orgies, even genocide, have a

long history. [However], Arendt singles out something that was unprecedented—

the systematic attempt to transform human beings so that they no longer exhibit

the characteristics of a distinctively human life. (p. 232)

Arendt struggles to capture this new crime:

It seems to me that it has something to do with the following phenomenon: making

human beings superfluous (not using them as means to an end, which leaves their

essence as humans untouched…; rather, making them superfluous as human

beings). This happens as soon as all unpredictability…is eliminated. (Kohler &

Saner, 1992, p. 166)

Eliminating human beings as distinct individuals was accomplished in stages: "The camps

show, first, that the juridicial person in humans had to be killed; second, that the moral person

had to be destroyed; and, finally, that the individuality of the self had to be crushed" (Benhabib,

2003, p. 65). The systematic attack on human beings by the removal of the conditions that made

them human was startling for Arendt as she considered Eichmann's role in the Holocaust. The

Nazis had very nearly destroyed the Jewish people by stripping away the conditions foundational

to living as a human being—natality, plurality, spontaneity and action. The *systematic*

elimination of human beings as human beings was unprecedented.

Moreover, the denial of the requisite conditions to live a full human life not only made the

administrative murder of thousands of "superfluous" people possible, but also promoted the

dispositions needed to become a criminal functionary. No one under the Nazi regime, Jewish or

not, had the requisite public space to think with others, or the corresponding private space to

think independently. There were no alternatives for Eichmann because the public and private

realms had been effectively shut down. The only public identity available to him was as an SS colonel, a compliant party member, with its accompanying norms and rules; the Nazi party became the only viable community available to him. Like everyone else, Eichmann became a 'what' rather than a 'who'; he had a singular identity defined by his role within the system. As such, there was no need or space to think and to make moral judgments, to consider the perspectives of others. The Nazis used the legal system to destroy the public world, dominating and controlling the terms and conditions of living, leaving no spaces to appear, no common world in which people could gather together yet remain distinct. Action—the form of public thinking with other people that Arendt advocated in *The Human Condition*—was impossible.

Eichmann's crimes were, of course, legal under German law. Arendt (2006) contends that the Holocaust—and in particular the Eichmann trial—demonstrated "the inadequacy of the prevailing legal system and of current juridical concepts to deal with the facts of administrative massacres organized by the state apparatus" (p. 294). The facts of the case were beyond doubt well before the trial began, as was Eichmann's guilt; identifying precisely what his crimes were, however, was challenging since Eichmann acted on orders that were consistent with the relevant jurisprudence. As Arendt (2006) points out,

> he acted in accordance with the rule, examined the order issued to him for its 'manifest' legality, namely regularity; he did not have to fall back upon his 'conscience,' since he was not one of those who were unfamiliar with the laws of his country. The exact opposite was the case. (p. 293)

Most countries agree that criminal orders ought not to be followed, a mandate that fails to take into account states or countries that are manifestly criminal like Nazi Germany. The Nazis had managed to turn the law—and its ethical and political foundations—upside down. Generally,

"the law expresses only what every man's conscience would tell him" (Arendt, 2006, p. 293) and all of Eichmann's peers, those who he considered to be part of good German society, were following the law and abiding by the same prevailing norms as he was. Eichmann was well-aware of the law and had always prided himself, not only on following orders, but on being a law-abiding citizen; his conscience was clear, and perfectly aligned with the law and the moral order. The problem was that the law reflected a deformed—and firmly entrenched—moral order.

Eichmann's Evil

Ironically, Eichmann actually appealed to the prevailing Western ethical-political framework to defend his actions in Israel. Before the trial, Eichmann explained to his police interrogator that he had always aimed to abide by Kant's Categorical Imperative, that is, "the demand that by Kant I long assumed as my guiding principle" (Bernstein, 2002, p. 241). Later, when challenged by one of the judges at his trial, he replied: "I was referring to the time when I was my own master, with a will…of my own, and not when I was under the domination of a supreme force" (Silber, 2012, p. 320). Eichmann distorted the Categorical Imperative to the point that

> all that is left of Kant's spirit is the demand that a man do more than obey the law,
> that he go beyond the mere call of obedience and identify his own will with the
> principle behind the law…. In Kant's philosophy, that source was practical reason;
> in Eichmann's household use of him, it was the will of the Fuhrer. (Arendt, 2006,
> pp. 136-137)

While Arendt (2006) recognizes this deformation of Kant's thought, she largely focuses on Eichmann's ordinariness, his lack of any motives except self-advancement and the "sheer thoughtlessness… that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of all time" (pp.

287-288). The banality of Eichmann's motives, however, belied their impact—a paradox that Arendt named, but did not analyze. Indeed, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2006) is not a "theoretical treatise on the nature of evil" (p. 285), but "only one example among many to demonstrate the inadequacy of the prevailing legal system and of current juridical concepts to deal with the facts of administrative massacres organized by the state apparatus" (Arendt, 2006, p. 294).

Having named the new phenomenon, Arendt spends the remainder of her life speculating on a remedy, one that does not depend so much on the availability of the kind of public and private spaces that she described in *The Human Condition*: The exercise of thinking that might contribute to making autonomous ethical-political judgments. She explains:

> What we have demanded in [all the postwar]…trials where the defendants had committed 'legal" crimes is that human beings be capable of telling right from wrong even when all they have to guide them is their own judgment, which, moreover, happens to be completely at odds with…the unanimous opinion of all those around them. (Arendt. 2006, pp. 294-295)

Arendt's Response

In responding to the Holocaust, Arendt, despite her admiration for Kant, rejects any notion of evil that depends on individual rational autonomy. For Arendt, far more concerning than distorting or disobeying the Categorical Imperative, was the Nazi's success at making human beings superfluous. In describing her own reaction when she learned what happened in the death camps she writes:

> It was really as if an abyss had opened…. *This ought not to have happened*. And I don't mean just the number of victims. I mean the method, the fabrication of

corpses and so on—I don't need to go into that. This should not have happened.

Something happened there, to which we cannot reconcile ourselves. None of us

ever can. (Arendt, 1994, p. 14)

Arendt subsequently focused her efforts on understanding evil and marshalling resources to

confront evil when—as the Eichmann trial revealed so powerfully—the private and public spaces

needed for the ethical-political action that she described in *The Human Condition* can so

effectively be foreclosed. Ironically, in her efforts to rescue the *vita activa*, Arendt turns to the

other viable form of life pursued in ancient Athens: the *vita contemplativa*, that is, the life of the

mind.

Chapter 3: The Wind of Thinking

Thinking inevitably has a destructive undermining effect on all established criteria, values, measurements of good and evil, in short, on those customs and rules of conduct we treat of in morals and ethics. These frozen thoughts…come so handily that you can use them in your sleep; but if the wind of thinking…has shaken you from your sleep and made you fully awake and alive, then you will see that you have nothing in your grasp but perplexities, and the best we can do with them is share them with each other. (Arendt, 1978a, p. 175)

The result of understanding is meaning, which we originate in the very process of living insofar as we try to reconcile ourselves to what we do and what we suffer. (Arendt, 1953, p. 378)

As human beings we organize our experience with the aim of making sense of our lives and living well with other people; moreover, living well with others requires the ability to know what counts as good or right action. To mediate the inherent complexity, we often attempt to codify what we ought to do by developing ethical standards, laws and rules which appeal to our need for organization and predictability. We rely on rules to maintain order, structure, and safety in order to live alongside one another in complex communities, trusting that our standards will ensure good decisions. Indeed, we could not live together without having some degree of agreed upon practices and rules—both overt and tacit—to govern how we co-exist day-to-day. However, rules can fall short and right action can be difficult to determine. As I faced the

responsibility of delivering penalties for the girls' drug behaviour and started looking at their individual circumstances, deciding the 'right' course of action proved challenging; I found little clarity, answers were elusive, and any surety dissipated. Had I looked only at the facts, consequences would have been evident, but once particulars and individuals were considered, I was left to rely on my own imperfect judgment, wondering about the many ways established policy might fail these girls.

Following rules and complying with expectations is important in maintaining structure and order, but it makes '*thinking* what we do' dangerously unnecessary. With the collapse of the need to think, as Eichmann demonstrated, we face critical and potentially tragic outcomes as morality is too easily turned on its head; in consequence our guiding practices, policies, and precepts need to be continually questioned so that we do not become enclosed in our understanding of the world, too dependent on singular, frames. The Holocaust offers a limit example of the frailty of codified ideals and the dangers of conformity and compliance, most obviously the Nazi reversal of the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' to "Thou shalt kill.' How do we come to forfeit our responsibility to think for ourselves in favour of conformity and obedience? For Arendt, the forfeiture is connected to an inability to think. She admits that thinking itself does not guarantee good or right action, but she does suggest that it may prevent evil doing.

If there is any possibility that independent thinking might act as a check on evil, we must demand it from every sane human being. "That horrendous evil can be done by a banal conformist raises up thinking, fragile and of breathtakingly slight effect, as infinite in value" (Deutscher, 2007, p. 22). Arendt recognized the complexity inherent in ethical action, the limitations and fallibility in judging right and wrong, good and evil, and yet she turned to

thinking in all its fragility as a way to resist evil-doing. She understood that most of us, most of the time, behave automatically, following established patterns, creating measures of predictability in our lives. Our systematized lives can become so comfortable that we live rather blindly, as if asleep, failing to question how we organize our experience. When everything we do is based on established rules or policies, we look outside of ourselves for direction, neglecting our responsibility to question the world. Most of the time, this somnambulistic existence is sufficient, but there are times when complacency and conformity prove inadequate—and sometimes catastrophic.

Eichmann, for example, lost the world and any sense of his place in it among other human beings: his perspective was restricted to the Nazi created reality that guided his behaviour. For many of us, it is only when established criteria, norms and rules become inadequate for making sense of the world—when our givens are shaken and what had previously seemed beyond question no longer makes sense, when we find ourselves 'in irons' and unable to maneuver as before—that we begin to reimagine or create new ways of understanding, or like Eichmann, we close our eyes and retreat into blind delusion. Any collapse of our taken for granted ideals sets us adrift until and unless, we are able to adjust the sails of our understanding so that we might once again be at home in the world. Only when we intentionally challenge the limited perspectives we have developed, the closed ways we see the world, and the "reality" we accept and assume, can we see differently and in new ways. The inability to 'see' and to think beyond apparent givens troubled Arendt deeply and inspired her speculations around thinking and the life of the mind. She hoped thinking might guard against the self-certainty, complacency and moral blindness she witnessed in Eichmann.

An inability to think, Arendt contends, is somehow connected to a loss of the conditions that make action and freedom possible—plurality and natality, public and private space—as evidenced in totalitarian states. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt was concerned with recovering and reimagining these conditions, but the Eichmann trial exposed their fragility and their vulnerability to the worldlessness precipitated by new forms of totalitarianism. In *The Life of the Mind* Arendt turns to the mental faculties of thinking, willing, and judging as possible bulwarks against worldlessness and begins to reimagine the relationship between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. A meaningful and worthwhile life depends upon an active, balanced, and healthy interior life of the mind. Conversely, Arendt recognized that a "world devoid of thinking, willing and judging would…[be] characterized...by 'thoughtlessness' and inhabited by automatons such as Eichmann, who lacked freedom of will and any capacity for independent judgment" (Nixon, 2015, p. 169).

In the unfinished *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt examines the faculties individually, a strategy similar to the one she used in *The Human Condition* with labour, work, and action, examining each faculty in order to understand it while insisting on the relatedness and interdependence of the faculties. "Thinking, willing and judging are all autonomous, both in the sense that they follow only the rules inherent in their activities and in the sense that they are not all derived from some single source" (Young-Bruehl, 1994, p. 338). Thinking involves questioning taken-for-granted assumptions including what is true, good, worthwhile and moral; willing entails accepting the responsibility to exercise our freedom to construct meaning in our lives; judging requires the construction of careful appraisals of what we know and what we should do. In "Thinking" Arendt is not a friend to her readers; she was not interested in generating a comprehensive or coherent theory or a system that would contain and categorize her

ideas, nor was she concerned with her audience's response. "The motive behind her work was her own desire to understand, and writing was part of the process of understanding" (Canovan, 1995, p. 2); it was not uncommon for Arendt to veer off on 'thought trains' as she wrote.

All thought, Arendt believed, arises from living experiences and is tied to it. "[A]lthough thinking soars away from the incident that sets it off, it remains bound to its source, orbiting in a circle around it" (Canovan, 1995, p.274). As such, her thinking spreads out in 'thought-trains' from the experiences of her life. "These 'thought-trains,' provoked by incidents of living experience, crisscross and interweave. Sometimes they reinforce each other. But sometimes they also clash with one another, and cannot be easily reconciled" (Bernstein, 2008, p. 65). Many have grappled with Arendt's inconsistencies and though they may prove frustrating, her work should not be dismissed because of them. Kateb (2010) for example, identifies several types of thinking that are at stake in Arendt's work: thinking as confirmation of human existence; thinking as a way to understand the perspective and standpoints of others; thinking as a way to create meaningful systems of knowledge; and thinking a way to destroy, deconstruct, or disturb existing knowledge systems. Here I divide Arendtian thinking into two over-arching approaches derived from Socrates and Kant respectively: thinking as wondering and thinking as searching for meaning.

Arendt believed that facing facts was essential to confronting reality, a process which involved "*re*sensitizing, becoming more open and more responsive to the world, including the most difficult realities of a tragic century" (Nelson, 2006, p. 100). Being attentive to and cognizant of reality involves not only organizing experience in order to generate knowledge and to explain the world, but also challenging that knowledge in order to better and more thoroughly understand the world of plural appearances and plural people. As we confront reality and our

experience in the world with openness we can hope to find meaning and freedom, though never easily or without challenges. Arendt's dedication to facts and reality resulted in a willingness to be altered, to renew understanding, and to accept unpredictability. Like Penelope and the spider, Arendt was willing to reweave and to rethink based on experience as it was factually given, her own unique perspective, and the reality of the day.

> Spinning her web, the spider is of necessity realistic, anchoring her threads to the world as it is given. But in spite of the random conformations of twigs and stones which determine the outer boundaries of her web, its form is of her own design, and the closer to the centre one looks, the less it reflects its surroundings. As we investigate Arendt's work, we shall find in its intricate thought trains a continual tension between her profound commitment to political realism and the withdrawal from the world into the centre of her own web that (as she was so well aware) was the prerequisite for the life of the mind. (Canovan, 1995, p. 12)

The political relevance of thinking was Arendt's focus and her hope for a healthy, well-functioning political realm. If we can pick up a thread or follow a thought-train that might help us regain, understand, and preserve plurality, we owe it to ourselves and to the many others with whom we share our world, to do so. Embarking on this journey begins with revisiting our generally accepted understanding of what it means to think.

Thinking as Wondering

Every act of creation is first an act of destruction.

—Picasso

When Arendt speaks of thinking she is talking about a particular kind of thinking, far-removed and different than the idea of thinking generally accepted and used. The Oxford English

Dictionary defines thinking as the process of considering or reasoning about something; using thought or rational judgment, indicating that for the most part, we tend to understand thinking as revealing knowledge or truth, existing within a means/ends framework where "our desire to know…can be fulfilled when it reaches its prescribed goal" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 62). Thinking is about finding out, discovering, and asking questions to which there are potential answers: "The questions raised by the desire to know are in principle all answerable by common sense experience and common-sense reasoning" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 58). Most of our pursuits—academic, economic, scientific, work and daily living—are founded in this type of means/ends thinking. Thinking does play "an enormous role in scientific enterprise, but it is the role of a means to [the end of] knowledge which…belongs to the world of appearances" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 54). Knowledge and truth are produced based on evidence we glean through our senses, that is, what we can know by means of sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. "Cognition, whose highest criterion is truth, derives that criterion from the world of appearances in which we take our bearings through sense perceptions, whose testimony is self-evident, that is, unshakeable by argument and replaceable only by other evidence" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 57). In other words, our senses (supported by our intellect) guide what we know and what we accept as true.

While our senses allow us to know the world, we rely on language to share our experiences, check our perception, and reach common understandings about what is and how we might live well together with others. We use language to label or name the various objects and ideas that we agree constitute our space, creating structure, security, and predictability in knowing the world. Language links us to others and to our shared understanding of the world, but it is imprecise and open to (mis)interpretation. Because we have developed categories of understanding, we are usually able to link our particular experiences within those general

categories. A simple example: If I mention that I am writing at my desk, you know what I mean and immediately an image of a person writing at a desk emerges; it makes sense to you even though I have not offered details about the white desk with two cupboards and one drawer, positioned under the window with a view of the mountains, the purple velvet chair, or the old silver laptop.

We know our world through categories, theories, and concepts that we have constructed in language based on our shared sensory experience. When we encounter a particular situation that does not fit into an existing category, we search for a way to make it fit, construct a new category, or dismiss the situation altogether because we cannot make sense of it. While language can communicate our unique perspectives, when those perspectives lack common sense, communication fails and language loses its relevance, e.g., when what I perceive does not match what you perceive we risk not reaching an understanding. Totalitarian governments, businesses, social media, and advertisers are especially skilled at controlling the messages they communicate to affect what and how people think, that is, their *reality*. When people hear or see something often enough without hearing alternatives, they can begin to believe it is true—which makes ideologies so powerful: "As instruments of total explanation, ideologies emancipate their believers from experience by violently reducing reality to an 'inner logic' at work behind multifarious appearances" (Villa, 1999, p. 92). Once a premise is established "the tyranny of logicality prevents ideological thinking from ever being disturbed by experience or instructed by reality" (Villa, 1999, p. 92). We fail to see the error or deception at play in ideology because it seems to be beyond question, it seems "proven". We forget that *we* have *created* our ideologies.

All disciplines that seek truth and knowledge, and especially modern science, exist in the realm of common sense and are subject to "corrigible error and deception" (Arendt, 1978a, p.

54). Generally, we accept a thing as true until new evidence is revealed and a new truth emerges. We believed the world was flat until it was proven otherwise. "Truth is what we are compelled to admit by the nature either of our senses or of our brain" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 61). We have come, in modernity, to a place of devotion to empirical and scientific processes where conclusions and ideas are accepted only when they can be proven statistically or quantitatively. "What science and the quest for knowledge are after is *irrefutable* truth, that is, propositions human beings are not free to reject" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 59) because the evidence speaks for itself. We have come to expect quantifiable, empirical evidence if we are to believe anything. We allow science, numbers, and statistics to define reality but as "a science of prediction and aggregates, statistical reality cannot represent the anomalous, which resides in the particular" (Nelson, 2006, p. 97). The primacy of empirical knowledge narrows our world and pervades our lives and our work, including schooling.

Schooling relies on governing rules and compliance, as do all organizations. Decisions about operation and instruction are made in accordance with school acts, legislation, mandated curriculum, approved resources, school board policy, school rules and expectations, and service plans based on generated evidence or data. From ministry to classroom there is alignment in philosophy and practice. "Teachers are often encouraged to be compliant laborers, delivering curriculum using best practice strategies and having their work checked by quality control testing tied to objective standards" (Coulter & Weins, 2002, p. 23). Schools are well-established institutions and those of us who work in schools recognize that there is much we accept simply because it is "how we do things" and how we have always done things.

For many years as a teacher and principal, I accepted what was given in curriculum, policy, and established practice. As noted in my story about Chris, I followed policy and did

what was expected, safeguarding process and delivering consequences. I did not question my

practice as a principal or as a teacher; I trusted (blindly and ignorantly) what was accepted and

available at the time. As a classroom teacher, I did not recognize the Eurocentric foundation of

my schooling, nor the ways it shaped me as a teacher and as a person. It was only after many

years that I realized the strength of these perceptions and how they restricted other ways of

knowing the world. Established policy and practice groomed my oblivion as I contributed to the

perpetuation of an unjust, unethical, uncritical schooling system that has failed to honour,

recognize, and respect ways of knowing that are other than Eurocentric. Most troubling to me is

that I had no idea how much I did not know. I did not understand the depth of my ignorance.

> We are what we know. We are, however, also what we do not know. If what we
>
> know about ourselves—our history, our culture, our national identity—is deformed
>
> by absences, denials, and incompleteness then our identity—both as individuals
>
> and as [Canadians]—is fragmented. (Davis, 2010, p. 384)

If education is about living well in the world with others, about developing the ability to

challenge assumptions, about recognizing what we know and what we do not, we need to find

ways to see beyond what appears to be given. If the "task of education is to turn around the 'eye

of the soul' so that undeceived, one is opened to" (Dunne, 2000, p. 27) the new and moved

beyond complacent self-certainty, we need to question the very structures of our schools. We

need to recognize how thoroughly a focus on ends and answers, knowledge and truth, roots and

controls so much of what we do. Arendt encourages us to move beyond those firmly knotted

certainties and consider a thinking that has no end and offers no answers, a thinking that is like

the susurrations of the wind, that can be felt, but can never be seen, a thinking that cannot ever be

quantified or measured, a thinking that can destroy and unsettle, a thinking that will undo its own creations, a thinking that confronts reality.

The Storm of Thought

Thinking's power, its ability to generate meaning, lies in its destructive capacity (Dunne, 2000), its ability to erect obstacles (Berkowitz, 2010), and free us from established rules (Deutscher, 2007); it is this capacity that Arendt respects and values. Through its destruction, thinking "prepares for judgment by purging us of 'fixed habits of thought', 'ossified rules and standards' and 'conventional…codes of expression'; it creates an 'open space of moral or aesthetic discrimination and discernment'" (Fine, 2008, p. 160), it "opens up space that enables us to appreciate the novelty of a particular event" (Villa, 1999, p. 89), it allows us to see new possibilities, and it loosens the grip of the universal over the particular (D'Entreves, 2000, Beiner, 1982).

Wondering, or challenging what seems to be, requires making space for the new. The creation of space in the midst of our busy day-to-day lives needs to be intentional and artists are among the few who make their work out of deliberately re-examining and manipulating our constructions of the world. They devote themselves to looking at the world from alternate, other-than-accepted and expected perspectives, as they strive to startle and unsettle us into new ways of seeing and understanding, disturbing our established biases and perceptions. Picasso claimed that, "every act of creation is first an act of destruction". The ability of art to challenge the world of appearance, to purge us of fixed habits of thought, to dissolve, to dismantle, to create doubt, to oppose ideology, to undo systems, and to expose errors, is the same destructive power Arendt recognizes in thinking. Art is not the only vehicle for understanding the world in new ways, but it is often the aim of art to do so. Artists, using language, images, sound, smell, movement, and

texture deliberately disrupt our comfort, vision, and understanding of the world, as they push us to see and to understand in new ways. "Aesthetic experience engages our perception, awakening not only our curiosity but also a sense of pleasure or displeasure, attraction or horror. Works of art expose us to complex experiences by rupturing the veil of our measuring grid" (Sjoholm, 2015, p. 94). Artists leave us feeling unsure of what seemed beyond doubt and we begin to think in a destructive way that allows us to re-conceive a concept, idea, or belief, what Knott (2011) calls "unlearning, the work of clearing away and reimagining" (p. 63). Arendt "emphasized what it means to see differently, to form a different picture" (Zerilli, 2005, p. 168), that we might continually create space for the new and resist complacency.

Schools, perhaps more than any other institution, shape and perpetuate our understanding of the world, holding fast to what is prescribed, demanding conformity and compliance, while at the same time professing aims of critical and creative thinking and democratic citizenship. In reality, there is little space or encouragement for the kind of destructive thinking Arendt suggests is required in a plural, democratic world. Instead schools reward answers and the achievement of predetermined ends and outcomes, focusing on accountability and efficient operation. "Accountability is an apolitical and antidemocratic strategy that redefines all significant relationships in economic terms and hence conceives of them as formal rather than substantial relationships" (Biesta, 2004, p. 241), which further alienates the possibility of plural ideas and opinions. When ends and means remain the focus in schools, education is marginalized and the ideals of schooling rule. Clearly, Arendt's thinking does not fit well with the organizational efficiency of our schools where what can be measured is valued. Creativity, like critical thinking, often exists within established parameters. The bureaucracy of schooling, through curriculum, policy, teacher training, and administration, communicates what is important in a particular

society, controls the discussion, and leaves little space for children (or adults for that matter) to contribute to or disagree with that discussion.

Educators need to be aware of the foreclosure of thinking that schools sustain and remember that we created our schools. Rather than accept "educational" discourse as given, we need to step back and more accurately and thoroughly assess our system. We need to know its espoused and actual purpose (often quite different), questioning whose stories are included and whose are not, who garners power and who is marginalized, whose voices are heard and whose are silenced. We need to consider "how power shapes what any true story could possibly be" (Lear, 2006, p. 31) and re-consider what stories we are telling in schools and why we are telling them. Without space for thinking and dialogue, we cannot know that we do not know. We shut down all space for appearing to each other in our plurality and teach children that conformity and compliance are rewarded. When faced with Chris' indiscretion, I was unable to question or consider alternatives because there was no space to do so—teachers and principals were expected to do things in a certain way and I did. The consequence of that doing was a loss of space to appear. Each of the individual human beings who were part of that story became absorbed by established process, lost in policy and practice.

Thinking's 'destructive and undermining effect,' its ability to disorient and disturb so that 'unlearning' might happen, is necessarily relevant to education. If we hope for our schools to be educational, we need to find space for thinking's destruction. The artistic process, as well as objects of art, challenges appearances, encourages rethinking givens, and clears space for creation while stimulating individuality and freedom. Even though fine arts in schools, as in society, are increasingly considered supplemental and on the margins, of less importance than academics and athletics, something to be done after "real" learning is managed, they are still part

of most curricula. The margin of the arts "is the place for those feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn't have a place for and mostly seems to suppress…. With the arts, people can make space for themselves and fill it with intimations of freedom and presences" (Donoghue, 1983, p. 129). By protecting fine arts, we protect artistic thinking and processes, knowing that "the shocks of awareness to which the arts give rise leave us (*should* leave us) less immersed in the everyday and more impelled to wonder and to question" (Greene, 1995, p. 135). The arts offer much more than an indulgence for our free time. The arts and artistic thinking are essential to freedom and renewal, creating opportunities for us to use our freedom.

> [T]he creative act aims at a total renewal of the world. Each painting, each book, is a recovery of the totality of being. Each of them presents this totality to the freedom of the spectator. For this is quite the final goal of art: to recover this world by giving it to be seen as it is, but as if it had its source in human freedom. (Sartre, 2000, p. 57)

Art is integral to the exercise of autonomy, reflecting our individual perceptions and judgments as they fit into a plural world. Teaching done well encourages artistic-looking and thinking, and demands awareness beyond the practice of instruction, allowing us to create space for the new. "To be an artist is perpetually to negotiate the boundary that separates aesthetic from mundane practice" (Grumet, 1988, p. 79), questioning and searching for new possibilities, refreshing perspectives, and renewing our vision. Artistic thinking (and teaching) is about process and is much broader than the conventional conception of art as limited to the fine arts or its creations.

For Arendt, Socrates served as an ideal thinker and teacher, comparable to artists in his desire to help people 'unlearn', divesting them of opinions in which they felt sure and confident,

pushing them to think beyond established beliefs and disrupting their givens. He spent his days in dialogue with others, understanding that "[t]hinking enables us to examine each situation we encounter. It carries with it the dangerous yet essential side effect of destroying the opinions we hold about it" (Meade, 1996, p. 124). Without fail, Socrates left his companions with questions and uncertainty, slowing them down to stop and think. He sought to unfreeze opinions and destroy assumptions through questioning and in doing so he hoped to clear space for new ideas and new understanding. Three metaphors describe the effect Socrates had on those with whom he engaged in conversation: the gadfly who was able to rouse people from their sleep, the midwife who delivered people of opinions and prejudices that they sometimes did not even realize they held, and the electric ray who paralyzed, forcing people to stop and think (Arendt, 1978a, pp. 172-173).

Embracing thinking's circularity and lack of an end proved challenging for Socrates' colleagues; it seemed a pointless waste of time. How could anything relevant come from such aporetic thinking? For Socrates the space of appearance was worth dying for because it is in this space that we create our identity, share ideas and opinions, and test our understanding of the world and of our reality. It is in the space of appearance that we come to know ourselves and to know others, by our actions, by the words we speak, by what we do and how we act. Socrates was willing to "lay down his life…simply for the right to go about examining the opinions of other people, thinking about them and asking his interlocutors to do the same" (Arendt, 1978a, p.168). Arendt admired Socrates' aporetic style, his insistence on being present in the public world, and thinking *with* others, demonstrating the relevance philosophy (contemplation) held for political life.

Both Socrates and Arendt have taught us that thinking offers resistance to becoming enclosed within ideologies, perspectives, and worldviews, allowing us to see things as other than they seem, never accepting that "it's just the way it is", or forgetting that we *create* our world and have a responsibility to question our creations. I failed to recognize my responsibility to think about Chris, his family, and the consequences I imposed. I did not think what I was doing, but rather accepted what was given as an appropriate process to follow. Arendt's "work is directed at making sense of those who, because they act, are too busy to think, or who are enslaved to fictions and cannot think and judge, or who in the mass are prone to incuriosity" (Kateb, 2010, p. 34). I was 'enslaved' to the fictions of schooling's practices and did not question or challenge them. Socrates and Arendt understood that we create our world together through conversation, thinking, listening, and sharing ideas, all absent from Chris' story. They understood that thinking is essential to a healthy public realm, but we cannot rely on thinking for answers about how we ought to be and act, or for what counts as good or evil.

> If Kant is right and the faculty of thought has a 'natural aversion' against accepting its own results as 'solid axioms,' then we cannot expect any moral propositions or commandments, no final code of conduct, from the thinking activity, least of all a new and now allegedly final definition of what is good and what is evil. (Arendt, 1971, p. 425)

Despite thinking's fragility and lack of result, Arendt recognized the possibility of inner plurality that might shore up plurality in the world and prepare us to enter into and act in public where we are known by our words and actions, by the ways we appear to others. Because, under conditions of modernity, the *vita activa* and the public world have been diminished, lost to the point that plurality is threatened, recovering hope for plurality in any iteration seemed redemptive.

"Socratic thinking, in its encounter with the difference 'inherent' *within* identity, discovers a duality that is analogous to, that 'points to,' the plurality of the outer world that is experienced by common sense and with which understanding attempts to come to terms" (McGowan, 1998, p. 118). Preparing to appear in public requires solitude and the space to engage in dialogue with self. Socrates recognized the important connection between inner plurality and the plurality of the public realm. "Indeed, it is solitude that nurtures and fosters thoughtfulness and thus prepares individuals for the possibility of political action" (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 239). Without space to think, we cannot possibly *know* what we think and will have nothing thoughtful to share with others. Thinking in solitude allows us to generate meaning in our lives, beyond knowledge and truth, meaning that arises from our experiences in a plural world. To better understand the difference between thinking as a way to challenge appearances and thinking that searches for meaning and allows us to exercise our freedom, Arendt turns to Kant.

Thinking as Searching for Meaning

All thought arises out of experience, but no experience yields any meaning or even coherence without undergoing the operations of imagining and thinking. (Arendt, 1978a, p. 87)

Following Socrates, Arendtian thinking allows for the challenging of appearances, questioning the world we have created, that is, looking at a plural world in other than accepted, established ways, but Arendtian thinking also provides a way to exercise human freedom, to acknowledge the contingency of our lives and to embrace a search for meaning, to live wide-awake to possibility, and resist complacent self-certainty. Arendt bases this second conception of thinking on Kant's distinction between two related and sometimes overlapping concepts, *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. Kant's *Verstand* is the faculty of the mind that organizes sensory

perception into concepts using logical rules that allow humans to generate and justify knowledge claims in a spatiotemporal world and is usually translated as the faculty of "understanding" (Arendt, however, translates *Verstand* as the "intellect"). *Vernunft*, in contrast, is a broad conception of reason that allows humans to develop a coherent and systematic conception of the natural world based on the necessarily incomplete resources provided by *Verstand*: Since our knowledge of the natural world will always be imperfect, we must therefore project totality. The goal of *Vernunft* is unity and Kant explains that "[w]e simply have to presuppose the systematic unity of nature as objectively valid and necessary (A 651/B 679). *Vernunft* can be used to posit a "systematic unity" which is a "projected unity" (A 647/B 675). Objective truth, for Kant, is never absolute truth, but always our *best estimate* subject to the reason of others. Hence Kant's stress on the fallibility of human judgment—including our judgments about the statues or validity of knowledge claims—is a reminder not to hold onto our knowledge claims too tightly—and the need to take responsibility for the exercise of our judgment.

Arendtian thinking in this second sense acknowledges the uncertainty and contingency of human existence and therefore does not aim to discover knowledge or truth but rather to create meaning and significance. Arendt turns to the *process* of thinking (rather than its ends), an activity that is withdrawn from and never appears in the world, occurring silently within, and leaving nothing tangible behind. Arendt (1978a) explains: "the quest for meaning produces no end result that will survive the activity, that will make sense after the activity has come to its end" (p. 123). Such thinking offers the opportunity to be awake to our freedom and to construct meaning in our lives in and across various dimensions of human experience. However, it is a thinking far removed from our general conception which is connected to knowing and cognition,

comparable to Kant's *Verstand.* Arendt hoped to disrupt this rarely challenged construction of thinking in order to extend and expand our understanding.

> Although thinking must be employed in the attempt to know, a division between truth and meaning goes hand in hand with knowing and thinking. Truth is what can be known; what has meaning is what can be thought. Truth can be attained; it is a matter of thought. Questions of meaning have responses but not definitive answers. Thinking about meaning has no result beyond its own production.
> (Deutscher, 2007. p. 17)

Thinking, Arendt claims, can be understood as "the quest for meaning, for the sense and significance of our experience of belonging in the world" (Gray, 1977, p. 49), a world of plural appearances and plural people, a world that is often not easy to understand. Thinking (as *Vernunft*) does not seek truth or knowledge and "does not ask what something is or whether it exists at all…*but what it means for it to be*" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 57). Thinking's emphasis on meaning and significance keeps it outside of the means/ends framework, dealing instead with ideas, concepts, and questions that "are all unanswerable by common sense and the refinement of it we call science" (Arendt, 1978a, pp. 58-9). While science can explain the world, how things work, and what they are, determining what is worthwhile knowing cannot be scientific (Arendt, 1978a, p. 59); it is a values question that needs to be decided and debated together with other people. In contrast, what we understand as knowledge or truth (*Verstand*) is evidence-based and exists within a means/ends framework in the world of appearance. "Cognition, whose highest criterion is truth, derives that criterion from the world of appearances in which we take our bearings through sense perceptions, whose testimony is self-evident, that is, unshakeable by argument and replaceable only by other evidence" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 57).

While thinking is distinct and can (and must) be distinguished from knowing, there is an inseparable connection and reciprocity. Thinking

> is the a priori condition of the intellect and of cognition; it is because [thinking] and [knowing] are so connected, despite utter difference in mood and purpose, that the philosophers have always been tempted to accept the criterion of truth…as applicable to their own rather extraordinary business as well. (Arendt, 1978a, p. 62)

However, "[t]o expect truth to come from thinking signifies that we mistake the need to think with the urge to know. Thinking can and must be employed in the attempt to know, but in the exercise of this function it is never itself (Arendt, 1978a, p. 61). We need to think in order to discover knowledge and truth (*Verstand*), but the *process*, the *activity* of thinking is quite different than any potential result. The reason we think, Arendt argues, is to "satisfy a hunger for sense and significance" (Gray, 1977, p. 52), that is, to find meaning (*Vernunft*). Thinking finds its purpose in its own ceaseless activity; it is "occupied with nothing but itself" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 65).

> Just as there can be no answer to the question, 'why do we live?' so there can be no answer to the question, 'why do we think?' The need to think is as much a part of human life as the need to breathe. This is why 'to think and to be fully alive are the same'; or to put the matter the other way, 'a life without thinking is not merely meaningless; it is not fully alive. Unthinking men are like sleepwalkers.
> (Yarbrough & Stern, 1981, p. 333)

Without thinking, Arendt would argue, there is no life, or at least not a life truly lived or worth living. It is engaging in the activity of thinking that gives life meaning.

The distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, while familiar to Arendt (she first read *The Critique of Pure Reason* when she was sixteen), is less known now, as is Kant's work in general, although ironically, it provides the background for much of Western philosophy. It seems that Arendt takes for granted that those reading her work are as well read as she, able to keep up with her often unusual use of language (she knew six languages, including Greek and Latin), allusions, and literary and academic references. In her determination to articulate and clarify ideas, she often creates confusion and complexity. For instance, as she explains the difference between truth (constructions that appear in the world) and thinking (a process that does not appear in the world), Arendt ends up using thinking in multiple ways, generating some perplexity for readers. Bernstein (2000) suggests that the very nature of the thinking activity— restless and resultless—breeds challenges. "If there is an inherent restlessness in the thinking activity itself, if the quest for meaning is an endless task, then Arendt's legacy consists of making *us* acutely aware of those perplexities and aporias which she did not resolve" (p. 291). Arendt does not offer any insight or provide us with any justification for the various meanings she has for thinking: "The veil that she weaves and reweaves has many loose threads" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 283). Though we cannot follow the trains of her innermost thinking, we can seek pearls of insight from the sources she turned to, and the thought-trains she followed and explored, imperfect and partial as they may be. The thought-train quest may provoke perplexity, but if we are willing to loosen our grip on knowing we might discover new meanings, perspectives, and understandings.

Thinking, for Arendt, is essential to living a responsible, wide-awake life. Without thinking, life becomes automatic and

> [i]f individuals act automatically or conventionally, if they do only what is
>
> expected of them (or because they feel they have no right to speak for themselves),
>
> if they do only what they are told to do, they are not living moral lives. (Greene,
>
> 1978, p. 49)

The predictable, repetitive behaviour of our lives can contribute to the neglect of thinking, creating a sense of meaninglessness that breeds moral blindness, complacency, and an inability to see others. We become so focused on doing, achieving, and succeeding, that we fail to recognize the many ways we live mechanically, identifying others as means to ends rather than as unique, independent individuals. When faced with the situation with the girls I began to question the recommended outcomes given in policy and practice. I began to realize that those answers might not be ideal, that perhaps there was no "right" consequence, but rather only possibilities of what *might* be right in that particular circumstance, revealing moral responsibility and the need to be awake that is inherent in this type of thinking. Somehow, I found space for the solitude that was necessary to think what I was doing. Arendt explores the inherent dangers and problems of a means/ends, behaviour-driven existence while surfacing the need and importance of thinking, "an unending activity that deals with coming to terms with and reconciling ourselves to reality, and trying to be at home in the world" (Beiner, 1982, p. 95). It is our moral and political responsibility to be attentive and questioning, to live wide-awake, to think and re-think, to question what is, to dissolve and destroy what seems certain and inalienable. As we do so, we test various actions, respecting and maintaining our capacity for freedom and autonomy, deciding what we ought to do, what is worthwhile and meaningful. "The winds themselves are invisible, yet what they do is manifest to us and we somehow feel their approach" (Arendt, 1971,

p. 433); the winds of thinking keep us awake and fully alive, able to engage thoughtfully and critically with others—and with ourselves.

Two-in-one Dialogue

I am the solitude that asks and promises nothing.

—W. H. Auden, "In Praise of Limestone"

Thinking requires temporary withdrawal into solitude, away from the world, that we might engage in uninterrupted dialogue with self (the two-in-one) in order to find meaning in our lives and to stir conscience. Two attributes—inner plurality and the ability to incite conscience—provide thinking the potential ethical-political relevance that is so important to Arendt: When we withdraw we allow ourselves opportunity to internally debate perspectives and possibilities to prepare ourselves for the larger public and we decide whether we can remain friends with our self. Our ability to enter into dialogue with ourselves, Arendt suggests, also enables the exercise of conscience, the capacity to recognize right and wrong, to act thoughtfully and independently.

Inner plurality parallels plurality in and of the world, revealing potential political relevance. When we engage in the two-in-one dialogue of solitude, we are able to debate issues and ideas and consider alternate viewpoints internally. "To be in solitude means to be with one's self, and thinking, therefore, though it may be the most solitary of all activities, is never altogether without a partner and without company" (Arendt, 1958, p. 76); it is never lonely.

> Thinking helps me 'keep myself company,' which means that I maintain my bond
> of friendship with the common sense that I share and that insinuates itself in
> dialogue in the form of a 'self' opposed to a 'thinking ego.' Loneliness is
> experienced only when the dialogue of the two-in-one comes to an end (Kristeva,
> 2001, p.198)

and we return to a world lived amongst others. Inner plurality allows me to talk with and to know myself.

Socrates recognized the power of solitude in preparing for public appearance. Engaging in two-in-one dialogue developed the inner plurality that prepared him to question and to test ideas in public. The relationship he fostered with self could withstand challenge and controversy; he could question his own understanding and speculate about why he believed as and what he did. The two-in-one requires that the two have a relationship that made difficult conversations safe. "To Socrates, the duality of the two-in-one meant no more than that if you want to think, you must see to it that the two who carry on the dialogue be in good shape, that the partners be *friends*" (Arendt, 1978a, pp. 187-188). Friendship with self allowed Socrates to enjoy the contests he put to himself as well as to enjoy the aporias he posed to others. "Thinking means only that when we 'descend' to the world of affairs, what we declare will not be thoughtlessly conformist" (Deutscher, 2007, p. 129). Being at ease in both solitude and public discussion, allowed Socrates to understand and move between inner plurality and the world of plural people and plural appearances, and to know and express his ideas thoughtfully.

The potential of conscience is the second reason Arendt finds hope in the two-in-one of thinking. Conscience arises only when we are conscious of the difference within our identity— when thinking reveals consciousness: "[C]onscience seems to be the only potential means we have for exposing (without any guarantee of success) the immorality of both codified morality and the norms of the majority" (Biesta, 2004, p. 248). Conscience, which we assume (perhaps too readily) is found in every person, can only exist within the two-in-one dialogue when the two who are in dialogue are friends. Building and sustaining any friendship requires effort and consistency. Socrates made two claims that suggest the kind of integrity required of inner

plurality if friendship is to be maintained: "It is better to be wronged than to do wrong" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 181), and:

> It would be better for me that my lyre or a chorus I directed should be out of tune
>
> and loud with discord, and that multitudes of men should disagree with me rather
>
> than that I, *being one*, should be out of harmony with myself and contradict me.
>
> (Arendt, 1978a, p. 181)

The idea that Socrates and Arendt explore is that we cannot risk being out of harmony with our self: "You always need at least two tones to produce a harmonious sound" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 183) and friendship demands congruence. Arendt explains that "The only criterion of Socratic thinking is agreement, to be consistent with oneself" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 186).

Arendt argues that conscience deters wrong-doing because it erects barriers that make it impossible for a person to live with the self, destroying inner harmony. "No matter what thought-trains the thinking ego thinks through, the self that we all are must take care not to do anything that would make it impossible for the two-in-one to be friends and live in harmony" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 191). What leads some to value and develop inner plurality and conscience while others rely on external rules and maxims to guide their behaviour? What makes some follow without question while others are 'filled with obstacles'?

> According to Arendt, the lesson of Socrates is that where thinking is absent
>
> (whether due to unquestioning commitment or everyday thoughtlessness), there
>
> can be no effective conscience, no active faculty that makes clear the simple virtue
>
> of nonparticipation in moments of widespread, but unrecognized, moral
>
> corruption. (Villa, 1999, p. 211)

We have a responsibility to exercise our inner plurality and develop conscience, as well as to foster thinking in others as Socrates modeled and encouraged. If thinking is, as Arendt and Socrates suggest, connected to morality and conscience, we need to protect the conditions that make it possible: private space for solitude, language, and plurality.

Supports for Thinking

The two forms of thinking that Arendt advocates—thinking as wondering and thinking as two-in-one dialogue in search of meaning—are largely missing from our contemporary vocabulary and would require significant supports given the conditions of worldlessness described at the end of Chapter Two. However, if our capacities to resist wrong-doing and to exercise conscience rely on thinking then recovering thinking must be a priority. At a minimum, Arendt recommends creating the possibility of safe, private places to withdraw from the world, increased attention to our language, and the nurturing of certain kinds of relationships with trusted others.

Privacy

In order to understand the world, one has to turn away from it on occasion.

—Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*

Private space requires withdrawal from the public and social world where we are always busy, active, and confronted with other people. Privacy provides space to stop ceaseless doing and activity so that we can find the solitude necessary to think. Socrates believed that private space could be created by posing questions and, like an electric ray he was able, "[t]hrough his questioning…to infect his listeners with his own perplexities, interrupting their everyday activities and paralyzing them with thought" (Villa, 1999, p. 243). The interruption Socrates created allowed his colleagues to stop and think, to remove themselves from the world of

appearance. Anytime we stop and think, the world recedes and we are left with only ourselves and our thoughts. Even amidst crowds it is possible to retreat to the extent that we become unaware of what is happening around us. Socrates identified opportunities to temporarily paralyze others that they might learn to question the "frozen thoughts" they rely on such as rules, customs, and codes. He often left people wondering and attempting to reorient themselves to the world they thought they knew.

> Hence, the paralysis of thought is two-fold: it is inherent in the *stop* and think, the interruption of all other activities, and it may have a paralyzing effect when you come out of it, no longer sure of what had seemed to you beyond doubt while you were unthinkingly engaged in whatever you were doing. If your action consisted in applying general rules of conduct to particular cases as they arise in ordinary life, then you will find yourself paralyzed because no such rules can withstand the wind of thought. (Arendt, 2003, p. 176)

Working through the unsettling effects of thinking's paralysis is difficult because we are left uncertain and insecure in understanding the world when our taken-for-granted perceptions are challenged.

Arendt (1958) suggests in *The Human Condition* that "the four walls of one's private property offer the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, from its very publicity, from being seen and heard" (p. 71). It is here, in the private space of our homes that we can reflect and think without fear of criticism or shame, where we can comfortably, freely, and safely be ourselves. The "ideal private might be understood as a sanctuary where people are hidden from view and safe from interference" (Coulter, 2002, p. 304), where people are accepted and free to develop ideas. When reflecting on the disciplinary situation I faced with the three

girls, I created space as I sat quietly in my office, uninterrupted, sipped tea and mulled over possibilities. At home later that night, I did more thinking, moving beyond and questioning the language of policy and discipline that generally guided my practice.

Private space for retreat allows us to refresh and rejuvenate ourselves as we prepare to enter the public world. Most of us have private space where we can relax, but having the physical space available to enjoy solitude does not guarantee that we will. Even in the quiet retreat of our homes there are multiple draws on our attention, distractions that can overwhelm our space and make it difficult to think in a Socratic way. We have created a world where solitude, peace, and quiet are increasingly elusive, targeted by a multitude of alternatives that encourage losing ourselves in mindless activity, escaping to Netflix, Google, Facebook, Instagram (endless social media options and apps), various online games, etc. These pursuits are certainly not bad or wrong, but they do keep us from ourselves and can contribute to feelings of loneliness and detachment as we strive to find refuge in what is essentially meaningless nothing. Our attention is successfully and consistently arrested from thinking, exacerbated by expectations that we always have activities to do and people with whom to interact. Other people and the connections we make with them are essential, but we also need private space to step back from the world as "a life spent entirely in public, in the presence of others, becomes…shallow" (Arendt, 1958, p. 71). It is only in privacy and solitude that we can develop our own ideas and independent thoughts. Without opportunity to develop depth of opinion we will never interrupt the complacent self-certainty of our life in the world amongst others; we quit questioning beyond fleeting moments of discomfort or momentary wondering. We give in to activity and doing that we have come to believe is necessary for personal and professional fulfillment, rather than

engaging in two-in-one dialogue that allows us to question givens, exercise our freedom, and generate meaning and significance.

We need to protect private space if we value thinking, freedom, and autonomy, if we hope to participate in, contribute to, and find meaning in the world. "The importance of thinking, and hence of solitude, is that thinking interrupts the oneness, certainty, and confidence that allows ideology to overwhelm thought" (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 241). Private space to think and enjoy solitude is necessary to resist conformity, to question our constructions of the world, to know our selves and our thoughts. In solitude we are able to engage in two-in-one dialogue with ourselves, questioning and thinking. It is through language in dialogue that we are able to arouse our selves and others, as Socrates' gadfly, "to thinking, to examining matters, an activity without which life…was not only not worth much, but not fully alive" (Arendt, 2003, p. 174).

Language

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

—Wittgenstein

Thinking's solitude allows us to prepare to appear in the world, to know our thoughts, develop opinions, and rehearse in preparation for sharing our perspectives with others. However, thinking is invisible, a private activity that happens within us, removed from the world and impossible for others to know. "[T]hinking does not have a real goal, and unless thinking finds its meaning in itself, it has no meaning at all" (Arendt, 1968, p. 129). Because the wind of thought leaves nothing tangible behind, thinking is potentially and practically useless. As Arendt (1978a) acknowledges, "thinking as such does society little good, much less than the thirst for knowledge, which uses thinking as an instrument for other purposes" (p. 192). However, if thinking is transformed it can be made manifest, not as it is, but as something representative. If

we want our thoughts and ideas to appear, we need language to prepare them, to link the invisible world of thinking with the visible world of appearance. "[T]hinking is rescued from inaccessibility only by language" (Deutscher, 2007, p. 7) which offers a tenuous bridge between thinking and appearing, transforming thoughts into words that we are able to communicate.

Language is a tool we have created (and continue to create) that allows us to make sense of, structure, and explain how we experience the world. We use language as our primary form of communication to profess knowledge, delineate what is agreed to be true, categorize, catalogue and define, differentiate professions, cultures, and communities, to entertain and explain; language is used for all manner of communication in our common and shared world. We rely on language not only to survive but also to enhance and enrich our lives. Over time language has evolved from being primarily concrete and literal to abstract and imaginative. The creative and productive capacity of language has allowed us to "transmit information about things that do not exist at all…to talk about entire kinds of entities that [we] have never seen, touched or smelled" (Harari, 2014, p. 24). We have constructed systems and institutions (fictions) founded on rules, procedures and laws we have created that allow us to maintain order amongst many diverse and various other people. Our ability to imagine things collectively has enabled us to "weave common myths [that] give [us] the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers" (Harari, 2014, p. 25), to live together cooperatively in community. "Any large-scale human cooperation—whether a modern state, a medieval church, an ancient city or an archaic tribe—is rooted in common myths that exist only in people's collective imagination" (Harari, 2014, p. 27). Language is a tool that we rely on to mutually manage ourselves; metaphor is a foundational device that allows us to explain, share, and realize ideas, opening space for new understanding as well as enclosing and protecting already accepted ideas.

Language shapes our thoughts. As Wittgenstein explains, "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world". We think within the confines of our language and communicate using the words we have available. It is easy to become bounded by our fictions (forgetting that we created them), taking language for granted, seeing words and language as given. While we necessarily rely on language to make sense of the world and conceptualize our experience, language can also blind us to possibility by confining us within ideology, discourse, and cultural constructs. "Ideology is the means by which human beings are stripped of the primary source of their freedom and spontaneity. They are rendered calculable and docile through their internalization of the 'logical necessity' of the...idea and its consequences" (Villa, 1999, pp. 92-93). The very structures we rely on to organize and systematize our world can overwhelm and limit us, removing us from questions and from seeing other people and situations clearly. The result is a sterility and thoughtless use of language that reflects thoughtless acts.

> Remoteness from effects, owing to a failure of imagination, indicates remoteness
>
> from the meaning of what one does and hence from the very meaning of the words
>
> one uses in speaking about what one is doing. One doesn't know what one is
>
> saying: the abstractions cut the speaker off from reality. (Kateb, 2010, pp. 39-40)

We can become so comfortable with language that we fail to think about what it means, how it shapes our perspectives and the way we see the world, fosters particular ideals and creates beliefs, controlling how and what we think in powerful ways. For example, the Nazis were purposeful about the language they used to communicate their plans for the Jewish people, speaking of relocation and the Final Solution rather than deportation and genocide. The words we choose affect the message we send and the way it is interpreted. As we change our words, we change our thinking.

We rely on metaphor almost exclusively to extend our understanding of the world by connecting what we already know or understand to something we do not, comparing dissimilar objects or ideas. The notion of language as a bridge between thinking and the world itself is a metaphor that "achieves the carrying over…the transition from one existential state, that of thinking, to another, that of being and appearance among appearances, and this can be done only by analogies" (Arendt, 1978a, p. 103). We use metaphor to create, destroy, reassure, confuse, control, to serve any number of purposes. Arendt was particularly interested in metaphor's capacity to interrupt established givens and poise us to see in alternate, sometimes uncomfortable ways, to disrupt our surety and change or open up our thinking. Metaphor, so closely connected to thinking, can "subvert our thoughtlessness and complacencies, our certainties" (Greene, 1995, p. 143) and allow us to understand otherwise; like Socrates' gadfly, metaphor can rouse us, disturbing our comfortable somnambulistic existence. "The Socratic thinker is a gadfly who stings citizens and also himself and thus arouses them from the satin sleep of conformity to the activity of thinking" (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 241). The gadfly is "a persistent irritant whose questioning and reproaches aim at preventing the citizens…from sleeping till the end of their days, from living and acting without genuine moral reflection or self-examination" (Villa, 1999, p. 243). The powerful creative and destructive capacity of metaphor is a friend to thinking, able to overturn self-certainty and call into question what seems unquestionable.

Those who use words as their medium for art, playing with language and experimenting with its effects, are like gadflies, inspiring speculation and wonder, opening us up to alternative ways of seeing the world.

Literature destabilizes thought by breaking open language and smuggling in sound, rhythm, and image—an invasion of aesthetics. …poetry can emancipate itself from

the standard definitions of words, enabling a breakthrough to new meaning, which

can then develop *after the fact*—different at each new reading. (Knott, 2011, p. 73)

Through literature we experience varied and other perspectives and voices, realities different

than our own that can reveal new insights with each reading and each reader. Writers use

language to sustain and extend discourses, ideologies and theories, as well as to interrupt them.

The pen has the power to create, transforming the writer's thoughts and imaginings. As

Shakespeare writes:

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

— A Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i

The writer's words enter the world in anticipation of a reader, someone who will interact with

the text and begin a dialogue, bringing reader and writer together. As the writer's ideas are

interpreted by the reader they will reinforce reality and sustain a sense of comfort or force the

reader to step back in wonder as reality is overturned and unsettled. While the writer may have a

particular intent or message in mind, once her words become print, their interpretation lies at the

mercy of the reader.

Two-in-Two Dialogue

Thinking, and the language that fuels it, anticipates communication. Without someone

with whom to share our ideas, thinking is nothing; it comes to nothing. "Part of the meaning of

thinking, as of life itself, lies in the disclosures that association with other minds, living and

dead, affords us" (Gray, 1977, p. 57). When we are able to communicate with others, sharing

ideas, opinions, and thoughts, we disclose who we are and discover who others are. Speech and language facilitate communication, allowing us to distinguish our selves from others, to confirm and criticize ideas and develop perspectives, to generate meaning. Without others our thoughts and ideas are meaningless, but moving directly from inner dialogue to public debate is challenging and risky.

Fortunately, friendship offers private publics, spaces of transition that are based on trust, care, and commitment. Amongst friends that we can test opinions and beliefs, we can speculate and wonder, listen and consider possibilities without fear of recrimination or ridicule. Within the "private public" of friendship we find space to appear and safety in developing an understanding the common world. "We move between the two-in-one and the two-in-two as we develop our sense of selfhood, thereby gaining on the way the capabilities necessary to operate discursively and thoughtfully within and across a wide range of contexts" (Nixon, 2015, p. 193). Friendship creates space "between the public and the private, incorporating elements of both but in different combinations with different friends: robust argumentation and the sharing of intimacies; working together and holidaying together; cooking for others and being entertained" (Nixon, 2015, p. 192). Amongst friends we revel in a sort of 'oases' where we are free to relax, recover, and be ourselves, openly expressing ideas and exploring the pressures and demands of a less caring and impersonal public world where we necessarily confront and negotiate multiple perspectives. The private public of friendship allows us to indulge in emotion and feeling, and recognize our biases and prejudices, which must be set aside when we enter the public realm.

Critical dialogue with friends allows us to share ideas we are developing or thinking through and to have these ideas questioned and challenged, revealing inadequate, misplaced, or false understandings without (usually) damaging the relationship. "Socratic dialectic was a

'talking something through with somebody,' a conversation among friends which aimed at elucidating the truth of an individual's *doxa* or perspective on the world" (Villa, 1999, p. 244). In this way, a friend acts as midwife, "whose dissolution of the prejudices and prejudgments of his [friends] helps them toward the revelation of their own thoughts" (Villa, 1999, p. 243). Friends are often able to deliver us of ideas we did not realize we had, pursue difficult questions, or lead us to re-examine what we too easily accept, helping us to clarify and improve our opinions. "In this way, [we] become aware of the truth *in* [our] opinion" (Villa, 1999, p. 96). The plurality implicit among friends allows for different perspectives on the world and creates space for opinions to develop and grow.

> The process of 'talking things over' and of 'give and take'—of seeking win-win outcomes over win-lose outcomes—is, as [Arendt] saw it, indispensable to both the sustainability of the democratic state and the continuity of the state of friendship. (Nixon, 2015, p. 37)

Socratic dialectic amongst friends makes us more aware of the world's richness and variety and establishes conversational partners, "friends who gain increased appreciation of what they have in common as they talk things through outside the press of daily business" (Villa, 1999, p. 208). We need only have a few friends to bring variety and perspective to our lives.

Most of us develop friendships that serve different purposes, each helping us to cultivate and understand ourselves and our opinions in various ways. "Opinion formation is not a private activity performed by a solitary thinker. Opinions can only be tested and enlarged when there is a genuine encounter with different opinions" (Bernstein, 1986, p. 228). The sanctuary of friendship offers a way to protect plurality, beyond the inner plurality of the two-in-one, and reflects on a much smaller scale, the plurality of the common world. In this way, friendship is an essential

condition of politics—of safeguarding plurality in the common world. "Each friend recognizes and respects the equality and distinctiveness in the other—friendship becomes a microcosm of a pluralistic world based on the equal worth of each unique individual" (Nixon, 2015, p. 28). Friendship is the space where we begin to recognize all that is 'between us' and the complexity of the world we share; the hope for the "renewal of everything *between* us—the flourishing of relationality, mutuality and reciprocity—[is] the prime end and purpose of politics" (Nixon, 2015, p. 6). We rely on friends for many things and appreciate the meaning and significance they lend to our lives. As we think together with friends, we prepare for life in public, building courage to experience the new and the unknown, assured and comforted in knowing that when we struggle, we have support. Friendship readies the stage for thinking in public and for reflective judgment.

Thinking in Schools

The Hand

The teacher asks a question.

you know the answer, you suspect

you are the only one in the classroom

who knows the answer, because the person

in question is yourself, and on that

you are the greatest living authority,

but you don't raise your hand.

You raise the top of your desk

and take out an apple.

You look out the window.

You don't raise your hand and there is

some essential beauty in your fingers,

which aren't even drumming, but lie

flat and peaceful.

The teacher repeats the question.

Outside the window, on an overhanging branch,

a robin is ruffling its feathers

and spring is in the air.

—Mary Ruefle (1996)

If we accept that thinking is necessary both for challenging the taken for granted and for the exercise of conscience, our current discourse of schooling proves woefully inadequate. The necessary conditions to promote the kinds of thinking that Arendt advocates are missing. Indeed, schools seem to be organized to prevent such thinking. Children, for the most part, enter school full of curiosity, eager to learn, anxious to be part of and contribute to a seemingly more "grown up" world. Teachers strive to preserve the openness and speculative wonder that is innate in children as they learn to make sense of the world and yet somehow, we fall short. We hope to inspire children to think critically and independently, to see the world in its diversity, "to open themselves to vistas of possibility—and to summon up visions of human agency, their own agency, that transcend correctness and the passing grade or the mere mastery of skill" (Greene, 2001, p. 143).

Unfortunately, schools are trapped in operational functionality—out of necessity to some extent, but also because of a need to perpetuate particular societal values in conjunction with the power of market discourse, effectively limiting critical, aporetic, Socratic thinking. Though our

school systems claim democratic citizenship as a goal, the thinking it requires, is mostly absent and rarely demonstrated in practice. Democratic citizenship may be acknowledged as an admirable goal, but because it does not reflect the direction or actions of society, it is not a goal that drives practice in schools. Accepted practice is more concerned with non-thinking conformity—docile compliance and self-certain complacency. "Eichmannism" is not only acceptable, but alive and well as preferred practice in many classrooms and schools. While this may seem a dramatic conclusion, the supporting evidence is vast (though certainly not varied).

> The way children approach their work, accepting the given curriculum, submitting to the rules, is one symptom of how unquestioned the whole process of schooling has become. It also means that children do not necessarily go to school with a sense of personal fulfillment, or individual curiosity. (Cullingford, 1991, p. 159)

Much of what we do in schools is connected to performance and management, which has become "ubiquitous, inescapable—part of and embedded in everything we do" (Ball, 2003, p. 223). Teachers and principals may not even realize how "the continual busy-ness and the act of doing has come to constitute the bureaucratic notion of what constitutes good work" (Smits et al., 2016, p. 2). Schools have been caught within the confines of market-driven ideology, as the language of schooling affirms, demanding efficiency and effectiveness, continual system improvement, productivity, results, data, competency, achievement, improved outcomes, excellence, compliance, knowledge production, rationality, targets, rates of completion and transition, a constant focus on doing and activity that can be measured and quantified.

> Teachers very rarely have an opportunity to discuss the purpose of schools with each other or with the children. The time is taken up with the tasks of teaching,

101

keeping up with the constant demands of the curriculum in what is one of the most

demanding jobs in the world. (Cullingford, 1991, p. 178)

A consequence is the loss of educational purpose and the sacrifice of thinking.

If you were to ask students and parents about the purpose of education, the answer,

almost without exception, will be about the purpose of *schooling* and future employability,

getting a good job. Teachers' roles in such a system is that of "technicians of behaviour, their

task to produce bodies that are docile and capable" (Foucault cited in Ball, 2003, p. 219).

Although there may be vestiges of a more ethical and democratic emphasis in schools, the

common practices and emerging mandates do not promote and may even actively discourage

them. Schools, generally, are hostile to alternative ways of seeing and knowing the world

because we rely on policy and accountability, outcomes and results, rather than "civic courage,

leadership and social responsibility" (Giroux, 2012, p 65). We seem to have forgotten that

education is a human endeavor, that it needs to include concerns for helping people learn to live

with and alongside other people and create meaning together. Economic and market pressures

have permeated schools, driving what is valued and what is understood as important. Knowledge

has become a commodity, as has schooling and its credentials. Choice is upheld as a virtue to be

safeguarded, even as it camouflages its consumerist core, an ideal inimical to freedom. Schools

operate within a singular discourse focused on doing and activity, productivity and outcomes. As

the growth model gains global momentum, democracy wanes and the purpose of schooling is

taken for granted and thus, lost.

The formula we have accepted in schools is that teachers teach and students learn.

Teachers prepare and present lessons; students listen, participate, and demonstrate their learning.

Repeat ad infinitum. In this environment, thinking exists within a means/ends framework; we

"think" to acquire knowledge, to solve problems, to find solutions, to succeed. It does not take long for children to figure out that school is about having the "right" answers and knowing the "right" way to do things. Once determined, school becomes a predictable, often deadening, activity. "When habit swathes everything, one day follows another identical day and predictability swallows any hint of an opening possibility" (Greene, 1995, p. 23). Schools are places where there is little time for activity that does not produce results, eliminating public and private space because they become superfluous—gratuitous and unnecessary. As teachers we feel that our time and efforts cannot be wasted on anything not connected to learning outcomes and student achievement, and the pressure to maintain this focus in order to be successful teachers is omnipresent. The result is that we "become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent" (Ball, 2003, p. 220). We are regularly reminded that our success is measured by our students' results and we re-ignite our efforts. Sadly, our persistent doing and activity promote worldlessness, which emerges as the norm, and thoughtlessness becomes accepted and expected. We need to ask ourselves more frequently, "are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured or compared? It will make us look good" (Ball, 2003, p. 220)!

Certainly, the labour and activity of schooling cannot be eliminated. "Much of teaching involves labour. Indeed, learning to teach is largely an activity of learning to labour and organize the labour of children, that is, a continuous effort to keep them engaged" (Coulter, 2002, p. 195). However, teachers need to resist the pressure to be captivated by schooling's expectations, having students engaged only and incessantly in activity that prevents us from educating.

Conceding that schooling as labour dominates our practice, how do we find space for education? There are those teachers and principals who find ways to educate, who persist in finding cracks of possibility and resistance. I suggest that these educators intentionally find private space to think, that they have protected and preserved a sense of wonder and curiosity that allows them to critically question and to live consciously. Educators committed to thinking are aware of and open

> to altogether new visions, to unsuspected experiential possibilities. [They are] personally engaged in looking, from an altered standpoint, on the materials of one's own lived life, and in imaginatively transmuting (from the fresh standpoint) the fragments of the presented world. (Greene, 1978, p. 187)

They act, in a sense, as artists, encouraging others to see the world from alternate perspectives, to open possibility, to question and to wonder. (Ironically, teacher-artists aim to create other artists, rather than works of art.) "Art is committed to that perception of the world which alienates individuals from their functional existence…it is committed to an emancipation of sensibility, imagination, and reason" (Marcuse, 1979, p.10) much like thinking. It seems to me that without thinking, indeed, without the arts and without teachers who are able to think like artists, we cannot educate, and "we are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or the quantifiable" (Greene, 2001, p. 7). If we hope to foster critical, thoughtful democratic citizenship—individuals who recognize their freedom and will question the way we do things, recognizing that we live in the world with other people and have a responsibility to each other—we need to follow Greene and generate interest in education, even as we critique schooling.

Educative spaces exist in our schools, but they are far too uncommon. A favourite and simple example: A teacher drives to school reviewing her plans for the day and anticipating her students' accomplishments. As she arrives at school she notices something striking and decides to share her discovery with her students. The day begins as the teacher quietly leads the children outside where the air is chilly and frost still clings. They follow their teacher's upward gaze and see a frosty spider web glistening in the morning sun. It's beautiful and they stand in wonder for several quiet minutes. And then the questions begin. What do you see? How was it created? How long will it last? How do spiders know to make that pattern? Where is the spider? What kind of spider built it? Was the web here yesterday and we did not notice it? The children study the web, then go inside to recreate it in a sketch, remembering as much as they can. A few students go to take another look. The class continues asking questions and discussing possible answers; suddenly it is recess. For the rest of the day, the class focuses on the web, figuring out how to find answers to often unanswerable questions and talking about what else they would like to know. They consider web patterns and construction, how long a web takes to build, what the material of the web is and how a spider produces it, arachnid species, language, and anatomy, the spider's place in the insect world, what spiders eat, what eats them, what our responsibility is to spiders—the questions persist. At the end of the day students take home their spider web sketch and talk with their families about spiders. The plan in the teacher's daybook did not include spiders. Her unit and year plans did not include spiders because the curriculum did not. However, this was not a day of learning lost at the whim of a thoughtless teacher. I would argue it was in fact the opposite—a day of memorable and meaningful learning together. The teacher learned along with the children because she was open and awake to possibilities, willing to think independently, and to courageously exercise judgment for the sake of education. It was an

opportunity to appear to each other, to share perspectives and to experience the power of thinking and learning together. "Children want to be reminded of the important questions" (Cullingford, 1991, p. 178); they want opportunities to think, to be curious and to wonder, they deserve teachers who are committed to "the expansion of the 'individual, human part' of those [they] teach" (Greene, 1978, p. 188), to enhancing awareness, imagination and thoughtfulness, enabling children "to break through the cotton wool of daily life and to live more consciously" (Greene, 1978, p. 185).

Developing the ability to think is of utmost educational importance if we hope to live well together and inspire democratic citizenship. Although the idea of Socratic/Arendtian thinking in schools runs counter to accepted and expected practice it is possible when educators make space for and embrace it. Thinking will be reflected in practice; the ethical and political dimensions of education will emerge, as conscience and judgment are exercised, and potentially immoral practice will hopefully be exposed. "[C]onscience seems to be the only potential means we have for exposing (without any guarantee of success) the immorality of both codified morality and the norms of the majority" (Biesta, 2004, p. 247). Educators need to recognize their responsibility to think, to find ways to develop a pedagogy that embraces the mindset of artists who "are not reliable servants of any ideology" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 24) but rather look at the world from alternate perspectives straining to see what is and what might be in an effort to live wide-awake. We must accept that "although we may know in part we are also part of what we know" (I Corinthians 13:9). We are responsible for transforming our givens, imagining alternatives, and generating meaning in our lives; we are responsible for 'thinking what we do'.

The Motive for Metaphor

Desiring the exhilaration of changes:

The motive for metaphor, shrinking from

The weight of primary noon,

The A B C of being,

The ruddy temper, the hammer

Of red and blue, the hard sound –

Steel against intimation – the sharp flash,

The vital arrogant, fatal, dominant X.

—Wallace Stevens (1982)

Chapter 4: Unanchoring the Will[5]

They said, "You have a blue guitar,

You do not play things as they are."

The man replied, "Things as they are

Are changed upon the blue guitar."

And they said then, "But play, you must,

A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,

A tune upon the blue guitar

Of things exactly as they are."

—Wallace Stevens, "The Man with the Blue Guitar"

Narratives make us appear, but how we appear is a matter of contingency. (Sjoholm, 2015, p. 58).

Arendt's exploration of thinking unsettles our historical and accepted understanding of what it means to think, leaving us adrift, lost in uncertainty, wondering and questioning our reality and our world. Through her work Arendt shows us how the wind of thinking challenges the bannisters we rely upon to make judgments about appearances, how thinking stirs us from complacency, shakes our surety and moves us to see the world in new ways. If, as Arendt (1978a) suggests, "the wind of thinking…has shaken you from your sleep and made you fully awake and alive, then you will see that you have nothing in your grasp but perplexities" (p. 175).

_____

[5] Following Arendt's practice, I capitalize Will in my thesis when I'm using it in in Arendt's (and Kant's) meaning for ease of reading.

How do we manage these perplexities? What then do we *do* with them? What prompts us to act when our bannisters have collapsed or failed? We cannot (or at least ought not to) stay paralyzed by thinking's destruction and its power to dismantle comfortable assumptions; we need to move through and beyond thinking's damage and discomfort. In *Willing,* Arendt attempts to find a way out of thinking's 'irons' by once again unsettling what we know and arguing that our Western understanding of the Will is problematic.

The problems Arendt discovers in the Will are not easily accessible; they demand time, patience, and a desire to understand. Arendt's theorizing is generally acknowledged (and particularly so in *Willing*) as a challenge to follow—she focuses on her own understanding, in her own unique style, and seems ignorant of the difficulties her style presents for her readers. Schwartz (2016) explains that:

> Arendt's style of theorizing was quite idiosyncratic, verging on eccentric, and she
> seemed to gravitate much more to the genealogical process of what she called
> 'pearl diving,' of digging deeper and deeper into the origins of our historical
> world, than to the process of attempting to tie up all the loose ends of her
> explorations. (p. 10)

Arendt was not predominately concerned with offering definitive answers or proving a political theory. Rather, she investigated with rapacious intent as she excavated a genealogy of ideas, learning from others, delving into the past, and pushing forward with new understanding. She wanted us to think for ourselves, to work for wisdom and 'good' judgment in ethical-political action. It has been helpful for me to acknowledge the density, obscurity, and inconsistencies of Arendt's style and to try to see the 'pearls' of ideas she uncovers that might help me better understand and re-vision my work as an educator. The commonly accepted concepts Arendt calls

out, re-views, and re-develops prompt me to shift my thinking and begin to see the world in new ways, to see possibilities where before there were accepted givens. Like the man with the blue guitar, Arendt encourages us to see beyond "things as they are" and to test the narrative(s) of our reality.

Conceptions of the Will

We have inherited particular understandings of the Will in the Western tradition that have evolved over time, leaving us with deeply rooted biases which seem beyond refute. Regular, daily use of "willing", and its many compounds, is unquestioned. We know that "to will" is to plan to do; it is "not yet" but reflects an *intent* to act. Today we tend to understand the Will in relation to being willing, being willful, and related concepts such as a strong-willed, will power, free will, and good will. We take these concepts for granted and use them without reflection, rarely interrogating what they mean or where they have come from; we simply accept that they exist as we understand them. Being willing, for example, speaks to our willingness to engage in particular activities, to do certain things. What we are willing to do is connected to what is important to us, what we value and how we set priorities. Being willful is somewhat different and speaks to a stubbornness, a confrontational demeanor that is often in unreasonable contention with others, non-compliant, and closed to listening. Being strong-willed seems slightly more reasonable, suggesting a determination and commitment to succeed, to strive, to achieve, to put in effort and try to the best of our abilities. While being strong-willed is invariably associated with stubbornness, it has a more positive bent than being willful. Similarly, will power implies a kind of strength and steadfastness similar to having a strong will, but with a very deliberate motivation and target. Will power implies that we have some control over ourselves and our choices, implying that our will is free, that we make choices and exercise

control over our lives. We feel and believe that we possess a *free* will. For example, I have power over my decisions and the freedom to decide whether I will write or not write today, whether I will go for a walk to the lake or stay home. As Arendt (1978b) states, "[t]he touchstone of a free act…is always that we know that we could also have left undone what we actually did" (p. 26). We all seem to know and accept that we have the power to determine what we do or do not do. Goodwill is different again and is tied to the idea of charity, care, and helping others; in contrast to the other types of will which are focused on the individual, goodwill has a pronounced and intentional focus on turning the will toward others. The various extrapolations of the Will include the "freedom" to do what I want. However, there are limits to what I can will, founded in my cognitive and physical capacity, the world as it exists around me, and the Wills of the various, multiple others with whom I live and who have Wills of their own.

The exercise of the Will, as we understand it in each of its iterations, is ultimately an exercise of control over self (self-sovereignty), calling attention to our freedom, our ability to *do* or *do not*, to act or not act. Our conception of a Will over which we have control lies behind established rules and "serves…as a necessary postulate of every ethics and every system of laws" (Arendt, 1978b, pp. 4-5). Simply put, we accept that human beings are responsible and should be held accountable for their actions because they are capable of making judgments about what counts as ethical-political action. As human beings, we believe that we *ought* to know how to act well, though we can also choose to act in opposition to what we know is right or good. However, after the rise of totalitarian systems and the Eichmann trial in particular, Arendt began to see the problem differently. It seemed no longer a matter of knowing what was right and acting against this knowledge. The capacity to commit evil acts appeared to be possible by those who were

"normal" and did not even recognize the immorality of their action, leading Arendt to question evil's radical villainy and see it instead as banal.

> The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implied…that this new type of criminal…commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong. (Arendt, 2006, p. 276)

What lies behind the banality of evil and the corresponding problem of ethical-political action, leads Arendt to the faculties of the mind—thinking, willing, and judging. In *Willing*, Arendt confronts and contests our understanding of freedom, challenging current understandings and accepted definitions of the Will, reviving lost meanings, and seeking to reconceive freedom as non-sovereign, in an effort to defend and sustain plurality in a common and contingent world.

A History of the Western Will

The Classical Union of Knowing and Acting

The faculty of the Will, Arendt argues is a relatively new discovery in the Western tradition, emerging not in philosophy, but in Christian theology. One reason for the emergence of the Will is connected to a change in our notion of time. The ancient Greeks understood time cyclically, identifying the cycles of life—days, seasons, rotations of the earth, cycles of the moon—where there is no future or progression of events, just recurrence. The belief was that there is a

cyclical movement in which everything that is alive swings—where indeed every

end is a beginning and every beginning an end…not only events but even opinions

'as they occur among men, revolve not only once or a few times but infinitely

often'. (Arendt, 1978b, pp. 16-17)

A cyclical notion of time contrasts the idea of perpetual progress and constant improvement

which is entrenched in Western modernity, notably in the sciences. Arendt (1978b) recognizes

that the "concept of unlimited progress is the dominant inspiring principle of modern science" (p.

54), reinforcing a Will that anticipates a future act or occurrence, something that is yet to be or

yet to come, and is therefore incompatible with a cyclical time concept. Arendt identified the

anticipated acts of the Will as *projects*, or future acts. The "Will, if it exists at all…is as

obviously our mental organ for the future as memory is our mental organ for the past" (Arendt,

1978b, p. 13). Our understanding of time is directly linked to our understanding of what it means

to *be* and to live well in the world. If we understand time as cyclical rather than rectilinear it

changes how we conceptualize being. Moreover, Arendt recognized that for Socrates and Plato,

knowing and doing were tightly linked. If you knew something, you acted upon it. Knowledge

and meaning were one and the same and it made no sense to act in opposition to what you

understood as right. The concern was primarily epistemological (though within a very different

epistemological framework than we use now), that is, ethical knowing and acting were integrated

in the Platonic Forms (reliable truths that exist apart from the unreliable world of appearances)

which *determined* what would count as ethical-political action.

Aristotle, however, recognized that knowing alone was insufficient to guide action; there

were times that a person knew what was right and yet acted in opposition to this knowledge, a

problem he identified as *akrasia*, that is, a lack of self-control. "The incontinent man…follows

his desires regardless of the commands of reason" (Arendt, 1978b, p.57). Conceding that we can know what is good or right, but still act otherwise, following desire rather than reason, Aristotle attempted to address the problem of *akrasia* through a combination of *proairesis* (choice) and *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, where a distinct intellectual virtue (one of five) selects the appropriate intellectual and moral virtues in order to act well in particular circumstances. Aristotle fails to fully explain what *phronesis* entails, but claims it to be "a kind of insight and understanding of matters that are good or bad for men, a sort of sagacity…needed for human affairs" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 59). *Phronesis* depends largely on a conception of reason (to which we will see future philosophers return) to select and activate the requisite virtue for the particular situation. Aristotle believed that we are all born with virtues and we continue to learn and develop these virtues throughout our lives, guided by reason and cultivated as we learn to recognize what is inherently ethical, usually through examples of excellence or virtuosity.

The Supremacy of Christian Faith

With the birth of Christianity, Arendt notes that our current rectilinear concept of time replaced the ancient cyclical time concept. "The story that begins with Adam's expulsion from Paradise and ends with Christ's death and resurrection is a story of unique, unrepeatable events" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 18) with a well-defined sequence. A rectilinear notion of time offered a past, present, and future along with a new construction of freedom, which made space for a new mental faculty, the Will, as the "organ for the future" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 29). Willing has the capacity to deal with matters of imagination, that is, "with matters that never were, that are not yet, and that may well never be" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 14). Christianity, along with the idea of a future over which we feel we have some control, brought new ideas about ethical-political action and what it meant to live a good life among others.

Arendt argues that reason—central in antiquity's answer to ethical action—was supplanted by faith: "[W]ith the rise of Christianity, faith replaced thought as the bringer of immortality" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 139). Ethical-political action became tied to the dictates of the Church and obedience became the foundation for Christian ethics. Glory that had previously been attainable through action in concert with other people was removed from the world and became part of the spiritual, heavenly realm. The world of appearance (the body politic) which had provided the space for glory to be revealed and appreciated, became government (and church) rule, and life, rather than the common public world, became the highest good. As Arendt (1958) claimed, "[o]nly with the rise of Christianity did life on earth also become the highest good of man" (p. 316).

As such, *eudaimonia*, or the pursuit of a good and worthwhile life came to be understood in relation to obedience and devotion to religious rules and commandments with eternal life as one's reward. Glory became associated with the afterlife rather than the esteem generated through action amongst peers and equals. With the Apostle Paul, there was a shift "from doing to believing, from the outward man living in a world of appearance…to an inwardness which by definition never unequivocally manifests itself and can be scrutinized only by a God" (Arendt, 1978b, p.67). Stepping back from the world of action into the realm of the spiritual and the eternal, propelled man to look inward and to realize an inner contest that came to be known as the Will. "When we deal with experiences relevant to the Will, we are dealing with experiences that men have not only with themselves, but also *inside* themselves" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 63); our inner world began to supersede the common world. The Apostle Paul "discovered" an inner tension and struggle in his efforts to do right, recognizing

that there is a faculty in man by virtue of which, regardless of necessity and

compulsion he can say 'Yes' or 'No,' agree or disagree with what is factually

given, including his own self and his existence, and that this faculty may determine

what he is going to do. (Arendt, 1978b, p. 68)

With Christianity, our understanding of ethical-political action shifted from public to private

where faith rather than reason became the motivating factor.

The Development of the Christian Will

Like the Apostle Paul, St. Augustine was interested in the Will, recognizing its inner

(private) sovereignty and power of self-command and obedience. Both Paul and Augustine

acknowledged the freedom of the Will, its ability to accept or reject, say yes or no, to will or to

nill, its power to create dissonance in the soul. "In every act of the Will, there is an I-will *and I-

nill* involved. These are the two wills whose 'discord' Augustine said 'undid [his] soul'" (Arendt,

1978b, p.89). The Will can affirm or negate reality, reason, or desire, reflecting its power, but

what motivates the Will remains a mystery. As Arendt (1978b) questions: "What is it then that

causes the will to will? What sets the will in motion" (p. 89)? Augustine approached the problem

of the Will and its freedom, which paralleled the interest human beings had in an "inner self" or

"I" (consciousness), through the lens of his faith and Christian philosophy. Augustine looked for

answers by examining the Will in isolation from other mental faculties and made four

determinations. First, the Will is divided or split and in perpetual conflict while engaged in the

activity of willing regardless of Will's focus; both good and evil wills are split. Second, the

contest of the Will is a mental activity where both the Will and counter-Will (nill) are equally in

play. Third, because the Will issues commands and expects obedience, it can also be resisted.

Finally, Augustine "finds no solution to the riddle of this 'monstrous' faculty is given; how the

will, divided against itself, finally reaches the moment when it becomes 'entire' remains a mystery" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 96). To redeem and unify the Will, Augustine turns to Love.

In order for Love to work as an answer to the Will's division and conflict, Augustine "undertakes to investigate the Will not in isolation from other mental faculties but in its interconnectedness with them" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 97). Like the Holy Trinity, which Augustine uses as a model of a three-in-one, the mental faculties work together as inseparable but distinct parts of one mind. Memory, Intellect, and the Will work in harmony. "These three faculties are equal in rank, but their Oneness is due to the Will. The Will tells the memory what to retain and what to forget; it tells the intellect what to choose for its understanding" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 99). It seems that the Will in this triad is the faculty "that makes them function and eventually 'binds them together'" (Arendt, 1978b, p, 99). Augustine turns to Love to redeem the Will for what Love is able to do—bind and unify. Love is "the 'weight of the soul,' its gravitation, that which brings the soul's movement to its rest" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 95), affirms who we are, and brings peace and comfort. "The soul's gravity, the essence of who somebody is, and which as such is inscrutable to human eyes, becomes manifest in this Love" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 95) and can still the discord of the soul. Arendt (1978b) explains, "the love that stills the will's turmoil and restlessness is not a love of tangible things but of the 'footprints' 'sensible things' have left on the inwardness of the mind" (p. 103). It is the Will that attends to and brings concepts and sense objects to the mind—to the Intellect and to Memory. When and where we love, there lies our attention.

The ability to attend to the world of appearance is in the Will's power and the Will exercises this power as it identifies and determines what warrants attention. Each of us can identify certain things, people, and ideas to which we give our attention and others which we do

not. There are times when we might look at something yet not see it, listen yet not hear (I am regularly guilty of both). Augustine argued that it is the Will that allows us to identify what we pay attention to, what we perceive through the senses and then bring into our inner world (mind) to *make sense of*, or to discard and ignore.

> In other words, the Will, by virtue of *attention*, first unites our sense organs with the real world in a meaningful way, and then drags, as it were, this outside world into ourselves and prepares it for further mental operations: to be remembered, to be understood, to be asserted or denied. (Arendt, 1978b, p. 100)

What Augustine saves in looking at the Will as one part of a greater whole in the life of the mind, is the Will's power to attend to the world as it appears to us and to identify what is important. We cannot underestimate "the Will's power of assertion and denial; there is no greater assertion of something or somebody than to love it, that is, to say: I will that you be—*Amo: Volo ut sis*" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 104). In willing another to be as they are we affirm and share our attention with her/him. When we recognize and attend to any object, idea, or person, we offer affirmation. Attention, for Augustine,

> is one of the major functions of the Will, the great unifier…the 'distention of the mind' [that] binds together the tenses of time into the mind's present. 'Attention abides and through it what will be present proceeds to become something absent', namely the past. (Arendt, 1978b, p. 107)

 The concept of time and its relationship to the Will creates unique challenges for Christian philosophy, for how could an eternal God (without beginning or end), omnipotent and good, create temporal beings? How does the concept of time even come to be? How can something that is eternal create "new" things when all that is has always been? Novelty and the

"new" cannot occur in cycles. Augustine's answer is to differentiate between an absolute beginning, *principium* (without/beyond time), and a relative beginning *initium* (with a beginning and an end). Man is a relative beginning "put into a world of change and movement as a new beginning because he knows that he has a beginning and will have an end" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 109). Each human being born into the world is a new being, a novelty, one of a kind, with the ability to interrupt the flow of "what is" when he/she arrives. Our "individuality manifests itself in the Will" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 109) and the Will's attention. Who we are is revealed in word and deed (actions), as Matthew 7:16 states, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." We are in the world with other people and it is only by virtue of *being with* others that we know ourselves and reveal who we are in our uniqueness. Each of us are judged by our words and actions which in turn reveal our identity. Ethical-political action came to be a matter of aligning one's self with the sovereign Christian will. If one followed the precepts and rules of the Church and relied on the teachings, commandments, and scriptures to lead the way to a good life, one was "saved" and could expect glory in the afterlife. One was seen by others as pious, charitable, and good if obedient to Christian ethics, the guiding Will and philosophy of the Church.

A Return to the Authority of Reason

St. Augustine believed that the Will was central to ethical-political action because the Will unified the faculties and had primacy in the mind, revealing individual identity through our attention and action (words and deeds). The Will was tempered and unified by Love. Eight-hundred years later, at the height of the Church's power in the middle ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE), sought to tie Augustine's teaching of the Will more directly to established doctrine and to integrate the teachings of Aristotle to create a new understanding of the role of

the Will in fostering ethical-political action. Aquinas grafts Aristotelian teleology onto Augustine's model of the mind, transforming both.

Aquinas accepts Aristotle's teleology in which he defines an end as "that for the sake of which a thing is done" (*Physics*, II, 8, 199a33) and explains that "every creature strives for immortality by way of reproducing itself (*Generation of Animals* 2. 1. 731b20-732b9). Aquinas concurs: "Every agent, of necessity, acts for an end" (ST, I-II, q. 1, a.2) and for humans, that end is Being. What separates Aquinas from Aristotle, however, is the origin of Being: for Aristotle, the cosmos is timeless, cyclical with neither beginning nor end; for Aquinas, the ultimate source of all being must be God and the creation of the world is God's gift *ex nihilo* (Oliver, 2013, p. 861). Aquinas contends that humanity's ultimate goal must be the "final and perfect beatitude [which] can consist in nothing less than the vision of the divine essence" (ST 1-11, q. 3, a 8): One should aspire both to know and appreciate the infinite goodness of God. Such a *telos* requires a congruent model of the human mind that Aquinas, unsurprisingly, finds in Augustine.

Aquinas agrees with Augustine that the Intellect and the Will are prime mental capacities for humans (but includes Memory as a feature of the Intellect) and explains that each faculty focuses on a complementary aspect of Being: the Intellect aspires to universal Truth and the Will strives for the universal Good. In contrast to Augustine's claim that the Will is dominant, Aquinas argues that the two powers have equal weight, they "include one another in their acts, because the Intellect understands what the Will wills, and the Will wills the Intellect to understand" (*De Generatione*, I, 3, 317b16-18). Further, Aquinas recognizes that each capacity for understanding Truth or Goodness in general must be supplemented by a strategy to determine what is true or good in particular contingent circumstances. He explains that the Intellect deals with self-evident, uncontested general truths needing no support; when we "need to come from

one thing to the knowledge of another…, we reason about conclusions that are known from the principles" (*De Civitte Dei*, I-II, qu. 5, a. 4) and therefore require the faculty of reasoning which he calls *prudentia* (adopted from Aristotelian *phronesis*). The change in vocabulary signals a dramatic shift in meaning: While Aristotelian *phronesis* aims at integrating moral and intellectual virtues—means and ends—in efforts to do the right thing, Aquinas' *prudentia*, in contrast, aims at finding appropriate means for ends determined by either the Intellect or the Will (Miner, 2000, p. 407).

Arendt outlines all of the above in *Willing* and then challenges Aquinas' characterization of the symmetrical relationship between the Intellect and the Will by pointing to a feature that Augustine recognized but Aquinas neglects—the initial selection of first principles or self-evident truths frames the subsequent interaction between the Intellect and the Will. Arendt (1978b) explains that for Aquinas

> 'every movement of the will [is] preceded by apprehension [of the Intellect]'—no one can will what he does not know—'whereas…apprehension is not preceded by an act of the will.' Here, of course, [Aquinas] parts company with Augustine, who maintained the primacy of the Will qua attention even for the sake of sense perception. (p.121)

The Intellect initially frames experience and provokes subsequent responses, a priority that Arendt (1978b) contends contributes to the valorization of certain forms of human life.

> For Thomas—as for nearly all of his successors in philosophy…—it was a matter of course, actually the very touchstone of philosophy as a separate discipline, that the universal is 'nobler and higher in rank' than the particular and the only proof

this needed was and remained the old Aristotelian statement that the whole is

always greater than the sum of its parts. (p. 120)

In sum, Arendt (1978b) contends that Augustine and Aquinas have different answers to the

central question that preoccupied medieval thinkers: In what does 'man's last end and happiness

consist? Augustine's answer was to love God; Aquinas' response was to know God. Aquinas

explains: "It is one thing to possess the good which is our end, and another to love it; for love

was imperfect before we possessed the end, and perfect after we obtained possession" (Pegis,

1973, p. 49). Arendt argues that Aquinas' subordination of the Will to the Intellect is part of a

process that returns the Will to the status of the means to accomplish ends determined by the

Intellect.

Not all of the scholastics followed Aquinas however. John Duns Scotus (1266-1308 CE),

a philosopher and theologian who was nearly a contemporary of Aquinas', believed that the

Intellect served the Will, placing the Will in a position of primacy. Scotus trusts that human

beings are rational and knowledge of the world is founded on what is understood in common.

"The test for the countless facts whose trustworthiness we constantly take for granted is that they

must make sense for men as they are constituted" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 129). We share language

that allows for common knowledge of things given and things imagined that are beyond us, such

as the idea of God. "The miracle of the human mind is that by virtue of the Will it can transcend

everything" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 136). That man is able to transcend his own limitations, Scotus

attributes to the Will. Arendt (1978b) explains:

[W]hatever the intellect proposes to him, man is *forced* to accept, compelled by the

evidence of the object…. It is different with the Will. The Will may find it difficult

not to accept what reason dictates, *but the thing is not impossible,* just as it is not

impossible for the Will to resist strong natural appetites. (p. 129)

Desire and Intellect can both be resisted by the Will. "It is the possibility of resistance to the

needs of desire, on the one hand, and the dictates of intellect and reason, on the other, that

constitutes human freedom" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 130). Scotus recognized the Will as

undetermined and nearly unlimited, challenging causality by claiming that what has happened

could also not have happened, "only the willing ego knows that 'a decision actually taken need

not have been taken and a choice other than the one actually made might have been otherwise'"

(Arendt, 1978b, p. 130). As human beings, the ability to will or nill is within our power and in

this sense the Will is free. "[H]uman beings, whether or not they know it, as long as they can act,

are capable of achieving, and constantly do achieve, the improbable and unpredictable" (Arendt,

2005, p. 114). Once words and deeds are enacted, their effects extend outward and it is

impossible to know (with any surety or finality) their outcome. Words and deeds enter the world,

coinciding with the plurality of wills and the webs of relationships that appear there. Individual

wills exist amidst multiple other diverse wills that are also free to will and nill, leaving the world

of human affairs open to unpredictability and surprise.

Modernity and the Sovereign Will

Though Scotus and Aquinas differ in respect to their conclusions about the primacy of the

Will or the Intellect in the life of the mind, both understood that the Will plays a major role in

human action: The Will possesses the power of command and control, obedience and resistance.

Arendt recognized that the Reformation challenged both Scotus and Aquinas by questioning the

religious maxims and traditions that had been relied on for centuries, engendering uncertainty

about ethical-political action and what counted as good and worthwhile. As secularity spread, it

brought not only the loss of religion, but also "a world that is neither structured by authority nor held together by tradition" (Arendt, 1993, p. 191). The *vita activa*, Arendt claimed, now dominated society with labour rising to the apex, firmly placing necessity and the force of life processes in control of behaviour where automatic functioning seemed sufficient and human life continued to be upheld as the highest good. Our unabashed focus on the self has become ubiquitous, a sign of worldlessness.

Thinking narrowed, its purpose known only within the service of doing. The result was that individuals were thrown back upon the self without reliable bannisters to guide action. The *vita contemplativa* was devalued as a path to understanding, truth, and knowledge, and society came to rely on "evidence," as discovered and proven in doing, to inform action. Our ability to create tools as a means to demonstrate and prove our world to ourselves quickly overwhelmed and narrowed our ways of knowing. What we do and what we know became tied to determined or projected ends and the Will became even more powerfully bound to ideas of rationality and sovereignty unencumbered by ethical-political action. Simultaneously action, rather than finding its genesis in faith or morality, found it in science and numbers, which employed "factual" evidence to generate empirical truth. Doing was effectively removed from ethical or normative concerns, and worldlessness, a concentration on the compulsory aspects of life, took hold.

Arendt recognized that our need for scientific, empirical "proof" and predictability overwhelmed what counted as knowledge and truth, leaving us to understand the world in limited ways that focus almost exclusively on means and ends. We are left seeking and believing in a predictability that is an illusion. Our reliance on quantifiable information to inform action is constantly reinforced. The sovereign Will remains private, never a public concern because it is deeply rooted in a given, "predictable" world, organized by science and all things empirical

where reason is held in high esteem. Nietzsche might say we have inherited the worst of both the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*, critiquing the sovereign Will because everything is left to the individual. Arendt (1978b) claims that Nietzsche's last word "clearly spells a repudiation of the Will and the willing ego, whose internal experiences have misled thinking men into assuming that there are such things as cause and effect, intention and goal, in reality" (p. 172). With Nietzsche, Arendt argues that what we think we know may not be accurate. "Clearly what is needful is not to change the world or men but to change their way of 'evaluating' it, their way, in other words, of thinking and reflecting about it" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 170). Dissatisfied with the understanding we have of the Will, Arendt seeks some pearl of an idea that might shift our understanding, allowing us to see the Will differently and redeem ethical-political action.

Arendt's Non-Sovereign Will

In her exegesis and critique of Willing, Arendt breaks "with the entire modern philosophy of the will in which the twin ideas of power as rule/force and freedom as sovereignty have been housed" (Zerilli, 2016, p. 189). Arendt endeavours to re-form our traditional understanding of the Will, offering a perspective so at odds with *what is* that it is difficult to accept without a seismic shift and release of what we know. Arendt argues that we have inherited a misshapen and dysfunctional society where we have forgotten what it means to think, will, and judge, to actively create (and question) our world rather than simply accept it. In reconceiving the Will, Arendt works from an essential underpinning of plurality, a belief that we live and participate in a common world shared *with* other people where we acknowledge our responsibility to each other as the basis for ethical-political action. Arendt's re-conception of the Will attempts to explain what non-sovereign freedom might look like in a world we create together amidst multiple, unique individuals who each bring their own story into a web of countless already

existing stories. Willing is "based on the ability of every human being to initiate a sequence, to forge a new chain" (Arendt, 2005, p. 126), to begin something new, to share a new story. Within a plurality of individuals pursuing various causes, we find endless sequences and initiations or new beginnings that connect and interconnect, weaving together our common human world, creating webs of stories and relationships.

Arendt's excavation of the history of the Will, yields two important pearls: From Augustine she finds a conception of freedom as the expression of natality, that is, the capacity to begin anew; from Duns Scotus, she recovers the idea of the link between the Will and freedom in a plural, contingent world. Freedom as the capacity to begin something new is the essence of natality. "Every man, being created in the singular, is a new beginning by virtue of his birth" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 109), entering the world as a unique and original human being with a unique and original story. Levinson (1997) recognizes that "[t]o Arendt, natality signifies both our newness in relation to the world and the possibility that we might bring about something new in relation to it" (p. 437). Though each of us is an original and separate beginning, able to insert ourselves and our ideas, opinions, and creations into an existing world, our uniqueness "is not an inert quality. It is brought into being—enacted—by speaking, acting subjects who do what they do in order to individuate themselves, to become distinctive selves" (Levinson, 1997, p. 440). Between birth and death, we find ourselves in a world filled with others, all of whom have the ability to act. The multiplicity and polytonality of action cannot be escaped (unless of course one were able to live in isolation); my freedom to act/do/choose might be unique to me, but my actions fall into a plural world to be judged. For this reason, as Arendt (1978b) aptly notes, "[n]o man can be sovereign because not one man, but men, inhabit the earth" (p. 234). Individuals may be able to achieve something new and unprecedented, but we are always one of many and so true

freedom, at least for Arendt, is the freedom to begin something *with* other people. Plurality is

non-negotiable and inescapable if we hope to have meaningful lives of any significance.

Living in a common world amongst other human beings who are independent and unique,

with diverse and distinct perspectives, leaves us open to the unexpected and the unpredictable.

We cannot, with any surety, have any conception of how things will play out, of how our actions

(our words and deeds) will fall into the world and affect others. We are all bound to be taken by

surprise on occasion. Indeed, as Arendt (1993) affirms

> [h]uman action, projected into a web of relationships where many and opposing
>
> ends are pursued, almost never fulfills its original intention…. Whoever begins to
>
> act must know that he has started something whose end he can never foretell, if
>
> only because his own deed has already changed everything and made it even more
>
> unpredictable. (pp. 84-85)

The contingency of our existence is inescapable and the ends of our actions are beyond what we

can anticipate or know. "The freedom of spontaneity is part and parcel of the human condition"

(Arendt, 1978b, p. 110), part of living in a plural world.

For Duns Scotus contingency meant that "everything that is might possibly not have

been" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 135). Innumerable intersections of action from multiple unique

individuals acting independently within the web of human relationships lead to potentially

infinite and unpredictable outcomes. Our world then, is not a singular world, but multiple worlds,

or stories/narratives, that layer, overlap, connect and weave together in various ways, created by

individuals who add their perspectives and understandings to the complexity, messiness and

wonder of the common world. Despite the evident contingency of our plural world, once a thing

has happened, it cannot be undone and we see it as necessary, something we can explain, justify,

and understand. Our ability to will, leads us to feel/believe we are the cause of particular outcomes. We are always searching for and trying to determine why a thing happens. "Why?— what is the *cause*?—is suggested by the will because the will experiences itself as a causative agent. [Whatever was willed] has become the necessary condition for my own existence" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 140) and I believe that I caused it, that I made it happen through my actions. The event no longer seems contingent.

Our rectilinear concept of time (past, present, future) reinforces our belief in causality. Once a thing has happened (and only *after* it has happened), we can attribute reasons for it having happened (though these reasons are invariably multiple). Arendt (1978b) offers the example of the first and second world wars and the volumes and volumes of books devoted to explaining what caused these wars to start. There is no final answer as to the cause, but rather a "coincidence of causes" (p. 138) collided. Following Scotus, Arendt (1978b) argues that "all change occurs because a plurality of causes happen to coincide, and the coincidence engenders the texture of reality in human affairs" (p. 137), while simultaneously challenging causality. There is enough we hold in common (though this can easily be threatened and lost, as with worldlessness) to make our worlds cohesive and comprehensive to each other despite our differences.

> All men live together on the solid foundation of an…acquired faith they have in common. The test for the countless facts whose trustworthiness we constantly take for granted is that they must make sense for men as they are constituted. (Arendt, 1978b, p. 129)

Within our common world, we are conditioned and limited creatures generally believing that we are "free." However, "that the will is free, undetermined and unlimited by either an

exterior or an internally given object, does not signify that man qua man enjoys unlimited freedom" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 141); we are free only in our plurality, in our living with many diverse other people. In this way, freedom, for Arendt is non-sovereign, connected, not to an individual, but to people; freedom is founded in plurality. "The conditions of the world *as it is* are given, but the world is also *as it is* made. As such, it is in need of constant care and upkeep" (Levinson, 2010, p. 476), constant re-making and re-imagining.

Willing in Schools

…humans are constantly born into the world and are continually in need of

introduction to the world and one another. This is what makes natality the 'essence

of education' (Levinson, 1997, p. 436).

The sovereign Will is about rulership and it overshadows modern Western society and dominates schooling. Though we do not refer to the Will when we think about or discuss schooling (an understanding of the Will is entirely absent from "educational" discourse and research), its effects are pervasive, most easily identified as standards of conformity, functional behaviour, and compliance that can be understood as a form of rule (or rulership). Schools are firmly rooted institutions that mirror and reflect society's values, predictable establishments where children (and adults) expect and rely on consistent organization, rules, and routines. Rulership is apparent in the structure and bureaucracy of schooling, the imbalance of power and the clearly established expectations around what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a student. The roles we have created in schools regulate the functioning and behaviour of teachers and students. We assume that what we do in schools, and how and why we do it, is necessary and appropriate, rarely examining our traditions or our compliance. An unquestioning acceptance of the ends of schooling—"success" and "achievement"—measured by graduation

and ultimately one's ability to be gainfully employed, parallels the acceptance of our roles within the institution. The roles and rules we accept within schools establish a way to insert people into mass society. As an instrument of society, school acts as a means to sort children, to influence and affect identity, to lead children to see themselves in particular ways and as particular kinds of people with particular (and predictable) options about how they will live life.

Evidence of rulership in schools is ubiquitous, so much a part of what we do and how we operate in schools, that it can seem nearly impossible and endlessly frustrating to counter. The result and impact of rulership is worldlessness (or world-alienation), where the social realm dominates, labour reigns supreme, and we focus singularly on the self. A prevailing attitude of determinism, where cause and effect are valorized beyond refutation, further substantiates an ethos of worldlessness where people are assigned their roles and stations (Levinson, 2010), an additional impact of rulership, emerges as a way of being. As we strive to fit people into mass society, identities are "belated" (Levinson, 1997) and we become blind to alternatives, to other perspectives and voices—often even blind to ourselves, where we accept dominant narratives and embrace a single story as reality. We focus on getting children ready for a world that is immune to action and it becomes increasingly difficult to see how our world might be, as Hamlet recognizes, "out of joint". Our ability to act and appear in the world amongst others is jeopardized.

The school is a singular, predictable institution ostensibly governed by cause and effect where worldlessness proliferates. An almost exclusive focus on finding means to meet unquestioned ends—ultimately student "achievement" and "success", is entrenched through a persistent and intractable "common script" (Metz, 1989), an idea of what school ought to be. As we prepare students for the "Real World" (Metz, 1989), the work force, and the ability to

contribute to the economy, we focus on "Real School" (Metz, 1989) a variety of predetermined and prescribed ends that we have come to believe are essential. These givens of schooling that constitute Metz's (1989) common script include such essentials as prompt and punctual attendance, a common curriculum, approved textbooks and resources, timetables, assessment and reporting, assigning students to a teacher and a classroom, assignments and projects, transition from one grade to the next (grade-levels), and an abiding commitment to imposed policy, rules, and expectations. We (teachers and students) "work within larger organizations, [schools and districts within a provincial Ministry], that mandate much of the common script in non-negotiable terms" (Metz, 1989, p. 81). We have deep-seated ideas about what schools, teaching, and student learning look like and so continue to support and enforce them, creating an intractable cycle.

As a beginning principal, I was aware of the expectations surrounding my role and what I believed it ought to be. Chris and his expulsion from school, act as an example of the roles we assume when we engage in the play of "Real School". Chris was no different than any student who had committed a misdemeanour; decisions were made about him based on policy, past-practice, and an accepted understanding of how disciplinary practice should proceed. Our focus was on applying the rules without bias, without attempting to understand or listen to Chris, who became more or less irrelevant. "In most conventional schools, students are not often included in deliberations about their fate when faced with having violated a school rule" (Kelly, 2014, p 400). Chris represents students in general, who attend school every day and, though we know them, we may not grant them space to appear and to show who they are. Instead, we allow them to show us what they can do and how they can succeed in meeting the goals we determine. Everyone involved in Chris' story, performed their roles with precision according to the play

"Real School," implementing protocols, policy, and practice as expected. Adherence to the script felt unavoidable. Not only was there no resistance, there was no thought of resistance, so deeply ritualized were our roles. We tend to understand "Real School as a ritual, rich with symbols of participation in cultured society and in access to opportunity" (Metz, 1989, p. 83). The structure of the play requires elements of the common script that create reassurance that what we are doing is what we *should* be doing. "Participating in the classroom actions that were part of this ritual…assured teachers as well as students that they were doing Real Teaching and Real Learning" (Metz, 1989, p. 83), and, in the case of operating a school or school district, Real Administrating.

The idea of a "common script" for schooling is further reinforced through a cycle of continual improvement and ongoing progress in schools that parallels the ideal of progress in modern Western society and is congruent with the continuing quest for increased efficiency and productivity. We focus on achieving measurable results (numbers/statistics) and we turn to the means we might implement to improve "student achievement." As we strive to improve results, people are often seen as means to achieving desired ends. A focus on efficiency, productivity, and economic growth tends to stifle ethical-political conscience, relying on "people who do not recognize the individual, who speak group-speak, who behave, and see the world, like docile bureaucrats" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 23). Unfortunately, it has become too easy for teachers and principals to become 'docile,' caught in the "crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness" (Dewey, 1954, p. 183) where we teach a prescribed curriculum to bored children. We teach, test, report, and repeat, encouraging children, our students, to embrace conformity, to believe that an "A" or any other descriptor of achievement equals success for which they should all be striving. Somehow, we exist and persist "in institutional settings with the spectres of

measurement always around us and a uniform standard that discourages difference" (Greene, 2001, p. 125). When we make decisions based on numbers (enrolment, designations, achievement scores), averages, expected outcomes, and/or past practice, we minimize difference and too easily miss the particular circumstances and particular persons with whom we are working; our work becomes the management of resources (children) rather than education. Individuals become invisible, lost in a sea of sameness, undistinguished in any meaningful way from others, as schools (and society) create and promote distance from the world. When opportunities for active engagement in shaping our world fail to exist, plurality is lost and worldlessness, or world-alienation, becomes the norm. We lose not only the world, but ourselves.

Focusing on narrow outcomes as evidence of "success" generates a particular understanding of our relationship with other people. The result is a loss of connection with the world as we become increasingly caught up in the process of life's necessity and meeting our personal needs.

> [A]s Arendt understands it, the world is that which comes into being and is
> sustained by the active participation of citizens. Worldliness is thus not simply a
> kind of awareness; it is a mode of engagement. We become worldly by acting in
> the world. (Levinson, 2010, p. 474)

Schools offer limited and often contrived opportunities for students to know and act in the world, to engage with others in creating, questioning, and renewing the world. Instead,

> [k]nowledge is now instrumentalized, and the awe, magic, and insight it might
> provide are rendered banal as it is redefined through the mindless logic of
> quantification and measurement that now grips the culture of schooling and drive

the larger matrix of efficiency, productivity, and consumerism shaping broader

society. (Giroux, 2012, p. 4)

With worldlessness (world-alienation) comes the added weight of our social positioning and the ways we are constituted and conditioned by the world into which we are born. Levinson (1997) identifies this as the challenge of "belatedness". "[T]he world does not simply precede us but effectively constitutes us as particular kinds of people" (Levinson, 1997, p. 437) in relation to each other, history, and the future, "putting us in the difficult position of being simultaneously heirs to a specific history and new to it. As a result, we experience ourselves as 'belated' even though we are newcomers" (Levinson, 1997, p. 437). Each of us can recognize the ways we are conditioned by what has come before us and by what seems to be the reality of our existence. While each of us is new to the world with the ability to interrupt processes and insert ourselves into the world in new ways, we may feel "so weighted down by [our] social positioning that [we] see no point in attempting to transform the meanings and implications that attach to [our] positioning" (Levinson, 1997, p. 437); it is tempting to feel overwhelmed or paralyzed by what is or what seems to be the condition of our lives that we fail to engage in the world with others and acquiesce to our conditioning.

We often allow ourselves to be constituted by accepting and executing our roles in schools, forfeiting our autonomy and as a result "[d]eterministic ideologies have further contributed to world-alienation by promoting the idea that the world—and indeed human nature itself—is defined by immutable laws and driven by irresistible forces" (Levinson, 2010, p. 483). Once we believe that the world and our behaviour are determined, we have eliminated the new. The ways we have structured schools supports a deterministic view of human beings with its common script of explicit rules and procedures. The British Columbia requirement for school

codes of conduct is a powerful example of teaching people to follow the rules and adhere to the common script, rather than learning to treat other people with respect, to recognize and appreciate plurality and difference which is critical to any democratic society. Chris again emerges as an example of a child made invisible and at the mercy of the common script. Had there been any resistance to Chris' fate, I expect the process for appeal would have been followed and the outcome the same. Chris' identity, as well as my own and the identities of others involved, were partly constituted by performing and fulfilling our roles within the narrative of "Real School." It is not a stretch to understand how we might feel powerless or paralyzed in the midst of well-established institutions, such as schools, and how agency and natality are overwhelmed.

Institutions, including and perhaps especially schools, affect who we are and who we become, they shape our world and our identities. Too readily we credit institutions with power over us. However, we must remember that institutions are created and operated by people. "In fact, institutions are us" (Palmer, 1998, p. 206) and, as such, we have the capacity to shape them. "If we are even partly responsible for creating institutional dynamics, we possess some degree of power to alter them" (Palmer, 1998, p. 206). Each of us has the ability to resist conformity, to question why we do what we do. We have the capacity to push against the "answers" that are given to us (through "research" or statistical results) about the best way to teach, the best practices for assessment, the most effective way to discipline, the steps necessary for successful school leadership, the ways to increase student graduation rates.

> The trouble with statistics, then, is not that they are wrong, but that they miss what
> really matters. And in the process, they reinforce the idea that the best that we can

expect of human beings is that they conform to these laws of nature. (Levinson,

2010, p. 484)

 When we view ourselves as determined in a determined world, we are unable to

recognize the ways that the world might be "out of joint" and consequently we are unable to "set

it right". We cannot care for, renew, or protect, what we cannot see needs care, renewal, or

protection. The inability to see what needs attention is a consequence of living in a labour-

focused society that targets necessity and self-preservation at the expense of plurality, thrives on

means/end goals, fosters world-alienation, conformity and complacency, and honours

deterministic ideologies. "[T]he simple fact of one's existence in a given reality makes it difficult

to recognize in *what is* anything other than what was meant to be" (Zerilli, 2002, p. 549).

Natality, however, provides for newness and beginning. As Arendt (1978b) suggests "[t]he very

capacity for beginning is rooted in natality…in the fact that human beings…again and again

appear in the world by virtue of birth" (p. 217) and it is the fact that each of us is new, unique

and different from others that we carry the possibility of renewing and re-visioning the world, of

setting it right.

Nurturing Educational Willing in Schools

The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical laws and

their probability, which for all practical, everyday purposes amounts to certainty;

the new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle. The fact that man is

capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is

able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only

because each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new

comes into the world. (Arendt, 1958, p. 178)

While we cannot escape the feeling that our institutions/our schools "seem to have a life of their own" (Zerilli, 2002, p. 543) that controls and determines what we do and how we do it, they are fashioned and formed by human beings. What and who we are "is always conditioned, but in no way determined" (Zerilli, 2002, p. 543); we are able to interrupt processes and practice, alter history, change institutions, and change the narratives we live by. We need to recognize that wherever there are narratives, there are counter-narratives; "every tradition contains within its master narrative a series of counter-narratives that are a source of tremendous insight into the shortcomings of the predominant narrative" (Levinson, 2010, p. 485). The way things are, is not the only way for things to be (for better or for worse).

As each of us act in the world, our actions ripple outward affecting those around us, though *how* each action, each word, and each deed affect others, can never finally be known. Once we act, we cannot control the outcome. "Whoever begins to act knows that he has started something that he can never fore-tell, if only because his own deed has already changed everything and made it even more unpredictable" (Arendt, 1993, pp. 84-85). Arendt understood contingency as an unavoidable aspect of living in the world with others; the unexpected and the surprising is always possible. Our world can change in an instant and accepting contingency allows us to recognize the fragility of human affairs and our common world, even as we see the need for renewal and ethical-political action. "The conditions of the world *as it is* are given, but the world is also *as it is made*. As such, it is in need of constant care and upkeep" (Levinson, 2010, p. 476). Fostering a commitment to care, attention, and renewal of the common world is quite different, and often directly opposes, a focus on self-sufficiency and "success", which includes schooling that is focused on "living life". Our classrooms and schools exist in a position of tension where too often we "actively, if unwittingly, help young people to circumvent the

world" (Levinson, 2010, p. 469) rather than encouraging them to know it and engage with it. Our challenge then, if we hope to foster natality as the expression of human freedom in a plural world, is to confront this tension and support children in caring for themselves, *and* finding ways to renew and care for the world by cultivating an enduring and genuine love for it.

Educating for a love of the world, for natality and renewal, requires teachers to nurture agency, political responsibility, an understanding of our belatedness and respect for the space 'in-between,' the space that both holds us together and separates us. Examples certainly exist in our schools, but they are not the norm. Rather they represent teachers resisting many of the entrenched and established expectations of "Real School," such as management and use of time. My friend who spent the day with her class in wonder over the spider and its web, allowing children to question, learn, and share together, was willing to let go of her plans and attend to the opportunity that presented itself, as well as to the children and their responses. She identified a thread of curiosity and allowed herself and her students to follow that thread without knowing where it would lead, creating space for wonder, exploration, and the emergence of the new. This may seem like a simple example, but I believe that most examples of nurturing natality in school are (seemingly) simple. They do, however, require that the teacher understand the world *as it is*, be able to question what is, and understand her responsibility in educating, in creating space for children to appear and to find their own understanding. It requires a different attitude toward teaching and children—and a different understanding of education than our school systems generally promote and encourage. What we need to protect and promote is plurality and natality, respect, diversity, openness, and wonder. "Discipline" and "behaviour management" are foreign concepts in educational classrooms because there is a culture of respect and care.

Creating space where children can exercise non-sovereign agency relies upon having space for them to appear and engage with one another. Children need to already know they have a voice, that their opinions and ideas will be heard, respected, and challenged by others, and that they have a responsibility to contribute and to appear. I recently entered a multi-age classroom where a math lesson was underway. Students were working in groups on a number of white boards around the classroom where they were clearly attempting to solve a mathematical problem. One student was beginning to explain the equation he had contributed to the group. I could see that the answer he had was wrong, as I am sure, could several of his classmates and teacher. However, we all listened patiently as the teacher asked him to explain his thinking. As he worked through the equation, it became evident that his "answer" was not wrong at all, but reflected his current understanding of mathematical processes. He had not yet learned about order of operations or division beyond simple remainders. His work was based on his current knowledge, and explaining his thinking allowed the teacher to understand exactly what he understood and how he could further develop his skills. The teacher acknowledged that the work was correct based on the process used and then queried the class about how the answer might be *more* accurate, which lead to an explanation by another student (with contributions from a few others) about order of operations. The discussion continued amongst the students with obvious excitement and enthusiasm about this new learning.

It was evident that the students in this classroom respected each other, respected the importance of "mistakes", and felt empowered to contribute. In other words, this was an example of a classroom where students had agency, had space to appear, were able to use their voice to share ideas, and to challenge each other and to learn together. "They understood that it takes courage to appear in the company of equals who can 'talk back'" (Levinson, 2010, p. 475), but

they also understood that this meant they could learn from each person in their classroom and in turn challenge *their* ideas. Certainly, the teacher was teaching and leading the class, but in a way that allowed the children to appear and to be seen as thinking participants. She was able to pay attention to what was happening with the children's thinking and to move learning forward, able to accept surprises and to approach what seemed unusual with a desire to understand and to learn herself. Clearly, she had been intentional about creating a culture where children felt safe appearing amongst their peers and accepted responsibility for participating.

Classrooms and schools are, in many ways, microcosms of the larger world and society, places where children learn about and begin to practice politics and political responsibility (or lack thereof). Schools have the potential to offer safe spaces where plurality and natality can be nurtured, resisting the constant pressure of schooling's common script. Although it is true that "the world does not simply precede us but effectively constitutes us as particular kinds of people" (Levinson, 1997, p. 437), if we are aware of *how* we are constituted, we can insert ourselves into the world with intention rather than passivity. When we acknowledge "the ways our very being is conditioned by what has come before us" (Levinson, 1997, p. 437) we can begin to make a difference in our world, rather than feeling powerless to initiate anything new.

In schools, as in mass society, political responsibility and respect for natality are generally usurped by conformity and complacency, by entrenched ideas about what the "Real World" is, especially when we allow our belatedness to define and determine us. We readily label and identify students in various ways: academic, bright, cognitively challenged, socially awkward, kind and helpful, difficult, athletic, artistic, logical, impulsive, quirky, and out labeling contributes to the ways students perceive themselves and what they believe they are capable (or not) of doing. Meanwhile, teachers focus on the predetermined outcomes, tasks, policies,

procedures, practices, and expectations of "Real School" and "the faculties of thought and imagination that make us human and make our relationships rich human relationships, rather than relationships of mere use and manipulation" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 6) are nowhere to be found. Metz's (1989) "Real School" and the "common script" reinforce rationality, sovereignty, and the dominance of economic concerns, leaving little space for education or ethical-political action, unless there is intentional resistance, and even then it is anomalous.

Teachers have an obligation to protect "the conditions of plurality and natality that make it possible for us to build a shared world" (Levinson, 2010, p. 476) rather than simply reinforcing the world as it seems to be given. "To 'preserve newness' is to teach such that students acquire an understanding of themselves in relation to the world in a way that holds open the possibility that the world and one's position in it might be changed" (Levinson, 1997, p. 443). Natality, as Levinson (1997) further explains, "stands for those moments in our lives in which we take responsibility for our situation by refusing to become passive vectors of social forces" (p. 439) and instead recognize that we are (or at least can be) social actors with the capacity to initiate the unexpected and open up new ways of being.

Our world is made up of a wealth of diverse and unique individuals and this difference is critical to any plural, democratic society, and hence, to any educational space. Helping students understand and value plurality and natality is an educational responsibility. Education "requires an appreciation for the complexity and interconnectedness of people and other living things, if we have any hope of maintaining both the planet and our democratic institutions" (Meier, 2002, p. 180); it is not about jobs and possessions but about expanding the soul, about becoming who we are, developing and attending to the parts of ourselves that make us human, which can only be done together *with* other people. "[E]ach of us has the capacity to renew a world that seems to

each generation, 'out of joint,' yet this process is never completed. The world is never set right once and for all" (Levinson, 1997, p. 436), yet we each have a responsibility to try and to make a contribution towards setting things right.

Setting the world right requires particular classroom conditions and teachers who are able "to assume joint responsibility for the world and the child in relation to it" (Levinson, 1997, p. 444), where the world is taught *as it is* with the opportunity to explore possibility rather than feeling doomed to accept the world as "impervious to change or already transformed and thus no longer in need of alteration," (Levinson, 1997, p. 442) determined and beyond their reach. We need to help children understand how each of them is a new beginning bringing the possibility of renewal and hope, as well as fostering a love of the world that will protect and preserve natality.

> The problem of the new is a political question about how we, members of
>
> democratic communities, can affirm human freedom as a political reality in a
>
> world of objects and events whose causes and effects we can neither control nor
>
> predict with certainty. (Zerilli, 2005, p. 162)

Educators are responsible for "introducing the young to a world that precedes them and that they will be responsible for sustaining and occasionally setting to rights" (Levinson, 2010, p. 470). A substantial challenge, but certainly not impossible.

If we consider once again the math classroom, each student understood that there are certain mathematical principles to be learned; they also knew that how each of them came to know and understand those principles varied. These students were aware that different ways of seeing a math problem as well as "errors" in solving it, were opportunities that, when shared, deepened everyone's understanding. This class, because of respect for plurality and the space created for appearance, was able to confront more challenging and sensitive issues as well. They

were able to begin to understand social positioning and perspective, how our various and unique backgrounds and stories differ from one another and affect how we know the world. They were able to listen to opinions and ideas that were different than their own, challenge them and work to understand them. They were essentially provided a space where they could test the fact of their belatedness and experiment with enough safety to begin to generate meaning and significance for themselves.

We cannot expect this understanding to be easy, and need to be patient and persistent, repeatedly allowing children the opportunity to search, to speak, to think, and to listen, to let their meanings emerge over time. The space 'in-between' past and future is critical to preserving the new and necessitates that we recognize and know the world we have entered, understand how the world that is shapes who we are and who we become. We are born into a world that existed long before our arrival and is the culmination of years and millennia of others creating and contributing to it. Educators can help children appreciate this, teaching *what is*, what possibilities exist for renewal, and helping students understand their space 'in-between.' Patiently protecting the space to generate meaning and potentially interrupt apparent givens can seem thankless, tireless, repetitive, ineffective, frustrating, and unproductive, but "[t]he possibility that these students might do something unexpected, disrupting the fatefulness of identities and unsettling the social processes to which they give rise, is what redeems teaching and offers hope" (Levinson, 1997, p. 447). The possibility of disrupting what is and thereby preserving the new is at the heart of education.

Education is not about the predictable, but the possible. Living in the world with others means that we confront multiple, diverse and unpredictable wills that we need to acknowledge and work with rather than working to control. As educators, we have a responsibility to help

children "break with the taken-for-granted, what some call the 'natural attitude,' and look through the lenses of various ways of knowing, seeing, and feeling in a conscious endeavour to impose different orders upon experience" (Greene, 2001, p. 5). We need to find ways to help children find their voice in the midst of diverse and various voices, create space for them to attend to the world in new ways, and to take a stand for (and know) what they believe. "It is this freedom of the will mentally to *take a position* that sets man apart from the rest of creation" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 136) and that schools ought to encourage. Thinking destroys givens and what is taken-for-granted. Willing allows us to direct our attention and begin to put the world back together after thinking's destruction, to re-construct, re-create, and renew. Teachers and children need occasions to create educational spaces where natality is protected. "I think what we want to make possible is the living of lyrical moments, moments at which human beings (freed to feel, to know and to imagine) suddenly understand their own lives in relation to all that surrounds" (Greene, 2001, p. 7). Moments where we can prepare to make judgments. Moments where we recognize that

> [e]ducation is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 1993, p. 193).

Chapter 5: Judging in Dark Times

The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the vanquished [cause] pleases Cato.

—Lucan's *Pharsalia*

If I could remove the magic from my path

And utterly forget all the enchanted spells

Nature, I would stand before you, a man alone

Then would be worth the effort of being a man.

—Goethe's *Faust*, II, V, 11202-11407

When Arendt died suddenly of a heart attack in December 1975, she had just finished drafting the first two sections of *The Life of the Mind* and was preparing to write the final section about another form of thinking distinct from thinking as wondering and thinking as 2-in-1 dialogue: thinking as ethical-political judging. On her typewriter was a blank page with the heading "Judging" and the above two epigraphs. While Arendt left some evidence of her possible direction for "Judging"—e.g., her 1970 *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (Beiner, 1982) and several essays such as "Thinking and Moral Considerations"—projecting a coherent conception of ethical political judging would be foolhardy. Instead, I search her writings to find significant considerations involved in making ethical-political judgments under conditions of worldlessness, that is, when the required private and public spaces for action are absent. My efforts sometimes draw on a source often neglected: Arendt's 1968 profiles of early 20th century figures who struggled to provide illumination under the most hostile conditions: *Men in Dark Times*. Arendt (1968) explains:

Even in the darkest of times we have the right to expect some illumination, and that illumination may come less from theories and concepts than from the uncertain, flickering, and often weak light that some men and women, in their lives and works, will kindle under almost all circumstances. (p. ix)

I read Arendt's profiles as studies of people attempting to make ethical-political judgments. I am especially interested in how they see particular other people; adopt a spectator stance in order to appraise possibilities; carefully choose their judging company; discover, assess, and select relevant examples or models; and imagine and structure their judgments to woo the consent of other spectators.

Seeing the Person

The first epigraph in *Judging* refers to those narratives or stories of the vanquished who have been defeated and then quickly ignored or forgotten in consequence. As human beings we have a "ferocious human proclivity to become enclosed in ideologies or fictions" (Kateb, 2010, p. 30) that become the narratives of the victors, and these narratives often fail to recognize the plural and contingent nature of a complex world. Eichmann embodied this proclivity, relying exclusively on the false bannisters and fictions entrenched in the Nazi regime. However, against all odds, some people did not comply with Nazi ideology and their stories of resistance stood in stark contrast to Eichmann's obedience. Arendt (2006) sought out these little-known stories because she believed that narratives of lost causes can demonstrate "that under conditions of terror most people will comply but *some people will not*" (p. 233). Such people were able to, for whatever reason and despite critical consequence to themselves, defy authority and law and *rely on their own judgment*. Arendt wanted to understand how they came to exercise this kind of autonomy in making ethical-political judgments.

Arendt's research into political judgment begins by looking for stories of those who were defeated, and largely excluded, during dark times. Too often when the stories of the victors define history, *other* stories disappear. She searches for meaning and truth through "a kind of disruptive faithfulness to factual reality, one that interrupts efforts to derive practical conclusions, as if automatically, from…simplified facts" (Markell, 2018, p. 508). An ability to distinguish particular narratives, perspectives, and voices that disrupt the dominant or victorious narratives, is essential if we wish to live meaningfully and understand the world as it is. Defeated causes may carry pearls of wisdom or insight that can illuminate and remind us what it means to be human.

The product of Arendt's research, *Men in Dark Times* (1968), is a series of portraits of the defeated, but not destroyed, including such figures of the pre-Nazi and Nazi era such as Rosa Luxemburg, Isak Dinesen, Pope John XXIII, Karl Jaspers, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht. Arguably the hero of the book is Karl Jaspers, Arendt's teacher and lifelong mentor. Jaspers (1883-1969) began his professional life as a psychiatrist, but soon began to study psychology and then philosophy, becoming chair of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg in 1922 where Arendt moved after studying with Heidegger at Marburg. Jaspers and Heidegger were key figures in the development of existential philosophy in Germany, but soon became bitter rivals largely because of Heidegger's support for the Nazis. Jaspers, married to a Jewish woman, refused to cooperate with the new regime and was soon dismissed from his professorship and subjected to a publication ban. Indeed, he and his wife were only saved from being sent to a concentration camp by the arrival of American troops in April 1945. Postwar, Jaspers was appointed rector of the University of Heidelberg and focused largely on the development of a democratic civic culture in West Germany.

Jaspers was

a man who was not tempted to do evil, he was the opposite of Eichmann, who was

not tempted *not* to do evil—and [Arendt] attributed this inviolability, this

independence of judgment to 'a secret trust in men, in the *humanitas* of the human

race.' Such a trust is the precondition for judging freely. (Young-Bruehl, 1982, pp.

299-300)

While Arendt bases her conception of politics on the ancient *polis* and is often accused of

romanticizing ancient Athenian democracy, she was well aware of the elitism of a system in

which only native adult males could participate in political life, excluding women, slaves,

foreigners (people from other Greek cities), and barbarians (people from outside Greece). She

contrasts Athenian with Roman citizenship in which people from widely different economic,

educational, and ethnic backgrounds had to determine how they would share the common world

(Arendt, 1968, p. 25)—an ideal of human plurality best captured by the Roman notion of

humanitas in which people demonstrated "their trust in the love [that humans] have for meaning,

the love they have for the existence of things and people, and the communicative pleasure they

take in reflecting on those things and people" (Young-Bruehl, 1982, p. 302). Jaspers

demonstrated his understanding of *humanitas* and of democratic citizenship by

exercising his incomparable faculty for dialogue, the splendid precision of his way

of listening, the constant readiness to give a candid account of himself, the

patience to linger over a matter under discussion, and above all the ability to lure

what is otherwise passed over in silence into the area of discourse, to make it

worth talking about. Thus in speaking and listening, he succeeds in changing,

widening, sharpening—or, as he himself would beautifully put it, in illuminating.

(Arendt, 1968, pp. 78-79)

In contrast, Eichmann was completely incapable of seeing other people in their particularity. Instead he relied on the laws, rules, and expectations—the false bannisters—that surrounded him and was unable to take responsibility for his actions. Dedication to the Nazi narrative and an inability to think for himself was repeatedly and consistently evident in Eichmann's thoughtless use of language (clichés) and reliance on established categories to understand and explain the world and himself. Eichmann's "banality was a phenomenon that really couldn't be overlooked. The phenomenon expressed itself in those unimaginable clichés and turns of phrase that [were] heard over and over again" (Arendt, 2018, p. 278) during the trial. There was no evidence of independent thinking. Eichmann was both a criminal and a "clown".

Accepting the Responsibility to be a Judging Spectator

The second epigraph that Arendt intended to use in introducing *Judging* identifies the need to be willing to accept responsibility to think and to judge; indeed, only the individual—the story-teller, the observer and spectator—can generate meaning from the events of history. She can bring her own unique perspective, interpretation, and understanding to events, with the potential of generating new understanding and new possibility. Arendt was "more interested in those defeated causes in which action and the revolutionary spirit became manifest and tangible than in the claims to 'human progress' and the 'success of History.'" (Bernstein, 1986, p. 236-7). Too often, Arendt warns, we allow grand theories to take on universal authority rather than recognizing our individual responsibility to create our world and its history. In sum, life does not just happen to us, we make our lives:

If judgment is our faculty for dealing with the past, the historian is the inquiring

man who by relating it sits in judgment over it. If that is so, we may reclaim our

human dignity, win it back, as it were, from the pseudo-divinity named

History…without denying history's importance but denying its right to being the

ultimate judge. (Arendt, 1978a, p. 216)

Because only *individuals* can judge, Arendt argues that History diminishes human dignity by

assuming comprehensiveness, greatness, and truth. Humanity as a collective does not judge

history; individuals do: As Beiner (1982) suggests, "judgment is rendered not by the collective

destiny of mankind but by the 'man alone,' the judging spectator who stands before nature

unencumbered" (p. 127).

The idea of Progress, like History, looms as a given and seemingly irrefutable truth.

Always future-oriented, Progress assumes ongoing growth and improvement which Arendt

views as antithetical to human dignity because it "means that the story has no end. The end of the

story itself is infinity. There is no point at which we might stand still and look back" (Beiner,

1982, p. 77), reflect and judge what has happened. The willingness and ability to stand still long

enough to withdraw temporarily from the world into safety and privacy that we might think,

reflect, and remember is necessary for generating meaning and significance in our lives. "What

sense there is can be detected only by the wisdom of hindsight, when men no longer act but

begin to tell the story of what has happened" (Arendt, 1978b, p. 155). To tell the story requires

knowing and judging what has happened and mentally preparing to share it.

Judging, for Arendt, includes being willing to step back and observe, to remove ourselves

and become a spectator of people, events, things and ideas, so that we might be able and

prepared to make appraisals. In Arendt's *Denktagebuch* or intellectual diary, Marshall (2010)

discovers a distinction that Arendt only briefly mentions in her *Kant Lectures*. Arendt translates the Greek concept of *krinein* (judgment) into two different German words—*urteilen* and *entscheiden*. *Urteilen* is "judgment as a passive, consensual capacity to discern" (Marshall, 2010, p. 369) or appraise a particular situation; *entscheiden*, in contrast, is "judgment as an active, agonal capacity to decide" how to act (Marshall, 2010, p. 369) consistent with Aristotelian *phronesis* or Arendtian action. *Krinein* is the general "rhetorical capacity" (Marshall, 2010, p. 372) exercised by Socrates to challenge the unfounded beliefs and ideas of those with whom he engaged in dialogue, essentially making public, in discourse, the thinking process. Socratic dialogue never left people with answers, but only perplexities, compelling them to re-think their opinions and perspectives. *Urteilen* is judging (understood as appraisal) from the standpoint of a spectator removed from the action and in a position to accurately discern and appraise the particular (person, event, thing, idea) that is under consideration'. *Entscheiden*, in contrast, is judging from an actor's perspective in order to determine the best course of action in particular circumstances to further some larger good.

In observing, the judging spectator is able to see more clearly and to set aside much of what conditions her. Being able to detach from the demands of the world and our own interests and personal agendas, allows the particular to which we are attending to be seen *as it is*. Removal and distance promote objectivity and require privacy, a stepping back and away from the public realm. The perspective of the spectator, because it is from a distance, has the potential to be disinterested in a way impossible for the actor who

> is always 'in the thick of things', is committed to this or that cause, is in pursuit of
> a particular end, desires a particular outcome, is motivated by particular reasons, is
> interested in objects, events and actions because he/she deems them to be right or

wrong, good or bad. The disinterested standpoint…is the standpoint of the

spectator. (Yar, 2000, p. 17)

Arendt (1993) makes it clear that "judgment must liberate itself from 'subjective private conditions'…from the idiosyncrasies which naturally determine the outlook of each individual in his privacy" (p. 217). If judging is not to be self-serving and if it is valid, it must be disinterested, autonomous, and free. What "endows it with these qualities of disinterestedness, autonomy, and freedom is the ability of the…spectator to rise above everyday interests by claiming an experience…to which all men can (in principle) give their assent" (Beiner, 1982, p. 121). Whatever judgment is reached, if it is shared with others, it must be reasonable, understandable, and significant. For example, we can talk of the Holocaust in general or we can talk of an individual's experience of the Holocaust. The individual experience —the particular—is likely to be more meaningful than the general. It is through particulars that we are able to begin to understand, to realize, and to connect. Judging

> is neither private opinion (with its irresolvable dissensus), nor the coercive
>
> universality of cognitive reason or truth; 'it is a mode of thinking which is capable
>
> of dealing with the particular in its particularity but which nevertheless makes the
>
> claim to communal validity'. (Yar, 2000, p. 11)

When we share a story or narrative, we release the meaning of the particular (the story) and those with whom we share it are able to more fully understand. Nonetheless, Arendt (1993) explains that "judgment is endowed with a certain specific validity but is never universally valid" (p. 217).

For Arendt, accepting the responsibility to create meaning from human experience is often best modeled by poets. She began writing poetry as a teenager and continued throughout her life

(although keeping most of her work private). She often quotes poetry in her public work and was close to two of the major poets of the 20th century, Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and W. H. Auden (1907-1973). Indeed, she takes the title of *Men in Dark Times* from the first line of Brecht's 1940 poem "*An die Nachgeborenen*" [To Those Born After Us]: "Truly I live in dark times!" In her portrait of Brecht, she focuses on certain key lines from the poem including:

> In the cities I arrived at the time of disorder
>
> when hunger ruled.
>
> Among men, I came at the time of upheaval,
>
> and I rebelled with them.
>
> Thus the time passed which was given me on earth. (Arendt, 1968, p. 224)

She writes of Brecht: "This, then was the man: gifted with penetrating, non-theoretical, non-contemplative intelligence that went to the heart of the matter" (Arendt, 1968, pp. 227-228). Arendt writes that at its best Brecht's poetry was able to display a "passionate longing for a world in which all can be seen and heard, the passionate wrath against history that remembered a few and forgot so many, a history that under the pretense of remembering caused us to forget" (Arendt, 1968, pp. 310-11). Brecht's remoteness allowed him to keep his eye fixed on

> 'the catastrophes of the time in the world' and not on 'anything that concerned
>
> him,' ensuring that he had the distance from reality necessary to capture and
>
> present the larger meanings of particular events—to practice the 'precise generality
>
> of the literary art'. (Markell, 2018, p. 531)

Eichmann, of course, embodied all that Brecht eschewed, beginning with his worship of success and his refusal to accept his responsibility to see and judge for himself. Eichmann "failed by not judging at all, by not being able to see himself from the spectator's vantage point, and by

not creating within himself the plurality and capaciousness that judging-spectatorship needs" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1097). Eichmann represents many who are "plagued by a disinclination to judge [and]…an overly comfortable, settled identity too at home with itself and too little provoked to see and judge itself from the outside" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1097).

Choosing Company

In order to judge at all, we need to situate ourselves in the physical, social, and political world with other people, that is, to employ our common sense—a singularly contentious topic. In her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy,* Arendt begins to interpret Kant's work on judgments of taste and his understanding of common sense or *sensus communis*. Arendt claims that "common sense, the faculty of judgment and discriminating between right and wrong, [is] based on the sense of taste" (Beiner, 1982, p. 64), a silent sense that is private, personal, and which gives rise to "immediate and overwhelming" (Beiner, 1982, p. 64) impressions of liking or disliking. Referencing Cicero's claims that "everybody discriminates, distinguishes between right and wrong in matters of art and proportion by some silent sense without any knowledge of art or proportion" (Beiner, 1992, p. 63), Arendt draws attention to the fact that human beings are capable of making claims about preference whether knowledgeable or not; these claims "are rooted in common sense, and of such things nature has willed that no one should be altogether unable to sense and experience them" (Beiner, 1982, p. 63).

Arendt draws on Aristotle and Kant to argue that taste and common sense allow us to be anchored "in a world that would otherwise be without meaning and existential reality: a world unjudged would have no human import for us" (Beiner, 1982, p. 152). Judging allows us to make sense of our physical and social world, making it possible to bear the responsibility of our freedom. Arendt (1978b) explains: "we are doomed to be free by virtue of being born, no matter

whether we like freedom or abhor its arbitrariness, are 'pleased' with it or prefer to escape its awesome responsibility by electing some form of fatalism" (p.217). Our freedom, according to Arendt, might only be mediated by appealing to the faculty of judgment because it is judgment that "keeps one from being crushed by the opposing forces of past and future while standing in 'this gateway, Moment'" (Beiner, 1992, p. 153). In judging the people, events, concepts, and ideas of the world, we exercise our freedom and establish meaning—"judging almost becomes a kind of vicarious action, a way of recouping our citizenship in default of a genuine public realm" (Beiner, 1992, p. 153). When there is little prospect for genuine action and freedom, exercising common sense allows us, at a minimum, to position ourselves in the world.

Aristotle's Common Sense

Aristotle's *nous* (understanding what is real and true) aims at identifying the first principles or starting places for human reasoning based on our shared human sensory experience, that is, our common sense. Aristotle recognizes that shared senses give "us the objects we have in common with all living things that have the same sensory equipment" (Beiner, 1982, pp. 64-65). What makes human beings different from animals who also understand the world through their senses, however, is humans' ability to use reason to create our world and our reality.

> The only character of the world by which to gauge its reality is its being common
> to us all, and common sense occupies such a high rank in the hierarchy of political
> qualities because it is the one sense that fits into reality as a whole our five strictly
> individual senses and the strictly particular data they perceive. It is by virtue of
> common sense that the other sense perceptions are known to disclose reality.
> (Arendt, 1958, p. 208)

Common sense "deserves credit for the fact that our private and 'subjective' five senses and their data are fitted to a nonsubjective, 'objectively' common world that we may share and evaluate together with others" (Arendt, 2018, p. 181). Common sense is a kind of sixth sense that fits the five other senses together and allows us to reflect on the representations of our sensory experience. Moreover, we can remember the objects we have sensed long after they are no longer present and reflect on them if we choose. Our imagination "transforms the objects of the objective senses into 'sensed' objects…by reflecting not on an object but on its representation. The represented object now arouses one's pleasure or displeasure, not direct perception of the object" (Beiner, 1982, p. 65).

Kant's Sensus Communis

In contrast, Kant transforms common sense, "a sense like our other senses" (Beiner, 1982, p. 70), into the *sensus communis*, "an extra sense…that fits us into a community" (Beiner, 1982, p. 70). As a community sense, *sensus communis* depends on an awareness of others and their perspectives and judgments that Kant calls an 'enlarged mentality.' Such thinking necessarily relies on the ability to disregard "the subjective personal conditions of [my] own judgment, by which so many others confined, and reflects upon it from a *general standpoint* (which [I] can only determine by placing [my]self at the standpoint of others)" (Kant cited in Beiner, 1982, p.71). Kant then develops three maxims for *sensus communis* consistent with his idea of human freedom: to think for oneself, to put oneself in the place of everyone else (enlarged mentality), and to be in agreement with oneself. When we are able to distance ourselves from what conditions and shapes our outlook on the world, we are better able to think impartially and to develop convincing, well-founded positions and arguments to support our opinions. Kant's

maxims stipulate that we not only need to agree with ourselves, but we also potentially, need to agree with others.

Community sense makes it possible to enlarge one's mentality and to think from the standpoint of others. Doing so involves the ability to limit private, personal conditions and circumstances in order to include other perspectives. "Private conditions condition us; imagination and reflection enable us to liberate ourselves from them and to attain that relative impartiality that is the specific virtue of judgment" (Beiner, 1982, p. 73). The ability to set our own prejudices aside in order to consider how others perceive the world, what opinions they might hold and why, is necessary for the development of an enlarged mentality and for impartial or 'disinterested' judgment. So long as we hold tight to our personal conditions, we will not be able to exercise our community sense; our "sensus communis is what judgment appeals to in everyone.… In other words, when one judges, one judges as a member of a community" (Beiner, 1982, p. 72) and it is this 'appeal' that gives judgment its validity. Our judgments are never guaranteed or certain (like cognitive truths), but are always open to argument and debate. As we attempt to convince others of the correctness of our views, others will also work to convince us, and in doing so, if we respect Kant's maxims, we enlarge our thinking and accept our freedom.

Arendt's *Sensus Communis*

> The reason I believe so much in Kant's Critique of Judgment is not because I am interested in aesthetics but because I believe that the way in which we say 'This is right, this is wrong,' is not very different from the way in which we say 'This is beautiful, this is ugly.' That is, we are now prepared to meet the phenomena, so to speak, head-on without any preconceived system. (Arendt, 2018, pp.481-482)

Arendt's interpretation of *The Critique of Judgment* is certainly original; indeed, she

sometimes even claims to know Kant's thinking better than he did himself (Beiner, 1982, p. 141). Most crucially for Arendt, the *sensus communis* does not involve simply projecting an abstract world community, but actually engaging others (practicing the virtue of *humanitas*). She emphasizes "that at least one of our *mental faculties*, the faculty of judgment, presupposes the presence of others" (Beiner, 1982, p. 74). Arendt contends that we always judge as members of a community, guided by what we have in common, but we are also world citizens and it is as world citizens that we must judge political matters. We must enlarge our thinking as widely as possible, taking the perspective of a world spectator.

Following Arendt, both art (culture) and politics depend on a public world; "both are concerned with how the world looks, how it appears to those who share it, and both attend to the quality of the worldly dwelling that envelops us" (Beiner, 1982, p. 103). Arendt argues that judgments concerning culture and politics therefore depend on discussion and persuasion:

> Culture and politics…belong together because it is not knowledge or truth which is at stake, but rather judgment and decision, the judicious exchange of opinion about the sphere of public life and the common world, and the decision what manner of action is to be taken in it, as well as to how it is to look henceforth, what kinds of things are to appear in it. (Arendt, 1993, pp. 219-220)

The implication is that "in matters of 'taste' I never judge only for myself, for the act of judging always implies a commitment to communicate my judgment: that is, judgment is rendered with a view to persuade others of its validity" (Beiner, 1982, pp. 119-20).

In judging, one must consider with "disinterested reflection" the various opinions of the judging community, as well as one's own opinion "in order to satisfy oneself and an imagined community of potential collocutors that a particular has been adequately appraised" (Beiner,

1982, p. 120). Our ability to make ethical-political judgments is, in part, a public concern because

> our decisions about right and wrong will depend upon our choice of company, of those with whom we wish to spend our lives…. Out of the unwillingness or inability to choose one's examples and one's company, and out of the unwillingness or inability to relate to others through judgment, arise the real…stumbling-blocks which human powers cannot remove because they were not caused by human and humanly understandable motives. Therein lies the horror and, at the same time, the banality of evil. (Beiner, 1992, p. 113)

The willingness and ability to choose one's company, Arendt iterates, is something we must intentionally do. Indifference to the composition of our company leads to indifference in judging, for which Eichmann specifically, and the Holocaust in general, proved tragic.

Again, Jaspers is Arendt's model. Jaspers may have been an accomplished scholar, but he was firm in his protection of public space and in his belief that "both philosophy and politics concern everyone" (Arendt, 1968, p. 74). Jaspers' commitment to the public realm was evident throughout his life. He wrote for both the general public and for academics, reflecting his belief that philosophy and politics are everyone's responsibility. Arendt (1968), admired how Jaspers "more than once left the academic sphere and its conceptual language to address the general reading public" (p. 74). For Jaspers "responsibility is not a burden…. Rather, it flows naturally out of an innate pleasure in making manifest, in clarifying the obscure, in illuminating the darkness. His affirmation of the public realm is in the final analysis only the result of his loving light and clarity" (Arendt, 1968, p. 75).

Jaspers served as an example of how we might strive to become guardians of a common world where *humanitas* is an ideal:

This realm, in which Jaspers is at home and to which he has opened the way for us, does not lie in the beyond and is not utopian; it is not of yesterday nor of tomorrow; it is of the present and of this world. Reason has created it and freedom reigns in it. …It is the realm of *humanitas*, which everyone can come to out of his own origins. Those who enter it recognize one another, for they are 'like sparks, brightening to a more luminous glow, dwindling to invisibility, alternating and in constant motion. The sparks see one another, and each flames more brightly because it sees others' and can hope to be seen by them. (Arendt, 1968, p. 80)

The practice of thinking, therefore, is something that happens between people (though it begins within) and is essential for preparing to engage with others to test their various perspectives on a shared world. Jaspers, because of his commitment to 'limitless communication' and truth that 'binds us together', because of his unwavering sense of responsibility for the world, was able to venture into the public and encourage others to join him there.

Not surprisingly, Eichmann's refusal to see others was reinforced by his choice of company, which seemed to be less a choice than a default based on his need to obey. The Nazi party superiors and commanding officers that Eichmann admired and tried to emulate were his "judging" community. "It would be idle to try to figure out which was stronger in him, his admiration for Hitler or his determination to remain a law-abiding citizen of the Third Reich when Germany was already in ruins" (Arendt, 2006, p. 149). The possibility of connecting with those who socially and professionally outranked him motivated Eichmann, and those moments when he found himself in their company were memorable for him. One notable and disturbing

example from his trial was his description of a trip to Bratslavia to meet with the Minister of the Interior about "the wholesale deportation of Slovak Jewry" (Arendt, 2006, p. 81). While there, he had the opportunity to bowl with the Minister and he bragged about this social outing in court as if trying to elevate his status for the judges, jury, and audience. When forced back to the questions at hand about the "'evacuation action against Jews from Slovakia…[h]e admitted his error at once: "'Clear, clear, that was an order from Berlin, they did not send me there to go bowling'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 82). Even on trial for crimes against humanity, Eichmann wanted people to understand his near success, his elevation in status. The result though, at least for Arendt, was that she saw in Eichmann, no monster, but a fool.

Diving for Lost Pearls

Full fathom five thy father lies,

Of his bones are coral made,

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

Nothing of him that doth fade

But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.

—Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, I, ii

Excavating the past, searching for what is of value in any cultural tradition, involves discovering and cutting out the 'rich and strange' from what has been passed down. Writing and literature can offer a rich tapestry of cultural artifacts and quotations. Taken from their context, quotations, for example, can convey new meanings, sometimes entirely at odds with the original intent. The power of quotations is "not the strength to preserve but to cleanse, to tear out of context, to destroy" (Arendt, 1968, p. 193) and in the destruction create space for new

understandings, new meanings. Arendt often used quotations in her writing, recognizing that "[t]here is no more effective way to break the spell of tradition than to cut out the 'rich and strange,' coral and pearls, from what had been handed down in one solid piece" (Arendt, 1968, p. 196). Discerning the lost pearls, recovering the fragments of what is of value within cultural traditions, Arendt compares to pearl diving—quest for treasures worth preserving, the search for particular stories that might serve as examples of ethical-political action.

> The ability to interpret particulars requires attunement to the possible and various particular actions and stories that surround us in order to appraise which are worth our attention. As in the case of texts, good judgment concerning the meaning of an action is a matter of managing to include as many particulars as possible within a unitary framework, of grasping as much as possible of the coherence underlying details…. (Ferrara, 2008, p. 57)

As we begin to interpret a text, a story, an action, we determine whether or not there is enough depth in our chosen example to have it stand as exemplary. "Arendt invokes Kant's idea of exemplary validity, where the example discloses generality without surrendering particularity" (Beiner, 1982, p. 130). Examples assist us in learning and understanding concepts, in extending what we know and how we know it. An "exemplar is and remains a particular that in its very particularity reveals the generality that otherwise could not be defined. Courage is *like* Achilles. Etc" (Beiner, 1982, p. 77).

Examples have power. "The force of the example is the force of what exerts appeal on us in all walks of life—in art as in politics" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 3). According to Ferrara (2008), exemplarity appears in two ways: "Sometimes what is exemplary embeds and reflects a normativity of which we are fully aware: we already know of what the example is an example"

(p. 3). For instance, if someone refers to courage and bravery, we are able to conjure examples

that exemplify courage and bravery, such as a grandparent serving in the war, a child standing up

to her friend who is encouraging her to lie, or more broadly, an example like Achilles, the

courageous Greek hero of the Trojan war. A second kind of exemplarity presents us with

something entirely new and unique where the

> exemplariness of the example is so pure and innovative that we first vaguely sense
>
> it by drawing on the analogy with past experiences and only subsequently do we
>
> succeed in identifying the normative moment so forcefully reflected in the object
>
> or action at hand. Fully grasping exemplarity in this case requires that we
>
> formulate ad hoc the principle of which it constitutes an instantiation. (Ferrara,
>
> 2008, p. 3)

In her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy,* Arendt explains that "Kant accords to

examples the same role in judgments that the intuitions called schemata have for experience and

cognition" (Beiner, 1982, p. 84). If someone talks about a table, we have an image of what a

table is, but not necessarily of the particular table to which the person is referring. Thus,

> the example helps one in the same way in which the schema helped one to
>
> recognize the table as a table. The examples lead and guide us, and the judgment
>
> thus acquires 'exemplary validity'. The example is the particular that contains in
>
> itself…a concept or a general rule. (Beiner, 1982, p. 84)

What makes an example compelling and universal Ferrara (2008) suggests, is its appeal to

sensus communis and an "intuitive sense of what it means to enhance and further or constrain

and stifle, our life" (Ferrara, 2008, p.60). A sense of "authenticity or integrity of an identity, what

is best for its flourishing, is the regulative idea that makes judgment function" (Ferrara, 2008, p.58). Kant's understanding of aesthetic judgment confirms that

> the awareness that the representation of a certain object is accompanied by a
> 'sensation of delight.' Such representation, continues Kant, 'is related entirely to the
> subject, indeed to its feeling of life—under the name of the feeling of pleasure or
> displeasure—which grounds an entirely special faculty for discriminating and
> judging that contributes nothing to cognition'. (Ferrara, 2008, p. 58)

Here the 'feeling of life' and 'sensation of delight' align with the idea or "feeling of the *promotion of life*", and "though we all express it differently, we all have a sense of what it means for our own identities to flourish or to stagnate" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 60). Good judgment then is intimately tied to "congruency of an identity with itself" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 60) and the idea of what it means to "flourish or attain authenticity" as a human being. Believing that the desire to flourish and live a fulfilled life is

> relevant for all individuals living in the human condition enables us to make sense
> of how a judgment that invokes no principles or concepts and addresses the
> potential, inherent in a given object of interpretation, for enhancing or furthering
> our lives, can claim universality after all. (Ferrara, 2008, p. 61)

Appraising Pearls

> By attending to the particular *qua* particular, in the form of an 'example,' the
> judging spectator is able to illuminate the universal without thereby reducing the
> particular to universals. The example is able to take on universal meaning while
> *retaining* its particularity, which is not the case when the particular serves merely

to indicate a historical 'trend.' Only in this way can human dignity be upheld.

(Beiner, 1982, p. 127)

Judging exemplarily is about choosing, interpreting, and appraising particulars that illuminate universals and help us understand and see the world more accurately. Using a particular to embody a universal however, is somewhat problematic because judging is "'the faculty of *thinking* the particular,' but—adds Arendt—'to *think* means to generalize,' hence judgment is 'the faculty of mysteriously combining the particular and the general.'" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 47). Arendt is well aware of the challenge and, using Kant, attempts to address it. She argues that the sense of taste is uniquely positioned to reflect judging, though she readily admits it is extraordinary that our most personal, subjective, noncommunicable, inner sense, ends up being used. "The most surprising aspect of this business is that common sense, the faculty of judgment and of discriminating between right and wrong, should be based on the sense of taste" (Beiner, 1982, p. 64). She goes on to explain that of our five senses, three—sight, sound, and touch—deal directly and objectively with objects. They "clearly give us objects of the external world and therefore are easily communicable (Beiner, 1982, p. 64). However, "[s]mell and taste give inner sensations that are entirely private and incommunicable; what I taste and what I smell cannot be expressed in words at all. They seem to be private senses by definition" (Beiner, 1982, p. 64). Taste is more internal (literally) and discriminating by nature, inciting pleasure and displeasure in a much more personal and immediate way than sight, sound, or touch. Sight, sound, and touch can more readily be re-viewed and re-presented than smell or taste. "Why then should taste…be elevated to and become the vehicle of the mental faculty of judgment? And judgment, in turn—that is not simply cognitive…but judgment between right and wrong—why

should this be based on this *private* sense" (Beiner, 1982, p. 64? The answer, or solution, Arendt identifies is imagination.

It is the reproductive imagination that allows us to "make present what is absent, transforms the objects of the objective senses into 'sensed' objects, as though they were objects of an inner sense. This happens by reflecting not on an object, but on its representation" (Beiner, 1982, p. 65) and as we *reflect* on the represented object, it "arouses one's pleasure or displeasure" (Beiner, 1982, p. 65). Imagination allows us to revisit what we have previously sensed and experienced; it is the

> faculty of having present what is absent, transforms an object into something I do
>
> not have to be directly confronted with but that I have in some sense internalized,
>
> so that I now can be affected by it as though it were given to me by a nonobjective
>
> sense. (Beiner, 1982, pp. 66-67)

Those objects or experiences that I recall provide me with things to be "judged as right or wrong, important or irrelevant, beautiful or ugly, or something in between" (Beiner, 1982, p. 67); they serve to support the opinions I develop. The opinions of spectators become the foundation or the basis of the import, meaning, or significance of any event. Arendt explains that "the opinions, the enthusiastic approbation [or disapprobation], of spectators, of persons whom themselves were not involved" (Beiner, 1982, p. 65) make an event the phenomenon that it is. She also emphasizes that spectators do not judge by themselves, but alongside other spectators who are "involved with one another" (Beiner, 1982, p.65). Spectators decide what is worthy of attention; they choose examples that are remembered.

Judging spectators, in turn, are involved with each other in a community of judges exercising *sensus communis*, reflecting and preparing to share opinions, to share examples that

resonate as exemplary. The quality of examples depends on the quality of the judges and their ability to identify, choose, and interpret what is exemplary and compelling. Examples

> become *exemplary*…by virtue of their ability to realize, within the horizon of an action or of a life course, an optimal congruity between the deed and a certain inspiring motive underlying it—a congruity that in turn resonates with us by tapping the same intuitions that works of art…are capable of tapping. Examples orient us in our appraisal of the meaning of action not as schemata, but as well-formed works of art do: namely, as outstanding instances of congruity capable of educating our discernment by way of exposing us to selective instances of the feeling of the furtherance of our life. (Ferrara, 2008, p. 61)

Examples that contribute to a feeling of the promotion of life, the flourishing of human beings, and the upholding of human dignity, are exemplary. 'Educating our discernment' becomes manifest as we pursue lost pearls and appraise exemplarity.

Pearl Diving

> Anyone who cannot cope with life while he is alive needs one hand to ward off a little his despair over his fate…but with his other hand he can jot down what he sees among the ruins, for he sees different and more than the others; after all, he is dead in his own lifetime and the real survivor.
>
> <div align="right">—Kafka, Diaries, entry of October 19, 1921</div>

Those who seek lost pearls educate their discernment through intentional focus and attunement to reality. Sometimes those with great difficulty in life have the distance, impartiality, and perception to see the world with pronounced clarity. In Walter Benjamin, Arendt found an expert diver who was able to use language in a way that challenged tradition and provoked

thinking. He was able to communicate his experience in ways that incited others to see in new and unique ways. "What seems paradoxical about everything that is justly called beautiful is the fact that it appears, and this paradox—or, more simply, the wonder of appearance—was always at the center of all his concerns" (Arendt, 1968, p. 164). The wonder and beauty of his writing remains incomparable. "The trouble with everything Benjamin wrote was that it always turned out to be *sui generis*" (Arendt, 1968, p. 155), original and completely different—exemplary.

Benjamin had a gift for challenging what appears to be true or real by finding correlations between seemingly disparate and unconnected things or actions, offering a "wide-eyed presentation of actualities" (Arendt, 1968, p. 163). Quotations were an important component of all his writing. He used these bits of text taken, out of context, to startle complacency and to disrupt entrenched ways of seeing the world. He explains: "'Quotations in my work are like robbers by the roadside who make an armed attack and relieve an idler of his convictions'" (Arendt, 1968 p. 193), much like Socrates. He understood that the power of quotations was "not the strength to preserve but to cleanse, to tear out of context, to destroy"' (Arendt, 1968, p. 193), to clear space for judging. "The destructive power of quotations was 'the only one which still contains the hope that something from this period will survive—for no other reason that than it was torn out of it'" (Arendt, 1968, p. 193).

Because Benjamin saw reality with such acuity, he was compelled to confront and challenge tradition. Benjamin "knew that the break in tradition and the loss of authority which occurred in his lifetime, were irreparable, and he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past" (Arendt, 1968, p. 193). He believed that "there is no more effective way to break the spell of tradition than to cut out the 'rich and strange,'…from what has been handed

own in one solid piece" (Arendt, 1968, p. 196). By pulling out pieces—quotations and thought fragments—Benjamin found a way to expose reality, challenge tradition, and transmit truth.

> Tradition transforms truth into wisdom, and wisdom is the consistence of transmissible truth. In other words, even if truth should appear in our world, it could not lead to wisdom, because it would no longer have the characteristics which it could acquire only through universal recognition of its validity. (Arendt, 1968, p. 196)

The only possible way of dealing with the past without the aid of tradition is through a focus on language:

> for in [language] the past is contained ineradicably, thwarting all attempts to get rid of it once and for all. The Greek *polis* will continue to exist at the bottom of our political existence—that is, at the bottom of the sea—for as long as we use the word 'politics'. (Arendt, 1968, p. 204)

Collecting thought fragments was Benjamin's passion and nothing was more characteristic of him "than the little notebooks with black covers which he always carried with him and in which he tirelessly entered in the form of quotations what daily living and reading netted him in the way of 'pearls' and 'coral.'" (Arendt, 1968, p. 200). He was open to all texts, genres, and sources, and "it was easy to find next to an obscure love poem…the latest newspaper item" (Arendt, 1968, p. 200). An example Arendt found striking was an item in a Vienna newspaper in September 1939: The local gas company

> had stopped supplying gas to the Jews. The gas consumption of the Jewish population involved a loss for the gas company since the biggest consumers were

the ones who did not pay their bills. The Jews used the gas especially for committing suicide. (Arendt, 1968, p. 200)

While Benjamin was a pearl diver seeking to name and reveal truth, Adolf Eichmann served as an example of someone who remained at the surface of life. Eichmann's inability to think was directly connected to his blind obedience and refusal to challenge ideas, authority, tradition, or laws, his poor choice in company, and his inability to use language in any meaningful way. He displayed a degree of shallowness that was astonishing to Arendt and that compelled her to rethink traditional understandings of evil.

Eichmann's unfailing inclination to obedience, resulted in a refusal to challenge and a commitment to do and to act as expected regardless of the circumstances. He saw in the Nazi party a way to make something of himself and dedicated himself to following the Fuhrer. In the trial it was evident that Eichmann believed that "he and the world he lived in had once been in perfect harmony" (Arendt, 2006, p. 52). He had a job, followed the rules, and lived according to expectations; he was completely ignorant "of everything that was not directly, technically and bureaucratically, connected with his job" (Arendt, 2006, p. 54). As such, Eichmann

> was troubled by no questions of conscience. His thoughts were entirely taken up
>
> with the staggering job of organization and administration in the midst not only of a
>
> world war but, more important for him, of innumerable intrigues and fights over
>
> spheres of authority among the various State and Party offices that were busy
>
> 'solving the Jewish question'. (Arendt, 2006, p. 151)

Eichmann had such a strong commitment to his own advancement that he was blind to any problems his subservience created, claiming "with great pride that he had always 'done his duty,' and "obeyed all orders as his oath demanded'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 92). It was also clear that

Eichmann "never made a decision on his own…was extremely careful always to be 'covered' by orders…did not like to volunteer suggestions and always required 'directives'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 94). His sense of duty, respect for obedience, and doing what his superiors expected of him, were what mattered most to Eichmann.

Arendt concluded that "Eichmann's inability to speak coherently in court was connected with his incapacity to think, or to think from another person's perspective" (Arendt, 2006, p. *xiii*). In the case of Eichmann, "it was not stupidity but a curious, quite authentic inability to think" (Arendt, 2003, p. 159). He relied on language only as it was given to him in the form of clichés and stock phrases, explaining that "'Officialese' is my only language'…because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché" (Arendt, 2006, p. 48). The Nazi 'language rules' suited Eichmann; indeed, "he functioned in his role of prominent war criminal as well as he had under the Nazi regime; he had not the slightest difficulty in accepting an entirely new set of rules" (Arendt, 2003, p. 159) Like others in the Nazi organization, Eichmann "was quite capable of sending millions of people to their death, but he was not capable of talking about it in the appropriate manner without being given his 'language rule'" (Arendt, 2006, p. 145).

Imagining an Appraisal

When pearls have been discovered, the spectator, as storyteller or historian, then needs to make an appraisal of their value or worth and prepare to communicate that appraisal. In doing so, the storyteller must integrate imagination (the possible reactions of others to her appraisal) and rhetoric (how to communicate and persuade others that her perspective is accurate and worthwhile). In order to convince others of the validity of our judgments, we need to recognize and attempt to understand the perspectives of various and diverse others, who may or may not

agree with us. The ability to consider other opinions relies on imagination, on "the capacity to imagine oneself as something other than oneself, and yet still oneself, the capacity to re-present oneself" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1096). Imagination allows us to think from the standpoint of others and consider their perspectives. As Sjoholm (2015) explains:

> Only imagination makes it possible to judge 'in the place of others.' Of course, the imagination used in judgment cannot be an activity in which we are attempting to formulate the standpoint of each and every person we encounter. Rather, the existence of other viewpoints is something that informs our perspective in such a way that we become disturbed and moved…, we are also impinged upon, coerced, forced to try to take new standpoints and attempt new points of view. (p. 89)

When we are able to imagine various viewpoints that are not our own, we become open to new points of view that may influence and alter our point of view.

Arendt, following Kant, identifies two types of imagination: reproductive which allows us to recall our experience and productive which allows us to create new opinions and ideas. The categories are not dichotomous. Beiner (1982) explains that while productive imagination prompts what is new and novel, the "new" is always, in some way, connected to what already exists. Further, the new is never wholly new because "productive imagination [genius] is never entirely productive. It produces, for example, the centaur out of the given: the horse and the man" (Beiner, 1982, p. 79). Productive imagination takes what is in the world already and reconceives or creates something new and different.

> The role that imagination plays for the faculty of judgment therefore is not simply one of making present that which is absent by reproducing it in representation. In

addition to that, imagination gathers the comparable in such a way that the

distinctive, the new, the unprecedented can appear. (Marshall, 2010, p. 385)

Imagination is essential to judging.

Once we have a tentative opinion, we need to determine how to persuade others that our judgments are valid by articulating and defending our position. Choosing examples and making "good" judgments consistent with those examples, make arguments more compelling and when we engage in debate we always do so with others in mind. Rhetoric assumes plurality, that is, the need to appeal to others' judgments about matters that never have final answers, but are always open to debate and discussion. Marshall (2010) explains "if it is not possible to describe something in at least two different ways (both of them plausible), then there is no question of making a judgment or holding an examination" (p. 377); judgment only comes into play when there is no answer. "Judgment deals with the possible, not with the necessary" (Marshall, 2010, p. 377), for there is no reason to debate the necessary. Opinions are not held on matters of truth or matters of fact because there is nothing worthy of discussion or debate. Matters of truth and fact can be agreed upon and accepted. Matters of judgment, however, are always open to contention and controversy, and judging always "requires making decisions about the affairs that one shares with others" (Marshall, 2010, p, 376). To engage in debate requires the ability to share opinions and understand the standpoints of others.

Judging matters of politics and matters of taste depends on a commitment to communicate judgment, to persuade. "Judgment is the mental process by which one projects oneself into a counterfactual situation of disinterested reflection in order to satisfy oneself and an imagined community of potential collocutors that a particular has been adequately appraised" (Beiner, 1982, 120). I need to be willing and sufficiently confident that my examples and my opinions

will be persuasive. "The ability to persuade depends upon the capacity to elicit criteria that speak to the particular case at hand and in relation to particular interlocutors. It is a rhetorical ability, fundamentally creative and imaginative" (Zerilli, 2005, p. 171). When we are able to persuade, "people are brought to see something new, a different way of framing their response to certain object and events" (Zerilli, 2005, p. 171) and this new way of seeing contributes to the development of an opinion that will always be open to deliberation. Any "discussion taking place after an example has been put forward as 'beautiful' can never be a matter of absolute proof and must always be a matter of persuasion or 'wooing'" (Marshall, 2010, p. 379). We must know our audience in order to prepare and defend our opinions; we must consider how to convince our community by being willing to listen, understand, and speak compellingly.

The Artist and the Critic

Ethical-political judgment is aesthetic in a second sense—like politics, works of art need public space in order to appear. "[A]rt and politics are closely intertwined since they both have to do with the world" (Arendt in Sjoholm,2015, p. 73); both rely on multiple opinions that are debated and shared in order to make decisions about the value or worth of a piece of artwork, or actions in politics. The plurality required to appraise art parallels the plurality required to appraise politics, both are contingent and constructed and the more perspectives that are represented the more valid the opinions. Critics and spectators make judgment about what appears, and in doing so contribute to creating our reality. Experience with art "engages our perception, awakening not only our curiosity but also a sense of pleasure or displeasure, attraction or horror. Works of art expose us to complex experiences by rupturing the veil of our measuring grid" (Sjoholm, 2015, p. 94), disturbing what we think we know, and creating space for us to see in new ways.

Art exposes us to the world in ways that can expand our understanding and challenge our perceptions, creating space for us to see the world from new perspectives. The arts allow people to

> become aware of the ways they construct their realities as they live together—how
> they grasp the appearances of things, how and when they interrogate their lived
> worlds, how they acknowledge the multiple perspectives that exist for making
> sense of the commonsense world. (Greene, 1995, p. 65)

Because art is about the world as it appears, about *what is* and how we live together in the world with other people, art is always potentially ethical and always open to discussion and debate. Works of art are things in and of themselves, appearing in the world and open to interpretation and perception. For example, when I read a poem or view a play, I bring my personal experience to my reading or viewing which makes my interpretation different from someone else's reading or viewing. When there are many people who share their opinion and interpretation of a text or a work of art, agreement may emerge, but it is never absolute. There will always be those who argue that *Hamlet* is not a great play, but there are stronger arguments in favour of its greatness, thus it has endured and deliberations about its meaning persist. Critics and spectators sit in judgment, making and debating appraisals, ultimately determining what is "good".

It is the spectator—critic, historian, storyteller, poet—who judges, who determines the validity of particular examples; it is the spectator who appraises which works of art, which texts, which events from history, are worthy of our attention and which contribute to the dignity of mankind. "Judgment is rendered not by the collective destiny of mankind but by the 'man alone,' the judging spectator who stands before nature unencumbered by metaphysical dreams and illusions. …the historian [the storyteller], is the ultimate judge" (Beiner, 1982, p. 127). There are

stories from the past, like texts and works of art, that merit attention, that provide us with opportunities to see and understand events more clearly because they offer another standpoint. The Warsaw ghetto resistance was such an example for Arendt, and she cited its relevance as a story of resistance during the Holocaust. "Art and politics both serve the hard and conflict-ridden path toward a construction of realness that allows for new experiences to come into being, and for ideology to lose its grip on how we see things" (Sjoholm, 2015, p. 94). The examples that we choose reflect our attunement to reality and what we apprehend as important.

Thinking and imagining provide judging with its objects and thinking's reflectiveness adds depth to judgment. However, "[b]ecause there is potentially no end to our ability to reflect, the activity of thinking tends to leave the thinker in a state of paralysis" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 177), unable to decide, or to form an opinion. Arendt concluded that what was needed was a

> faculty that can, in a sense, refreeze the concepts and meanings thinking has
> unfrozen in reflection, by giving them a decisive form again after they have been
> reflected on, so they can again serve the same function in common sense that the
> previously frozen concepts and meanings served. (Schwartz, 2016, p.177)

It is judgment that redeems and realizes thinking by allowing "the thinker to come to a conclusion on his potentially endless reflections" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 177). Judging provides "a decision—an ability of the storyteller, historian, judge, politician, or citizen to conclusively decide about which narrative most fully and authentically captures the meaning of the deeds [or work of art] that he or she has observed" (Schwartz, 2016, pp. 177-8). The meaning of an event, a text, or a work of art can be determined only after the object or event enters the public realm for appraisal, that is, only when it has been submitted to the taste of the critic. According to Kant, "the full prerogative of judgment is granted to the spectator who stands back from the work of

art, or stands back from political action, and reflects disinterestedly" (Beiner, 1982, p. 123).

Arendt agrees with Kant that judgment "is retrospective and is pronounced by the bystander or onlooker, not by the artist himself" (Beiner, 1982, p. 123). The artist creates the work, but she is not the one who judges the work or actions. The artist and the actor are too busy doing to step back and to judge.

Our reality is a compilation of narratives—stories, events and objects—that need to be appraised by judges who are attuned to a plural reality and careful in their judgments. "Arendt believed that without the depth and meaning that thought provides, political judgment…will remain superficial and only pay attention to the surface of things" (Schwartz, 2016, p. 179). Spectators, through reflection and attunement to reality, are able to carefully and thoughtfully attend to the world, observe, and listen.

> The political question that thought must always pose has to do with the fact that
> our own individual stories are not the only stories in the world; there are a
> multitude of other stories, all of which must find their place in the common world.
> In essence, by making reference to a cultivated *sensus communis*, judgment allows
> us to bring our stories together into the common world. (Schwartz, 2016, p. 178).

Without judgment, thinking and willing are never realized. The way we create "reality" is always political as it is the result of multiple, diverse narratives that exist together. "Accounts of reality are always already deeply politicized, and no form of political judgment can afford to ignore the way in which narratives surrounding events are construed" (Sjoholm, 2015, p.70).

Aporias of Ethical-Political Appraisal

There are certain seeming inherent contradictions or paradoxes in ethical-political appraisal. For instance, to accurately make appraisals requires the ability to be both objective and

subjective. We need to judge from our own standpoint or perspective, yet we also need to consider the perspectives of as many others as possible. Arendt (1993) writes:

> The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinions. (p. 241)

The ability to step outside of ourselves to understand others' opinions and yet still protect the responsibility to judge for ourselves is how we exercise our freedom. Developing an intersubjective point of view

> arises from imagining ourselves in the place of others and seeking judgments that these imagined others could accept. And it estimates that acceptability by referring not to concepts or rules or abstract forms, but to particular examples, drawn either from history or from literature. (Garsten, 2007, p. 1086)

The ability to step away from the subjectivity and narrowness of our personal perspective to consider other perspectives and exercise representative thinking is indispensable as it allows us to remove ourselves from accepted "norms through the use of imagination, creating a different, broader community whose common sense can inform and ground judgments that depart from those supported by one's actual community" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1087). Arendt is clear that "the more perspectives one imagines and consults or woos, the more valid one's judgments will be" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1087). The broadening of perspectives should finally result in a perspective that takes humanity in general into account. "At stake is the difference between understanding another *person* and understanding the *world*, the world is not an object we cognize but 'the space in which things become public'" (Zerilli, 2005, p. 177).

A second aporia or seeming contradiction with judging involves thinking the particular. The chief difficulty in judgment is that it is 'the faculty of thinking the particular'; but to *think* means to generalize, hence it is the faculty of mysteriously combining the particular and the general. This is relatively easy if the general is given—as a rule, a principle, a law —so that the judgment merely subsumes the particular under it. The difficulty becomes great 'if only the particular be given for which the general has to be found'. (Beiner, 1982, p. 76)

Arendt suggests that Kant found solutions to this difficulty: the notions of humanity, purposiveness, and exemplary validity. Kant's view that humanity is "what actually constitutes the humanness of human beings, living and dying in this world…which they inhabit in common, share in common, in successive generations" (Beiner, 1982, p. 76) generates the perspective of a global community that all human beings share, the idea of global citizenship and mankind as a whole. Secondly, Kant (following Aristotle), recognizes the idea of purposiveness. "Every object…as a particular, needing and containing the ground of its actuality in itself, has a purpose. The only objects that seem purposeless are aesthetic objects" (Beiner, 1982, p. 76) which exist for the sole purpose of making us "feel at home in the world" (Beiner, 1982, p. 76). Arendt believes that one possible way to address the problem of thinking the particular is Kant's understanding of *exemplary* validity. When we find an example, a particular person or narrative that exemplifies a general concept, such as courage, we are able to better understand the concept, yet the example remains a particular. The "exemplar is and remains a particular that in its particularity reveals the generality that otherwise could not be defined. Courage is *like* Achilles" (Beiner, 1982, p. 77).

A final aporia of ethical-political judging is the idea of judging both as an actor and as a spectator. The two perspectives

> seem wholly incompatible, an antinomy that cannot be resolved. For if the
>
> spectator judges as an actor, he/she loses the standpoint which grants him breadth
>
> of vision; and if the actor judges as a spectator, he/she forsakes the capacity to be
>
> in the world with others as an agent. (Yar, 2000, p. 23)

However, Arendt finds a possibility for reconciliation in the notion that each human being is representative of humankind in general:

> It is by virtue of this idea of mankind, present in every single man, that men are
>
> human, and they can be called civilized or humane to the extent that this idea
>
> becomes the principle not only of their judgments but of their actions. It is at this
>
> point that actor and spectator become united; the maxim of the actor and the
>
> maxim, the 'standard,' according to which the spectator judges the spectacle of the
>
> world become one. (Beiner, 1982, p. 75)

Unfortunately, this reconciliation is not entirely satisfactory and "confronts us like parallel lines which seem to converge at some point beyond the horizon, in some remotely possible future or other world" (Yar, 2000, p. 23).

The Discerning Spectator

Ironically Arendt (1968) begins her portrait of Brecht in *Men in Dark Times* with a poem:

> You hope, yes,
>
>> your books will excuse you,
>
> save you from hell:
>
>> nevertheless,

without looking sad,

              without in any way

seeming to blame

           (He doesn't need to,

knowing well

         what a lover of art

like yourself pays heed to),

              God may reduce you

on Judgment Day

       to tears of shame,

reciting by heart

        the poems you would

have written, had

       your life been good.

                          —W. H. Auden, "Had Your Life Been Good"

In her study, Arendt focuses on Brecht the poet instead of Brecht the man, investigating the question: What does it mean to be a great poet? Her answer is succinct: "Someone who must say the unsayable, who must not remain silent on occasions when all are silent, and who must therefore be careful not too talk too much about things that all talk about" (Arendt, 1968, p. 228), a description congruent with her conception of an ideal judging spectator. Consistently attaining such an ideal is difficult, if not impossible and Arendt's portrait of Brecht depicts his struggles to navigate the aporias of ethical-political judging—general/particular, subjective/objective and actor/spectator—and the consequences for his poetry.

From Arendt's (1968) perspective, Brecht's most obvious struggles involved ideology: Brecht became a communist in his early 20s, but still managed to maintain a degree of "poetic distance…from Communist politics" (p. 216) throughout most of his career. While he was generally faithful to communist ideology during the Moscow trials, the Spanish Civil War, and the Hitler-Stalin pact, he was still capable of writing plays such as *Measure Taken* that were critical of Stalinism. "He had done what poets will always do if they are left alone: He had announced the truth…that innocent people were killed and that the Communists…had begun to kill their friends" (Arendt, 1968, p. 241). However, when Brecht was enticed back to East Germany in 1949 with the promise of his own theatre company, he was "in infinitely closer contact with a totalitarian state than he had ever been in his life before…[and saw] the sufferings of his own people with his own eyes" (Arendt, 1968, p. 217). His ideological blinders had been removed and he saw the world differently: "Reality overwhelmed him to the point that he could no longer be its voice" (Arendt, 1968, p. 247). Arendt contends that "the consequence was that not a single play and not a single great poem was produced in those seven years" (Arendt, 1968, p. 217). The compassion that was "the fiercest and most fundamental of Brecht's passions" (Arendt, 1968, p. 235) betrayed him: not only did it initially lead him to the "answers" of communism, but when those "answers" were revealed as illusory, Brecht was lured from his role as discerning spectator to becoming another political actor. Arendt (1968) writes:

> To be the voice of what he thought was reality had carried him away from the real;
> wasn't he on his way to becoming what he liked least, one more solitary great poet
> in the German tradition, instead of what he wanted most to be, a bard of the
> people? And yet when he went into the thick of things, his remoteness as a poet
> was what he carried. (p. 246)

Arendt's portrait of Brecht reveals a degree of integration and dependency among the various dispositions that contribute to ethical-political judging: Brecht may have had a powerful imagination and remarkable, unique rhetorical skill, but he ceased to be a poet when he lost his poetic distance.

Eichmann faced no such dilemma. He had none of the dispositions necessary to be either a political actor or discerning spectator, but neither did he have the dispositions characteristic of a monster or even a criminal. Indeed, his very ordinariness is perhaps what is most frightening. To dismiss Eichmann as a "'tiny cog' in the machinery of the Final Solution" (Arendt, 2006, p. 289) ignores the implications for a democratic society—and those aiming to educate for democratic citizenship—when "so many were like him" (Arendt, 2006, p. 276). Arendt (2006) captured what is at stake for any democratic society—and any educational system that aims to prepare people for democratic citizenship:

> There remains one fundamental problem…[that] touches upon one of the central moral questions of all time, namely the nature and functions of human judgment. [How do we demand] that human beings be capable of telling right from wrong even when all they have to guide them is their own judgment? (p. 294)

Judging in Schools

As Eichmann focused diligently on his operational duties, the horror of the Holocaust and what was being done to millions of people, was distanced, beyond his purview. The primary draw on his attention was the train transport of the greatest number of people as efficiently as possible. Many individuals working in modern bureaucracies are similarly engrossed in their responsibilities and the expectations of their position. Schools, are no different. The main draw on the attention of teachers and principals is meeting the daily demands of the job. Diligently

intent on our duties, we may not think to question the ends of what we are doing, easily falling captive to the fiction of school and becoming enclosed in its ideology. We are all susceptible to "the attractiveness of mental constructions—especially ideologies—that reduce reality to an all-encompassing story or picture" (Kateb, 2010, p. 30). The story of schooling is commanding and influences much of our policy and practice, leaving little room to consider other ways we might operate, other ways we might choose to be live together in schools.

Chris' story exemplifies how schooling can be adiaphorizing, employing objective policy and rules (tacit and overt) to determine right action. Indeed, every participant—student, principal, parents, district staff and elected officials—had an assigned role in the process. Chris was the student offender. I was prosecutor responsible for describing Chris's transgressions and his school record to the judges. Chris' parents—the people who knew Chris the best and were unversed in the structures and procedures of the process—were there to support Chris. The judges were the people who knew the least about Chris and the most about the process—not considered a problem since Chris as a complex person was largely irrelevant to the exercise.

I now recognize that I was so focused on doing my job that I was unaware of my role in the play Real School. I did not question my assigned role or lines; I aimed to be seen as "the good—that is successful—principal." Metaphorically, I was focused on maintaining the train schedule, and ignored where the train was going. My attention was misplaced and the train with Chris onboard hurtled onward. The well-established schedules, rules, and policies that underpin schooling's focus on productivity, using whatever markers we have chosen—graduation, grade promotion, proficiency in *x* (fill-in-the-blank)—will dominate for as long as we continue to be too busy, too distracted, too self-involved to begin to think in such a way that we might clear space for judging.

While the narrative of schooling may seem overwhelming and the hope for education in schooling faint, I do not believe the effort is doomed. Following Arendt, we can begin with the most obvious step: seeing other people. Chris was swallowed up by the narrative of schooling and the stories my colleagues were telling about him. Joelle, Melanie, and Anne were not. Though I was still largely preoccupied with *doing my job*, I had come to question what that entailed and to wonder why I was doing it as I was. When I began to query what was best for each of these girls, and to consider that they might each need something different, I found myself uncertain. Perhaps what seemed like a roadmap solution was not the best. As the girls confronted me with their personhood, I started to understand that the implications of my decisions would have effects well beyond me and my "job." I began to accept my responsibility to be a judging spectator—someone who both knew the girls and was capable of stepping back from that familiarity to appraise what might be educational for each.

Choosing to step back from what I felt I was expected to do allowed me to interrogate some of my taken-for-granted assumptions. As I did so, I needed to talk with other people, but the only responses I received were empty, reinforcing what was expected. It seemed there was no one willing to challenge the common script of Real School. When thinking and judging company is severely restricted, we can only turn inward, depending on the friendship we have cultivated with ourselves. That my two-in-one dialogue prompted me to re-think my practice, I find encouraging. I was also able to consider what the conversation might have been if the girls were present and able to talk with me. With Chris, there was no thinking; there was simply the sterility of applying the pertinent policy and practice. In my role as prosecutor, I had many eager and supportive associates.

I certainly was not thinking about Arendt when I was fumbling for ideas about what to do with the girls. And though Arendt would not have had answers, I believe she would have asked provoking questions. She wondered how to combat systems thinking and our eagerness to be defined by the circumstances we encounter, how we might safeguard plurality and respect human dignity, how we might identify examples that reflect what it means to be human, to care about each other and our world. Somehow I knew I needed to act differently.

The way I reacted to Chris reflects the entrenchment of schooling and my poor judgment which was "based on applying received stereotypes to stereotyped reading of doings" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 53); my response to the girls was more reflective of what it means to educate. I was able to exercise better judgment and imagine possibilities outside the realm of schooling, interpreting the situation with the girls much differently than I had interpreted the situation with Chris. Every day in schools, we have the opportunity to judge the educational-ness of what we are doing. Our "judgment is bound up with the *interpretation* of action, and consequently good judgment is linked with the question concerning which interpretation is better" (Ferrara, 2008, p. 53). The more perspectives we encounter, the more dialogue in which we engage, the better and more complete will be our interpretation.

What I have learned is that our examples are sparse and alternatives few. *Humanitas* in schooling is fragile which is especially disheartening when we realize that Chris, like other children, are rarely seen "as individuals with enormous capacities to be critical, knowledgeable, imaginative, and informed citizens, workers, and social agents" (Giroux, 2012, p. 69). "Teachers provide for many if not most students their only model of what it means to be an educated person" (Noddings, 2005, 177). If teachers themselves have not thought carefully about what this means, they will likely continue to focus on doing their jobs rather than educating; children, in

turn, will come to believe that an educated person is one who has been credentialed in school. *Humanitas* is disconnected with school, yet has everything to do with education, learning with and from others, with letting go of control and being open to alternatives, thinking beyond inevitability. It seems that in order to find examples of exemplarity, of *humanitas*, and to imagine possibilities and appraise the worth of our examples, we need to listen and attend to each other.

> What does it mean to listen to a voice before it is spoken? It means making space
>
> for the other, being aware of the other, paying attention to the other, honouring the
>
> other. It means not rushing to fill…silences with…the things we want to hear.
>
> (Palmer, 1998, p.47)

With Joelle, Melanie, and Anne, I started to listen. I started to complicate my "givens," what I saw as my experience, knowledge, and standpoint. I stepped away and considered where the train was headed.

As I thought about Joelle, Melanie, and Anne, I thought about *who* they each were and how I might support them in making good appearances in our school and our community; I knew suspending them would not help. I became aware "that it is always the individual, acting voluntarily in a particular situation at a particular moment, who does the deciding" (Greene, 1978, p. 49) about what the right thing to do is.

> To be moral involves taking a position against the matrix, thinking critically about
>
> what is taken for granted. It involves taking a principled position of one's own
>
> (*choosing* certain principles by which to live)…so as to set oneself on the right
>
> track. (Greene, 1978, p. 49)

My unease with following disciplinary expectations allowed me to question what I took

for granted and adjust my thinking in order to set myself on the right track, or at least on a

track I felt I could honour and defend.

"People tend to weave their images of the world out of the yarn of their experience"

(Bauman, 2008, p. 56). I have no doubt that the way I handled the situation with Chris was

wrong. I failed to listen, to see, to think. Arendt's understanding of judging and thinking, has

helped me to understand the ways that compliance and complacency can captivate attention and

result in wrongdoing.

> If nothing else, Hannah Arendt has shown us that the possibility for changing the
>
> world and making it something truly human has not yet departed from among the
>
> fundamental human capacities; perhaps it only awaits our willingness to take
>
> responsibility for our world again. (Schwartz, 2016, p. 205)

Arendt uncovers important resources that I need to consider in making the myriad of judgments

that I make each day. I need to remind myself to try to see each person, accept my responsibility

to be a judging spectator, choose my company and examples carefully and take the time to

imagine alternative appraisals. Of course she offers no five, six, or seven step process to

guarantee successful ethical political judging, but she does provide support for people who aim

to educate in their efforts to seek light in the darkness. "The darkness around us *is* deep. But our

great calling, opportunity, and power as educators is to shed light in dark places" (Palmer, 1998,

p. 213).

Chapter 6: Pearls of Illumination

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer;

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,

The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere

The ceremony of innocence is drowned;

The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity.

—William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming"

Hood Up

Lynn, a colleague of mine, was teaching a challenging grade eight class; one boy in particular, Freddy, proved especially difficult for everyone. Freddy is a student who scares most people—children and adults. He is mean, threatening, and aggressive and does not care about consequences or how his actions affect others. He is highly intelligent, carries a great deal of pain, hurt, and loneliness, resists connections with others, does not trust, and yet there is a hopefulness and a joyfulness about him (if you care to look for it). Lynn had looked forward to having Freddy in her class, believing she could "reach" him and support him. Freddy's previous teachers had not felt as Lynn did. They seemed only to see Freddy as a problem to be avoided; he was not what teachers wanted in a student and therefore teachers had repeatedly cast him out—academically, physically, socially—often unfairly. For example, one day during grade six,

Freddy and his classmates were listening to the teacher read aloud. Three separate students got up quietly at different times to fill their water bottles as the teacher read. Clearly, it was acceptable for students to move around the room at this time. Freddy rose and went to fill his water bottle (as quietly as the others), but as soon as he approached the water cooler, he was reprimanded and sent from the room. This was what school was like for Freddy and what he came to expect from adults at school.

Lynn was determined things would be different for her and Freddy; as an experienced teacher she believed that she could connect with Freddy and build a relationship because she had always (almost) been able to do so. She sincerely cared about children and in time was able to know them. However, the year started with significant obstacles. Freddy was somehow able to challenge nearly every expectation Lynn set, no matter how simple. One day he rode a classmate's skateboard around the classroom and when caught argued quite convincingly that there was no explicit classroom rule about riding a skateboard. He didn't hurt anyone or interfere with instructional time. This was a typical daily example and no matter what the behaviour, Freddy always had an explanation. Lynn was exceedingly patient, and with the assistance of administration and other support workers, repeatedly talked through these situations with Freddy until they reached an agreement about what was acceptable and what was not. For instance, Freddy resisted writing. Whenever there was a written assignment, Freddy had an empty page. When asked for his thoughts, he was able to talk about the topic in question, often quite insightfully. He was capable of writing, but did not like it or see the point. Lynn allowed Freddy to complete many of his assignments orally or to show his knowledge in other ways, but she did also expect that on occasion, he would provide written responses. He produced some beautiful poetry, engaging stories, and thoughtful reflections, but the majority of

the time he demonstrated his understanding and learning orally. In time, Lynn and Freddy were able to establish expectations around completion of work, behaviour, and participation in class. However, Freddy refused to remove his hood during class, a minor, but persistent infraction. Lynn had to remind him every day. It did not make sense to her that he continued, day after day to wear his hood, and day after day, she asked him to take it off. He always did, and was only occasionally resistant and argumentative about it. Lynn talked with him more than once about why *it mattered to her that his hood was removed—she wanted to see him, to be able to make eye contact, to "read" how he was doing, it was respectful. She explained all of this to Freddy and repeatedly he said he understood and agreed to remove his hood. Yet, he continued to enter the classroom each morning with his hood up. Lynn and Freddy developed a respectful relationship, but the hood persisted. Lynn continued to ask Freddy to remove the hood and he did, often with a bit of a smirk. This became part of their daily routine. I have rarely seen Lynn so confused or frustrated with a student's behaviour.*

Sometime in early November, Lynn and I were talking about Freddy and his hood. There had continued to be numerous (daily/weekly) incidents involving Freddy, but we had been able to work through them and learn from them each time. The hood, however, remained elusive. It did not make sense. Freddy received lots of positive attention from Lynn, from school support staff, from me. We knew we had to be explicit about what we asked Freddy to do or not do, he had clearly and repeatedly demonstrated his expertise at discovering ways around expectations and agreements. There was something about the hood however that he was holding on to and as we talked about it, we realized that the hood interaction each morning was about Lynn seeing and connecting with Freddy. If he walked in with his hood off, it would only be a matter of time before Freddy would blend in with everyone else. The hood was Freddy's way of testing Lynn's

191

level of care. Did she actually care about him or was she just doing her job? Did she care

enough to continue asking him to remove his hood or would she eventually give in (up) and let

him wear it? Or would she get so frustrated that she would impose punitive consequences (as

Freddy would expect)? Or would she understand that Freddy needed to have that interaction

with her each morning? Of course, Lynn understood and the morning "hood off" conversation

became an important ritual for both her and Freddy, one they both came to appreciate and

value.

Freddy represents some of the problems of schooling and Lynn was one of the few

teachers who actually saw Freddy for who *he was, rather than simply what he represented.*

Freddy moved away from our school at the end of the year; we shared information with the

receiving school, hoping they would continue to work with and understand him. Unfortunately,

Freddy proved to be too much work. Teachers continued to see him as a problem, a hinderance

to the learning of others, a hinderance to what needed to be done at school, and all too quickly

cast him out. Certainly no one asked him to take his hood off; he had permission (and was

encouraged) to disappear.

The Single Story

In many ways, Freddy exemplifies the single story of school. It is a story that confidently

carries on, city to city, province to province, country to country, deflecting other possible stories.

There are very few schools that operate in a way that opposes the single story, and the result is

that we have come to understand school as an established institution that is largely beyond any

significant structural change. There have been changes over the years to curriculum, reporting,

research, professional development, and the inclusion of special needs students, but nothing that

has notably altered school's basic structure as an establishment where children go to be taught by

qualified teachers and eventually come out as certified graduates ready for the world of work. In many ways, the single story has enchanted and captivated children, teachers, parents, and governments, leaving little room for questioning (other than those questions directed at how schools might be more effective by, for example, increasing test scores or graduation rates) because the ends of schooling remain largely uncontested. The aim of the single story is essentially about preparing people for their economic roles in society and though there are other goals, such as citizenship, they are peripheral and only cursorily acknowledged ("lip service" goals). "The assumption is made that education…is undertaken to fulfill the requirements of the economic system, no matter what the requirements of idiosyncratic, personal growth" (Greene, 1978, p. 92).

In Freddy's case, there were practices and processes in place to assist with managing the many problems that he presented. However, Lynn refused to accept the structures that demeaned Freddy, and for the time he was with her, she was able to support him. In Chris' story, there was no Lynn. He was quickly removed and the problem he posed was eliminated. There were no questions asked, other than procedural ones, demonstrating how schooling questions are ends-focused, system-oriented, and system-preserving. Rarely (if ever) do we question *why* we do what we do or if it is the right thing to do; rarely do we consider the moral and ethical implications, as Lynn did, and if we do, it is within the confines of the applicable rules. The single story endures. Neither Chris nor Freddy were in a position to resist.

As a hierarchy, schooling's participants each are assigned a role—teacher, student, parent, principal, superintendent—and each participant is defined by the assigned role and shaped by its expectations. The system's hierarchical structure supports schooling's commitment to effectiveness and efficiency, market values, and commodification. As Giroux (2012) warns:

Increasingly, students are being subjected to a stripped-down notion of schooling, making it more difficult for them not just to think critically but also to imagine a world beyond the gospel of competition and profit and the economic calculus of financial gain and loss. Shaped by a pedagogy of containment, security, and conformity that undermines critical thought, teaching, and dialogue, the discourse of public schooling now emphasizes market values. (p. 51)

Regardless of their role, children and adults understand what they are to do; there is little need for them to think. We are expected to "get along" (play nicely with each other) and "follow along" by complying with established expectations, standards, and rules. Freddy refused to get along or follow along (though I am certain he clearly understood these expectations) and as a result was easily dismissed. A clear, vertical chain of command, or rulership, has become a tacit component of schooling. Freddy was at the bottom of the chain.

The model of sovereign rulership in schools feeds the promise of effectiveness and efficiency. In aspiring to be the "best"—teachers, schools, school districts, ministries—we have become competent at "batch processing," scripted and utilitarian ways of grouping students and pushing them through the system to reach the desired outcome: graduation and the ability to "contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy" (British Columbia Ministry of Education). As we fulfill our duties, however, we diminish the individual: "It is easier to treat people as objects to be manipulated if you have never learned any other way to see them" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 23). Batch processing in schools is evinced in the way we group students in grade-levels and follow curricula with grade-level outcomes, all consistent with "measuring success to ensure accountability." Such accepted practices "blunt the moral conscience, so it needs people who do not recognize the individual, who speak group-speak, who

behave, and see the world, like docile bureaucrats" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 23). Adults—teachers and principals—hold the authority to rule a space, and are generally quite skilful at completing the tasks they are assigned—managing behaviour and overseeing a well-managed high-achieving group of students. We seldom recognize how our docility contributes to uniformity and banality.

The desire for predictability and sameness in schools is evident in the common script—the many ways teachers and administrators carry out the daily work of schools. Labouring in the bureaucracy of schools, "individuals find it harder and harder to take initiative. They guide themselves by vaguely perceived expectations; they allow themselves to be programmed by organizations and official schedules or forms" (Greene, 1978, p. 43). Teachers, principals, and other school staff "work within larger organizations that mandate much of the common script in non-negotiable terms" (Metz, 1989, p. 80), as laid out in curriculum, the School Act, reporting orders, and board policies. Additionally, there are certain ways teachers are expected to structure and manage a classroom, organize the school day (and year), write report cards, plan lessons, complete assignments, hold parent/student conferences. The list is long. The point is that there is a script for the actors in the play "Real School", directing them what is to be done, by whom, to whom, and when. The play is "reinforced by an interacting set of influences that overdetermine a conformist outcome. Broad societal support for these standardized patterns is frozen into bricks and mortar and into legal language" (Metz, 1989, p. 88). Freddy resisted many of these "standardized patterns" and as a result, he was no longer allowed in the play, no longer tolerated in school. Parents, community, and government all follow the script.

There is little space for anything other than adherence to the common script and the single story—questioning is minimal (though some children like Freddy, and teachers like Lynn, try) and faithfulness to the story is expected. Failure to comply generates severe penalties. The

consequences tend to be most severe for children, but also exist for adults. Those attempting to ask critical questions are routinely either ignored or overtly told not to ask questions. Most players however, seem quite comfortable with their roles in Real School and have little inclination to challenge it. The script is apparent in the language we use to talk about what we do in schools and the "educational research" that is available to support it. The language of schooling is penurious and thin, further reducing the chances of moving beyond or outside of the script.

> It has become too easy to miss the role that the language of clarity plays in a dominant culture that cleverly and powerfully uses clear and simplistic language to systematically undermine and prevent those conditions necessary for a general public to engage in at least rudimentary forms of critical thinking. (Giroux, 2012, p. 113)

When language is standardized and controlled, thinking is limited and we are offered answers and "the kinds of knowledge and ideologies cleansed of complex thought or oppositional insight" (Giroux, 2012, p. 113), as Eichmann clearly demonstrated. And as I demonstrated with Chris.

Almost all the resources we use in school provide information targeted at answers and "how-to": how to teach, plan, discipline, assess, engage, lead, inspire—whatever the catchwords and jargon of the day are. "The 'promise' of the school is understood to be the promise of credentialing and the gaining of some kind of status as a result" (Greene, 1978, p. 93), keeping the single story at the forefront. The industry of "educational research" does little to move us beyond the single story or cultivate the language of schooling because it works within the story where the ends of what we are doing are largely taken for granted and only the means are

discussed. A quick scan through current "educational" books reveals titles such as: *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College, Teach Like a PIRATE: Increase Student Engagement, Boost Your Creativity, and Transform Your Life as an Educator,* or *Hacking School Discipline: 9 Ways to Create a Culture of Empathy and Responsibility Using Restorative Justice.* Journal articles concede a similar focus such as: "What Is the Potential for Applying Cost-Utility Analysis to Facilitate Evidence-Based Decision Making in Schools?" or "Understanding a Vicious Cycle: The Relationship Between Student Discipline and Student Academic Outcomes", both from *Education Researcher* (June/July 2019). Much "research" suggests that there are "answers" for how to teach successfully, how to discipline and manage the behaviour of students, how to measure student and teacher achievement, and how to effectively lead both children and adults—all consistent with the rulership of schooling and the performance of Real School. Such resources do not encourage independent thinking or advocate for the private and public space required to think, rather they seem to restrict themselves to utilitarian, functional, means/ends-focused thinking that relies on determinate judgments connected to rules, standards, and expected practices. These resources rarely address particularity and the unpredictability inherent in educating, largely because this way of understanding education is inconsistent with how we have organized schooling.

> [A]s significant as the numbers are, and boundaries, and necessary rules—there are
>
> times when we must move beyond. To think of the creative spirit is to think of
>
> moving beyond into spaces where we can live now and then in total freedom.
>
> (Greene, 2001, p. 201)

In such spaces we might create stories that defy the dominant narrative of schooling. Freddy's story is one that reinforces that single story. With the exception of his relationship with Lynn,

Freddy was a victim of the common script of schooling and the hierarchy of rulership. Freddy needed to be managed because he was unable to fulfill his role; he did not fit. Like Freddy's, our stories will remain tied to the authority of schooling and fail to generate any educational meaning or significance if we rely solely on determinate judgments and "how-to" resources, if we carry on with a common script that honours effectiveness, efficiency, and batch processing, that is, in turn, sustained by a language that discourages thinking.

Disenthralling Ourselves from the Single Story

Transcendental Etude

But there come times—perhaps this is one of them—

when we have to take ourselves more seriously or die;

when we have to pull back from the incantations,

rhythms we've moved to thoughtlessly,

and disenthrall ourselves, bestow

ourselves to silence, or a severer listening, cleansed

of oratory, formulas, choruses, laments, static

crowding the wires.

—Adrienne Rich (1978)

The conflation of schooling (single story) and education (the possibility of a plurality of stories) is laughable in its irony. Arendt recognized and called out these kinds of incongruencies, by physically laughing at them. "Arendt's laughter was the laughter of incongruence, the laughter that erupts when facing absurdity, a pause to catch one's intellectual breath. We happen upon something that makes no sense, we laugh" (Knott, 2011, p. 19) and then try to understand. That schooling has subsumed educating in common usage to the point that both concepts are

used interchangeably further diminishes the space to educate while sanctioning the single story. Schooling has become the "static crowding the wires", drowning out education. In educating, plurality is respected, while schooling promotes sameness and invisibility. Plurality defies answers while schooling relies on them. Lynn, in her resolve to see and understand Freddy, exhibited the ability to educate, to think independently, to 'disenthrall' herself, to listen, and to 'pull back from the incantations,/rhythms we've moved to thoughtlessly'. Without being conscious of it, Lynn was using Arendt's conceptual resources and engaging in the process of withdrawing herself from the common script and the busy-ness of functioning within the classroom/school world in order to find the space to wonder about her circumstances and Freddy's, and to search for something better, something that made more sense than what typical schooling solutions could provide. In this sense Lynn was '*Frei wie ein Blatt im Wind'*, as free as a leaf in the wind, willing to let go, accept Freddy in his particularity and try to understand him, granting that "the experience of being human—can only be understood in its irreducible specificity" (Nixon, 2015, p. 88). Lynn wanted to do the right thing and could see more in Freddy than schooling ever could; she noticed his intelligence, his anger, his struggle, and Lynn refused to let him disappear.

Educating includes teaching children to wonder, to question what is, to see beyond givens, and to become independent thinkers/judges—all things that schooling claims to strive for, yet actively dissuades. Greene (2001) queries:

Is not learning, authentic learning, a matter of going beyond? Is it not an exploration generated by wonder, curiosity, open questions? Is there not always a drive to reach beyond what is deliberately taught? Is it not the case that learning really begins when people begin teaching themselves? And is there not a special

pleasure, a delight found in the discovery, in the sometimes startling realization,

that what is being learned affects the manner in which we make sense of the

world? (p. 38)

However, if children (and adults) were to actually wonder, question, and think as Greene

suggests, the institution, constructs, and norms of schooling would be threatened. We would

begin to see beyond the single story and open ourselves to the possibility of something more.

While Arendt had limited experience in schools, no experience with teaching children, and wrote

little about education, her resources provide a different way to think what we are doing in

schools, to open ourselves to possibilities and various perspectives, allowing other stories to

emerge, and in doing so, challenge the single story.

I Cannot Bring the World Quite Round

I cannot bring a world quite round,

Although I patch it as I can.

I sing a hero's head, large eye

And bearded bronze, but not a man.

Although I patch him as I can

And reach through him to almost man.

If to serenade to almost man

Is to miss, by that, things as they are

Say that it is the serenade

Of a man that plays the blue guitar.

—Wallace Stevens, "The Man with the Blue Guitar"

In order to see the world in new ways, we need to be willing to let ourselves be shaken and to lose our footing for a time, as Arendt did when she encountered Eichmann. When Arendt revealed the pervasiveness and dangers of non-thinking, she modeled how we might begin to think what we do by challenging assumptions and bringing new concepts to light where they can be tested and debated. The withdrawal of the mental faculties offers space to stop—to reflect and think—to be willing to become spectators of our own practice so that we might wonder at what is, direct our attention to what matters, attend to experiences in new ways, and begin to consider ways to create meaning and accept our responsibility to think and to judge. The space to stop and think is surprisingly (or perhaps not so surprisingly) limited. Unless we decide to withdraw, however, trying to think will often prove futile—the reason the non-sovereign Will is so crucial. We must be awake to the world and choose to find the space to think. On occasion we need to refuse to live automatically so that we might "be enabled to crack the codes, to enter in, to uncouple—if only for a while—from the ordinary, commonsensible reality" (Greene, 2001, p. 181). Arendt's life of the mind is about uncoupling from the ordinary in order to think about alternatives; in reconceiving thinking, willing, and judging, she identifies a way to address thoughtlessness and protect plurality, thereby creating space for educating, for appearing to one another, for *humanitas*.

When Lynn encountered Freddy, she wanted to do what was right, but was uncertain what that might be, especially because the conventional ways of "managing" Freddy felt wrong. She lost her balance and had to think what she was doing, trying in her own way to 'bring the world quite round'. Wondering about what was happening and why Freddy was acting and resisting as he did, Lynn began to question much of what she had accepted about how to "manage" a classroom and work with children. The time Lynn spent absorbed in two-in-one

thinking resulted in her challenging her own practices, re-thinking what she believed. Eventually, because she found no answer, her thinking led her to a thinking partner (two-in-two) who was able to talk through the perplexities and query possibilities with her. As Lynn persisted in her thinking and in her dialogue, she was able to generate meaning, better understand Freddy, and to foster a relationship with him that allowed him to make good appearances in her classroom.

It was only in withdrawing from the frantic, busy-ness of school that Lynn was able to find the space to think, will, and judge as a spectator to her own practice in order to consider how she might know and understand Freddy and include him in her classroom. Her willingness to try, and keep trying, in spite of repeated failure, reflects her commitment to educate, that is, her acceptance of her educational responsibility, rather than simply assenting to the single story of school.

Lynn's willingness to be open to alternatives reveals a resistance to "Real School" and the common script, her refusal to simply get along and follow along, and her refusal to be determined by her role or allow Freddy to be determined by his. Generally, we do not attend to or recognize the ways we are determined because we see ourselves as unique individuals, unique teachers, students, parents, and yet we "are particularly astonished when we find ourselves approached not as unique and distinctive beings but as members of a social group. Most of us resent the idea that we are interchangeable with others and yet, we approach others similarly" (Levinson, 1997, p. 440). The roles we play in school tend to eliminate individuality and promote uniformity, students being the most obvious 'interchangeable' group as the products of batch processing. Freddy struggled against his role of being a 'student,' recognized his social positioning as 'other', and fought to develop a sense of identity that was true to who he was and that allowed him to appear to others. The many ways we are shaped and limited by the world in

which we find ourselves, our belatedness, is often easier to endure than to confront or defy, as Freddy showed. As he pushed back against what people thought he should be—a 'good' student—few people paid attention and instead continued to try to help him understand how to play his role. Freddy refused and was written out of the play.

Very few teachers acknowledged Freddy as Lynn did. She had the courage to interrupt the predictability of expectations in 'Real School,' see beyond her social positioning, and not allow herself to be entirely determined by it. There was nothing available to provide guidance about what Lynn ought to do; there were no "answers." In her willingness to do the right thing and her commitment to educate, Lynn accepted the unknown and opened herself to it, exercising her agency. "To judge, to depart from the safety of rules, codes, and principles, to insist on one's own personal stake in one's evaluations, requires a bold spirit" (Garsten, 2007, p. 1099). Lynn was able to educate in the midst of the single story of schooling, to stand as a spark of light, a quiet and barely visible story of resistance. Yet hers was another defeated cause.

Understanding the relational aspect of teaching, of allowing ourselves to be human and entangled with each other, made it possible for Lynn to see Freddy as an individual rather than simply another "student." She innately understood that

> [t]he proper way to encounter another person is to be open to them, to be ready to
> see new dimensions, new facets of the other, to recognize the possibility of some
> fresh perception or understanding, so you may know the other better, appreciate
> that person more variously. (Greene, 2001, p. 54)

Lynn's ability to see Freddy in his particularity, combined with her "precision in listening", made it possible for her to judge and reflects a faith in and desire for *humanitas*, creating space

in a plural world where human beings can appear to each, freely exchanging and debating opinions, thoughts, and ideas.

Through his words and actions, Freddy was able to show Lynn what he needed because she was able to pay attention and be awake to what was happening—acting as a discerning spectator of her classroom and her practice. Accepting that she did not know, that there was no certainty in what to do, demonstrates Lynn's understanding of what it means to educate. Finding some distance from existing bannisters, expected behaviours, and established standards in order to judge independently, to recognize *what is*, rather than accede to the fiction of the single story is no simple feat and is strongly discouraged. That Lynn detached herself from her practice in order to think is something of a miracle.

With space to think as an outsider to her practice, Lynn recognized a problem, but also recognized she had no idea what to do about it. There seemed nowhere to turn, no company, past or present, that might offer solutions, so she sought out a thinking partner, someone who supported her in her thinking and in talking through possible alternatives. Lynn's thinking partner also had no answers, but together they were able to search for examples in practice that might make sense for Freddy. Ultimately, there were no examples, nothing to hold on to or to ground practice, so Lynn had to decide for herself what to do.

In the end, Lynn knew that there was no guarantee that what she did would be right and as a result of her letting go, she and Freddy were able to create educational space together. Lynn was able to imagine possible ways to appraise the situation, to think of options for Freddy, and to contemplate how she might frame her thinking so it would make sense to her thinking partner. She had to bridge unfounded existing beliefs about how she ought to work with children and communicate her thoughts to her thinking partner, hoping that her partner would share her

interest in challenging what seemed given. Persuading her thinking partner that her perspective was worth considering required Lynn's willingness to speak to and defend her ideas even though she realized how unconventional they were. Without a trusted thinking partner, Lynn may not have been able to move beyond what was expected. Lynn and Freddy's story has, for me, become an example of both the possibility of defying the single story and also its tragedy.

When Loaded Balances Come to Grief

Wind shakes the big poplar, quicksilvering

The whole tree in a single sweep.

What bright scale fell and left this needle quivering?

What loaded balances have come to grief?

—Seamus Heaney, "The Poplar"

Despite Arendt having little to say about schooling or education, her resources and her modeling help me understand the problem of the single story of school and what might be done about it. Unfortunately, it becomes increasingly clear that this is a problem I cannot solve; 'the centre cannot hold', and this is in many ways a defeated cause. However, there are pinholes of hope, examples of those who look for other possibilities, such as Contact, an alternate school in Toronto, which "aims to foster political agency…[through] informal opportunities to learn democracy, organized through and reflected upon in their Oral English (OE) class" (Kelly, 2014, p. 403). Here students develop skills, awareness, and the opportunity to participate critically and thoughtfully in their own learning, creating educational space together. Unfortunately, such schools are scarce, but they "illustrate the potential of alternate education as both embodiments of a more participatory democratic society, as well as forums where counter-hegemonic narratives can be voiced, debated, and publicized" (Kelly, 2014, p. 404). In recognizing the

efforts made to find other ways to be together in schools, and in turning to stories like Lynn and

Freddy's, I am inspired to fuel my efforts to continue searching for lost pearls, those moments of

illumination that transcend the predictable. Working in a profession where we engage with other

people all day every day, we need to realize/accept that there will be times when 'things fall

apart', when the given rules, standards, and practices make no sense, and we will need to think

for ourselves and exercise our judgment. Identifying these moments, these pearls, rests on our

ability to think. How do we create space in schools for the wind of thinking?

Understanding the power of the single story and the ways in which "the worst are full of

passionate intensity" that roots and sustains the story, allows me to look at what we do in schools

differently, to consider where there are cracks to let in the light and pierce the impenetrable

darkness. It is evident that

> [p]edagogy is never innocent. But if is it to be understood and made problematic as
>
> a moral and political practice, educators must critically question and register their
>
> own subjective involvement in how and what they teach. They must also resist
>
> calls to transform pedagogy into the mere application of standardized practical
>
> methods and techniques. Otherwise, teachers [and principals] become indifferent
>
> to the ethical and political dimensions of their own practice. (Giroux, 2012, p. 82)

When I found myself confronted with Chris years ago, I lacked this understanding, trusting

entirely my supervisors and the other adults with whom I worked. I wanted to do what was right

and do my job well, but I was consumed by Real School and what I thought it meant to be a Real

teacher and a Real principal, what my role needed to be. Reflecting on my inability to recognize

other perspectives is fascinating and terrifying to me, mostly because I know my thoughtlessness

was not an anomaly. Unfortunately, as I have become more aware of how few answers there

truly are in so many of the circumstances we encounter in schools, I am witness to far too many refusals to think about what we are doing. *Not* thinking what we do is expected and those who dare to think enter dangerous territory, especially if they choose to share the results of their thinking, their judgments, publicly. The risks cannot be minimized. Whenever there is questioning and resistance to what is established and seems indestructible, there is upheaval. Enchantment with the single story is ubiquitous and it is true that most of what we do fits within its parameters.

When and if we can create space for other stories to appear, we can, in the oases of our classrooms and schools, begin to see each other as more than the roles we play.

> [W]hen persons open themselves to one another, there is always a sense of new profiles to be experienced, new aspects to be understood. If we attend from our own centers, if we are present as living, perceiving beings, there is always, always more. (Greene, 2001, p. 16)

There are examples that reveal *humanitas* and allow us to appear to each other as persons, as Freddy was able to appear to Lynn. Getting to a place where this is possible requires us to be vulnerable, willing to let ourselves be shaken and surprised rather than determined. Breaking free from the single story and the way it shapes and conditions what we do requires us to begin to think. As we do so we can cultivate an openness to what is and begin to see the world differently. As we learn to enter our classrooms and our schools with a sense of wonder and possibility, accepting that there is much we do not know, perspectives we do not understand, and how the persons we encounter each day will choose to be and respond to each other, we will be better prepared to think, will, and judge. Noticing what there is to notice by paying attention and

practicing attunement requires commitment, thoughtful effort, and the exercise of judgment, all of which are suppressed by school.

Confronting and changing the single story is clearly a defeated cause. School is not going to go away or change in any significant way. Ironically, there is too much at stake politically and economically for governments and ministries around the world to think about what it means to live well together in the world, as individual persons across difference; world citizenship belongs to us all, yet there is so much self-interest, what we hold in common, what is most important, becomes lost. It seems and feels quite hopeless. How can we find hope in the midst of such hopelessness? Perhaps we can find hope in the stories that speak to what is right and good. Finding such examples involves a willingness to accept our responsibility to think without bannisters, and to give account, to share and to speak to our judgments. Doing this does not just happen; it requires practice—wondering, questioning—and sharing our thoughts with someone we respect and trust, as I tried to do when thinking about the girls and as Lynn did when she encountered Freddy. With the girls, I was left with my own company, since those I reached out to were only able to think within the single story, caught in their own roles and unable to see beyond. Lynn had her own company and the company of a trusted thinking partner with whom she could consider alternatives. Seeking out good company and finding examples allows us to engage and debate the taken for granted. When we can move beyond two-in-one and two-in-two dialogue and include more perspectives, we begin to think more carefully about why we hold the opinions and beliefs that we do.

When we are able to move beyond the superficial singularity of school and begin to see alternatives, to see other stories and perspectives, to see individual people in their specificity, we create space to appear to each other where we can think together about what we are doing and

why we are doing it. We can share our opinions, listen with precision, and begin to interrogate what is right and good. We can question what seems beyond question. We can examine the language we use and how language both enhances and limits our understanding. We can seek encounters with the arts, knowing that the arts offer perspectives that often startle and challenge our reality. The arts, because they exist in an in-between, a space in the margins—coming from a place of distance, and yet, are also of the world—can reveal new views: "Art is the great enemy of obtuseness" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 23). We owe it to ourselves and to our students to infuse the arts in our teaching and to provide diverse encounters with the arts.

Developing the ability and skill to create and appreciate the arts requires tremendous dedication and thoughtful effort. We are able to teach the fundamental foundational skills required to dance, paint, draw, write, perform, play an instrument, and compose, but those skills can only be honed and mastered by intentional and consistent practice. Artists spend endless hours *becoming* artists, and the devotion to practicing, developing skills, and creating, is substantial. It seems to me that artists are able to reflect on their experience and use it to create. For me there is a close tie between thinking without bannisters and creating, engaging in, experiencing, and opening ourselves to the arts. To become an expert, someone who is masterful at thinking, is not something that happens quickly or easily, but takes patience and time. I cannot decide I want to be a concert pianist, a painter, or a novelist and simply become one. To do so takes years of dedicated effort, and even with all of my hard work, I may become a very good pianist (better than I was) yet never masterful. The same is true of thinking and judging. As I thoughtfully make the effort, I improve. I become better at making judgments about what is right and wrong, but it is something I will never master. It cannot be so because there will always be more, there will always be new standpoints, new experiences, new interactions. Thinking that

clears the way for judging, like the arts, is endless and ongoing, keeping us awake and attuned to what is.

All thinking comes from experience. I am slowly waking up and recognizing that I have a responsibility every day to think what I am doing, to reflect on what I have done and what I experience in schools. I am willing to try to imagine other perspectives, to contemplate alternatives to the language we use and practices we so readily adopt. I am becoming more aware of the single story and its enchantment and consequently, increasingly frustrated with those who "lack all conviction" and complacently and obediently carry on, refusing to accept responsibility. I am more conscious of the importance of carving out space for thinking and engaging with thinking partners who offer other ways of seeing the world, who are dedicated to understanding and loving the world as it is. Arendt and Greene have proven to be reliable and worthy companions, as have a few trusted friends. Other thinkers and writers, novelists, poets, playwrights, artists of all kinds offer objects and ideas for reflection—thought-things that I can carry with me and engage with, wonder about, when I am able to find solitude and let the wind of thinking rage through, unbalance, and change me. Most importantly, the children I work with every day teach me what it means to live together with other people, how often we make mistakes and misjudge people and circumstances, how limited our perspectives can be; they help me understand what it means to listen with precision, to respect various standpoints, and to find ways for each of them to make good appearances in the world. It is these interactions, these tangled relationships, that make it possible for me to exist, to live in the midst of the single story of school, and to find small and simple ways to resist that honour the people with whom I work and create spaces of *humanitas* where plurality, even fleetingly, exists.

Arendt's admonishment to think what we are doing, stands as a summons to enter into an unending endeavour to understand and love the world as it is, including ourselves and others, knowing that there is no answer. There are only flawed and imperfect individually unique and miraculous human beings living together in a world we have created. Arendt presents a conceptual framework along with examples, her own life and work included, of what it looks like and what it means, to think and judge in a plural and contingent world. "Arendt was not only *of* the world, but *for* the world…actively engaging with the uncertainty and contingency of the world in all its plurality" (Nixon, 2015, p. 85). She

> wanted to comprehend the world as it actually presented itself instead of limiting
> herself to what could be understood, in the sense of 'deduced,' from preconceived
> ideas, existing worldviews, or all the precious small and large lies we cling to.
> (Knott, 2011, p 21)

The message to live wide awake—to recognize, engage with, and listen to each other, to search for stories of exemplarity—lost pearls and defeated causes—and to accept our responsibility as human beings—reverberates through Arendt's work and her life's story. In many respects, for me, she has become an example and a thinking partner, who enriches who I am, forces me to think about what is right, how I know. and how I strive to be and to educate.

Although I know there is no answer to the problem of school, and changing the single story is seemingly hopeless, I will continue to try because I know there are pinholes of hope. As Arendt (2006) reminds us, even during the darkest times there are always bursts "of light in the midst of impenetrable, unfathomable darkness" (p. 231)—particular stories of courage and possibility that allow us to think anew, particular stories that can silence, for a time, the 'static crowding the wires'. I will do what I can to disenthrall myself and others from the static, from

the fictions that enchant. I will be intentional about finding and creating space to spectate and think what I am doing, I will find more opportunities for myself, for children, and for educators to engage with the arts. I will share my stories and listen carefully to the stories of others in hope that the wind of thinking might bring what seems to be in balance 'to grief', startle and disrupt, make me stop temporarily and wonder. For there is nothing sure, nothing predictable or certain in the realm of *humanitas* where educating is possible.

References

Aquinas, T. (1947). *The Summa Theologiae*. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (trans.). New York, NY: Benziger Bros. (Original work published 1265-1274)

Aquinas, T. (1963). *Commentary on Aristotle's physics*. R. J. Blackwell, R. J. Spath and W. E. Thirlkel (trans.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. (Original work published 1265-1274) doi: https://dhspriory.org/thomas/Physics.htm

Arendt, H. (1951). *The origins of totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (1953). Understanding and politics. *Partisan Review, 20*(4), 377-392.

Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, H. (1960). Freedom and politics: A lecture. *Chicago Review, 14*(1), 28-46.

Arendt, H. (1968). *Men in dark times.* New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (1971, Autumn). Thinking and moral considerations: A lecture*. Social Research, 38*(3), pp. 417-447.

Arendt, H. (1978a). Thinking. *The life of the mind.* New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (1978b). Willing. *The life of the mind.* New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (1993). *Between past and future.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Arendt, H. (1994). *Essays in understanding 1930–1954* (J. Kohn, Ed.). New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (2003). *Responsibility and judgment.* New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Arendt, H. (2005). *The promise of politics*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.

Arendt, H. (2006). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Arendt, H. (2018). *Thinking without a banister: Essays in understanding, 1953 - 1975.* New

    York, NY: Schocken Books.

Aristotle. (2009). *Nichomachean Ethics.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of education policy*,

    18(2), 215-228.

Ball, S. (2005). *Education policy and social class: The selected works of Stephen J. Ball.*

    Routledge.

Bauman, Z. (1991). The social manipulation of morality: Moralizing actors, adiaphorizing

    action. *Theory, Culture & Society, 8*, 137-151.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Modernity and the holocaust.* New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bauman, Z. (2008). *Does ethics have a chance in a world of consumers?* Cambridge, MA:

    Harvard University Press.

Beiner, R. (Ed.) (1982) *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*. Chicago, IL:

    University of Chicago Press.

Beiner, R. (1983). *Political judgment*. London, UK: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Beiner, R. (2001). *Judgment, imagination, and politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt.* Beiner &

    Nedelsky (Eds). NY, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Benhabib, S. (1994). Hannah Arendt: Critical essays. In L. P. a. H. Hinchman, Sandra K. (Ed.),

    Hannah Arendt: Critical essays. New York: State University of New York Press.

Benhabib, S. (2003). *The reluctant modernism of Hannah Arendt.* Lanham, MY: Rowman &

    Littlefield Publishers.

Berkowitz, R. (2010). Solitude and the activity of thinking. In Berkowitz, R., Katz, J. & Keens, T. (Eds.). *Thinking in dark times: Hannah Arendt on ethics and politics.* New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

Bernstein, R. J. (1986). *Philosophical profiles: Essays in a pragmatic mode.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bernstein, R. (2000). Arendt on thinking. In D. R. Villa (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Hannah Arendt* (pp. 277-292). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Bernstein, R. (2002). *Radical evil: A philosophical interrogation.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Bernstien, R. J. (2008). Are Arendt's reflections on evil still relevant? *The Review of Politics*, *70*(1), 64-76.

Bernstein, R. J. (2016). *Pragmatic encounters.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Biesta, G. J. (2004). Education, accountability, and the ethical demand: Can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Educational Theory, 54*(3), 232-250.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2012). *Standards for education, competence and professional conduct of educators in BC.* Retrieved from https://bctf.ca/ssta/Assets/Assets_Services/edu_stds.pdf?id=4782

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015). *Service plan.* Retrieved from https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2015/sp/pdf/ministry/educ.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education Service Plan (February 2016) https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2016/sp/pdf/ministry/educ.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2019). *BC's new curriculum.* Retrieved from https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2019). Retrieved from

    https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-

    organizations/ministries/education

Canovan, M. (1995). *Hannah Arendt: A reinterpretation of her political thought.* New York,

    NY: Cambridge University Press.

Coulter, D. (2002). What counts as action in educational research? *Educational Action Research*,

    10(2), 189-206.

Coulter, D. & Wiens, J. R. (2002). Educational judgment: Linking the actor and the spectator.

    Educational Researcher, 31 (4), 15-25.

Coulter, D. & Wiens J. R. (Eds.) (2008). *Why do we educate? Renewing the conversation.*

    Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Cullingford, C. (1991). *The inner world of the school: Children's ideas about schools.* London,

    England: Cassell Education Limited.

D'Entreves, M. P. (2000). Arendt's theory of judgment. In D. Villa (Ed.) *The Cambridge*

    companion to Hannah Arendt. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Davis, L. (2010). *Re/envisioning indigenous-non-indigenous relationships.* Toronto, ON:

    University of Toronto Press.

Deutscher, M. (2007). *Judgment after Arendt.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Dewey, J. (1954). *The public and its problems.* Chicago, IL: The Swallow Press, Inc.

Donoghue, D. (1983). *The arts without mystery.* Boston, MA: Little Brown.

Dunne, J. (1997). *Back to the rough ground: Practical judgment and the lure of technique.* Notre

    Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press.

Dunne, J. (2000). Figures of the teacher: Fergal O'Connor and Socrates. In Dunne, J., Ingram, A. & Litton, K. (Eds.). *Questioning Ireland: Debates in political philosophy and public policy.* Dublin, Ireland: Institute of Public Administration.

Fenstermacher, G. D. (1990). Some moral considerations on teaching as a profession. In J. I. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K.A. Sirotnik (Eds.), *The moral dimensions of teaching.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Ferrara, A. (2008). *The force of the example: Explorations in the paradigm of judgment.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Fine, R. (2008). Judgment and the reification of the faculties. *Philosophy and Social Criticism, 34* (1-2), 157-176.

Gadamer, H. (1975). *Truth and method* (J. Weinsheimer & D.G.Marshall, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum. (Original work published1960)

Garsten, B. (2007). The elusiveness of Arendtian judgment. *Social Research, 74*(4), 1071-1108.

Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the crisis of public values: challenging the assault on teachers, students, & public education.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Gray, J. G. (1977). The winds of thought. *Social Research*, *44*(1) (Spring 1977), 44-62.

Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: essays on education, the arts, and social change.* San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: the Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on aesthetic education.* New York, NY: Lincoln Center Institute.

Grumet, M. R. (1988). *Bitter milk: Women and teaching*. Amherst, MA: The University of Massachussets Press.

Habermas, J. (1973). *Theory and practice*. Viertel (trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press. [German, 1968a, 1971a]

Habermas, J. (1992). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, W. Rehg (trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [German, 1992b]

Harari, Y. N. (2014). *Sapiens: a brief history of mankind.* Toronto, ON: Random House Canada Limited.

Harvey, C. (2010). Making hollow men. *Educational Theory, 60* (2), 189-201.

Kant, I. (1952). *The critique of judgement* (J. C. Meredith, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. (Original work published 1790)

Kant, I. (1964). *Groundwork of the metaphysic of morals* (H. J. Paton, Trans.). New York, NY: Harper & Row. (Original work published 1785)

Kant, I. (1988). *Critique of pure reason* (P. Guyer & A. W. Wood, Eds. & Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1784)

Kant, I. (1996). *Critique of practical reason* (T. K. Abbott, Trans.). London, UK: Longmans. (Original work published 1788)

Kateb, G. (2010). Fiction as poison. In R. Berkowitz, J. Katz, & T. Keens, (Eds.) *Thinking in dark times: Hannah Arendt on ethics and politics.* New York, NY: Fordham Press.

Kelly, D. M. (2014). Alternative learning contexts and the goals of democracy in education. *Teachers College Record, 116*(14), 383-410.

Knott, M. L. (2011). *Unlearning with Hannah Arendt.* New York, NY: Other Press.

Kohler, L. & Saner, H. (1992). *Correspondence Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace.

Korsgaard, C. (1996). *Creating the kingdom of ends.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University
     Press.

Kristeva, J. (2001). *Hannah Arendt.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Lear, J. (2006). *Radical hope: Ethics in the face of cultural devastation.* Cambridge, MA:
     Harvard University Press.

Levinson, N. (1997). Teaching in the midst of belatedness: the paradox of natality in Hannah
     Arendt's educational thought. *Educational Theory, 47(4),* (Fall 1997), 435-451.

Levinson, N. (2010). A "More General Crisis": Hannah Arendt, world-alienation, and the
     challenges of teaching for the world *as it is. Teachers College Record, 112(2),* (February
     2010), 464-487.

MacIntyre, A. (1981) *After virtue: A study in moral theory.* Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre
     Dame Press.

Marcuse, H. (1979). *The aesthetic dimension: toward a critique of Marxist aesthetics.* Boston,
     MA: Beacon Press.

Markell, (2018). Politics and the case of poetry: Arendt on Brecht. *Modern Intellectual History,
     15*(2), 503-533.

Marshall, D. L. (2010). The origin and character of Hannah Arendt's theory of judgment.
     Political Theory 38 (3), 367-393.

McGowan, J. (1998). *Hannah Arendt: An introduction.* Minneapolis, MN: University of
     Minneapolis Press.

Meade, E. (1996). The commodification of values. In May, L. & Kohn, J. (Eds.), *Hannah
     Arendt: Twenty years later.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Meier, D. (2002). *In schools we trust: creating communities of learning in an era of testing and standardization.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press books.

Metz, M. H. (1989). Real school: a universal drama amid disparate experience. *Politics of Education Associates Yearbook*, 75-91.

Miner, R. C. (2000). Non-Aristotleian prudence in th*e prima secundae. The Thomist, 64,* 401-422.

Nelson, D. (2006). The virtues of heartlessness: Mary McCarthy, Hannah Arendt and the anesthetics of empathy. *American Literary History*, 86-101.

Nixon, J. (2015). *Hannah Arendt and the politics of friendship*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2001). *The fragility of goodness: Luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Nussbaum, M. (2010). *Not for profit: Why democracy needs the humanities.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

O'Neill, O. (1996). *Towards justice and virtue: A constructive account of practical reasoning.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Oliver, S. (2013). Aquinas and Aristotle's teleology. *Nova et Vereta, 11(3),* 849-870.

Osborne, K. (2008). Education and schooling: a relationship that can never be taken for granted. In D. Coulter & J. Wiens (Eds.) *Why do we educate? Renewing the conversation.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life.* San

      Fransisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Pamer, M. (2010). *Education for a common world.* (Doctrate of Education), University of British

      Columbia Vancouver, BC.

Pegis, A. C. (1973). (Ed.), *Basic writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Volume Two*. Indianapolis,

      IN: Hackett Publishing.

Phelan, A. (2001). The death of a child and the birth of practical wisdom. *Studies in Philosophy*

      and Education, 20 (1), 41-55.

Phelan, A. (2005). On discernment: The wisdom of practice and the practice of wisdom in

      teacher education. In G. Hoban (Ed.), *The missing links in teacher education design:*

      Developing a multi-linked conceptual framework (pp. 57-73). Dordrecht: Springer.

Pitkin, H. F. (1981). Justice: On relating private and public. *Political Theory, 9*(3), 327-352.

Plato. (2008). *The Seventh Letter*. London, UK: Forgotten Books.

Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and*

      choice are undermining education. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Rich, A. (1978). *The dream of a common language: Poems 1974-1978.* New York: W. W.

      Norton.

Rocky Mountain School District Superintendent Report on Student Success (2017-2018)   doi:

      https://www.sd6.bc.ca/Departments/Curriculum%20and%20Learning/Enhancing%20Learn

      ing%20Framework/Documents/Superintendent%27s%20Report%20on%20Student%20Su

      ccess%202017%202018.pdf

Ruefle, M. (1996). *Cold Pluto*. Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University Press.

Sartre, J. P. (2000). *Literature and existentialism.* New York, NY: Citadel Press.

School Act, RSBC. (1996). Retrieved from

> http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_00

> Citation in text: (School Act 1996/2015)

Schwartz, J. P. (2016). *Arendt's judgment: Freedom, responsibility, citizenship.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Silber, J. (2012). *Kant's ethics: The good, freedom and the will.* Boston, MA: Walter de Gruyter, Inc.

Sjoholm, C. (2015). *Doing aesthetics with Arendt: How to see things*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Smits, H. et al. (2016). Worldlessness and wordlessness: how might we talk about teacher education in a fractured world? *Critical Education*, *7*(7), 2-24.

Stack, M., Coulter, D., Grosjean, G., Mazawi, A. & Smith, G. (2006). *Fostering tomorrow's educational leaders.* Vancouver, BC: The University of British Columbia.

Stevens, W. J. (2015). In Serio, J. N. & Beyers, C. (Eds.) *The collected poems of Wallace Stevens*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Superintendent's report on achievement. (2014). Retrieved from

> https://www.sd43.bc.ca/District/Departments/Superintendent/Documents/Superintendents%20Report%20on%20Student%20Achievement%202014.2015.pdf

Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Villa, D. R. (1996). The banality of philosophy: Arendt on Heidegger and Eichmann. In L. K. May, Jerome (Ed.), *Hannah Arendt Twenty Years Later* (pp. 179-196). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Villa, D. (1999). *Politics, philosophy, terror: Essays on the thought of Hannah Arendt.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wiens, D. & Coulter, D. (2008). Epilogue: Democratic eruptions. *National Society for the Study of Education 107*(1), 1-314.

Yar, M. (2000). From actor to spectator: Hannah Arendt's 'two theories' of political judgment. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *26* (2), 1-27.

Yarbough, J. & Stern, P. (1981). Vita activa and vita contemplative: Reflections on Hannah Arendt's political thought in The Life of the Mind. *The Review of Politics*, *43(3)* (July 1981), 323-354.

Young-Bruehl, E. (1994). Reflections on Hannah Arendt's *The Life of the Mind.* In L. P. Hinchman & S. K. Hinchman (Eds.), *Hannah Arendt critical essays.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Young-Bruehl, E. (2004). *Hannah Arendt: for love of the world*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Zerilli, L. M. G. (2002). Castoiadis, Arendt, and the problem of the new. *Constellations*, (9)4, 540-553.

Zerilli, L. M. G. (2005). 'We feel our freedom': Imagination and judgment in the thought of Hannah Arendt. *Political Theory 33* (2), 158-188.

Zerilli, L. M. G. (2016). *A democratic theory of judgment.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.