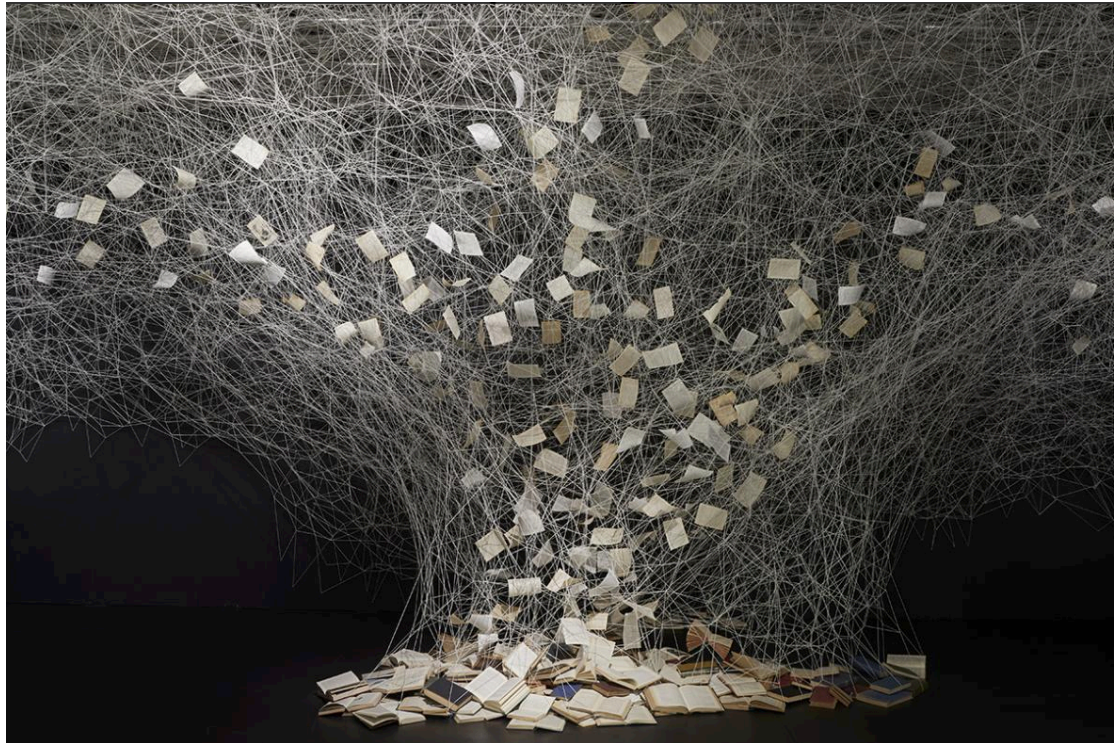


The Role of Art in Education

Explained through the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt



Chiharu Shiota, The Crossing, 2018

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Chiharu Shiota, The Crossing, 2018

“Every single thread carries a vast amount of meaningful information, accumulating in a mass of awareness. It is the history of our interwoven, universal narratives, filling the space with an organic structure of human matter. With ‘The Crossing’, I want to present this intermingling but compact system, to map the knowledge we share and pass on to our children, who pass it on to their children. Chiharu Shiota”¹

¹ “Chiharu Shiota, Melbourne Art Fair: The Crossing,” Anna Schwarz Gallery, accessed October 19, 2019, <http://annaschwartzgallery.com/exhibitions/the-crossing/>

Abstract

In this thesis I seek to grasp the meaning of art education by making an appeal to the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. I do so by asking the question: what is the role of art in education? According to Arendt natality is the essence of education. Natality in education means teachers prepare students to participate in an already existing world but also to bring in the new in society. Art and education meet in the classroom: a space in between the private and the public realm. According to Arendt the creative arts are most related to private space and the human activity of making, the performing arts to public space and action. Arendt's framework of the human condition is intended to ensure political action but also gives insights into the nature of human activities that concern art education. Her notion of work implies an object is produced or reified. Art education cannot be accurately considered from the perspective of Arendt's notion of work because education is mostly about relations. Although action is about what goes on between human beings, Arendt would not consider art education as action either, as for action is intended to achieve the freedom of an activity chosen for its own sake. Arendt characterizes the role of the teacher through authority and responsibility: they should know the world and be able to instruct others about it. Teachers have to take responsibility for the world. Through wonder the nature of art can be revealed in the classroom. The nature of wonder in art is related to the concept of attentiveness: openness towards the world and to others. The artist and the teacher share this quality, although it reveals itself in different spaces. The attentiveness of the artist is ultimately directed towards the public space of the world. The teacher directs her attentiveness towards the interaction with her students revealing the art world in the protected space of the classroom.

In 2005 I started my last year at the 'Academie voor Beeldende Vorming' (Academy of Fine Art) and my first year as a teacher at 'De Nieuwste School' (The Newest School). Until that year I never seriously considered to become a teacher. I studied art and this was my focus, the fact that I would obtain a qualification as a teacher was of secondary meaning to me. It was a practical side effect: I would not have to worry about finding a job afterwards.

That was true: even before I graduated I started working as a teacher at 'De Nieuwste School' (DNS). A fantastic opportunity because this school was to open her doors for the very first time: no traditions or ballast: I was free to create a new curriculum. In that first year I learned so much: about myself, about my colleagues and about the students that were entrusted to me to learn about art. Exciting of course, but at the same time pretty scary: because what should they be trained in the arts? I had to decide upon the themes we would explore together. At the same time I had to get to know the students to be able to connect to their enthusiasm and curiosity. The students learned to imitate and master basic skills and find their own way through the new things I showed and learned them. At the time I graduated in 2006 it was clear to me that I would not start my own practice as an artist in a studio, I had become a teacher. But did I? I was not sure. I had been dedicated to studying art for four years. I loved working with all kinds of materials: painting, textile, video, and photography. Did I really feel like a teacher? It was not something I could say out loud without feeling hesitation: I loved making art and at the same time felt very confident about my decision to teach. Moreover: I did not even miss making art that much in the months that I focused on teaching. Was that wrong, did I neglect my education to become an artist? Not at all: art and education had become equally important to me and choosing to work at DNS did not feel as a way of neglecting my love for making art. During my education I learned about art and in the first year at DNS I learned more about education than in all those years at the academy. But this was not satisfying for my surroundings. They wanted to know: did I become a teacher and did this mean I didn't want to become an artist any more? Not the right question to grasp how I experienced the world at that time. But at that time I couldn't explain what would have been 'the right question' either. So now is the time to really explore this and find the words I did not find before.

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Introduction

In this thesis I will try to grasp the meaning of art education. I will do so by using the framework by Hannah Arendt to give words to that what makes art education such a necessary part of human life combined with examples and experiences. My questions are about the essence of the work of the teacher: what does it mean to teach art? What is art and what is the role of art in education?

What is the role of art in education? I wonder whether the art world is present in education. It should: teachers prepare their students for a world of art outside the school. The problem is that perhaps the art world is not represented at all. Arthur Efland, a professor of art education describes this problem with something he calls 'school art'². According to Efland school art is "first of all a form of art that is produced in the school by children under the guidance and influence of a teacher".³ 'School art' are the art assignments we all know: making collages and paintings made with cheap "school paint". The style in which the artworks are made is often conventional and rarely surprising. Efland describes school art as "a new and different art style that is only marginally related to the heritage."⁴ He wonders:

Why does the school, which is the agency providing the transmission, proceed to invent a new and different style of its own? My perplexity is compounded by the fact that the school art style does not seem to be a pedagogical for teaching children about art in the world beyond the school, though this is its manifest function, to be sure.⁵

When at my turn I ask the question: what is the role of art in education, I am looking for a form of art education in which art *is* present. In this thesis I will not so much explore art education as a pedagogical practice that raises children. This thesis is more fundamental; about art education as a human practice. To describe this practice I will explore the meaning of the human activities of education and art and how these activities come together in the space of the classroom. I will use the philosophy of Hannah Arendt as a philosopher that does not provide a classical ethics of education, but an understanding of the human condition.

In order to handle my question about the role of art in education I will first describe how Arendt describes art and education. I turn to what Arendt has to say on the essence of education in her essay *The Crisis in Education*.⁶ I will describe her notion of the classroom, as this is the space where education and art come together. In the essay *What is Freedom* distinguishes art in two categories: the creative arts and the performative arts.⁷

² Arthur Efland, "The School Art Style: A Functional Analysis," *Studies in Art Education* 17, no. 2 (1976): 37-44.

³ Efland, "School Art," 37.

⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁵ Ibid., 39.

⁶ Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Education," in *Between Past and Future*, (Digital Publisher: World Public Library Association, 2010), 173-196.

⁷ Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom," in *Between Past and Future*, (Digital Publisher: World Public Library Association, 2010), 153-154.

In the second part of this thesis I will turn to the human condition and art education. I will explore in which ways the human activities action and work that Hannah Arendt describes in her famous book *The Human Condition* relate to art and education.⁸ In this part I also turn to the work of Gert Biesta, a theoretical pedagogue, and Richard Sennett, a student of Hannah Arendt, to expand our understanding of art education seen through Arendt's notion of work.

In the final part I return to the essay *The Crisis in Education* to describe the relation between teachers of art and their students. To describe the nature of art education I use Arendt's notions of authority and responsibility. To describe the role of art I will finally turn to the concept of wonder, a concept Arendt already used in 1954 in a lecture series on action and thought: *Philosophy and Politics* and to which she returns in her final work *The Life of the Mind*.^{9 10}

I will refer to several works of Hannah Arendt. When I discuss education I will most of the time turn to the essay *The Crisis in Education*. I will use *The Human Condition* in the second part of this thesis, but I also consider it as her main work that throughout this thesis I will use for a deeper understanding of her philosophy and the (relations between) concepts she uses.

Finally, my thesis is about the work of the arts teacher in secondary schools. I will end my thesis with some recommendations for art education. These recommendations give direction to grasp the practice of art education in a meaningful way without getting in the way of the endless process of questioning the wonder of art and education itself.

⁸ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁹ Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," *Social Research*, Vol 57, no. 1 (1990): 73-103.

¹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, (New York: Harcourt, 1978).

The Essence of Education, the Classroom and the Art World

In this thesis I try to grasp the meaning of art education by making an appeal to the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. I will first explore what Arendt has to say on education in general in *The Crisis in Education*. In this essay Arendt claims the essence of education is natality: “the essence of education is natality, the fact that human beings are *born* into the world”.¹¹ So before I can turn to education I have to explain Arendt’s notion of natality first.

Natality

In *The Human Condition* Arendt relates the human capacity of natality to the human activity of action: “The new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew.”¹² Natality is about the human capacity to bring in the new through action. But what has the human activity of action to do with the fact that we are born? Apparently Arendt distinguishes between a first and a second birth, because she argues: “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance”.¹³ She explains how the human activity of action is like a second birth:

It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; it impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative. To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin (...), to set something into motion”.¹⁴

Peg Birmingham, who discusses Arendt’s notion of natality in *Hannah Arendt and Human Rights* calls the second birth a “linguistic birth”.¹⁵ She explains that the self that we present through our words is not “a consequence of speech.”¹⁶ The self that is disclosed through speech is performative: the self is “born in the very speaking itself”.¹⁷ So we should not understand Arendt’s notion of a second birth as just one moment, but as a repetitive phenomenon. As Arendt herself argues: “This disclosure of “who” in contradiction of “what” somebody is- his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide- is implicit in everything somebody says and does”.¹⁸ So to return to my question: action and being born are related in the sense that through action the newcomer discloses his unique self.

¹¹ Arendt, “The Crisis,” 174.

¹² Arendt, *Human Condition*, 9.

¹³ Ibid., 176-177.

¹⁴ Ibid., 177.

¹⁵ Peg Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt & Human Rights : The Predicament of Common Responsibility*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 24.

¹⁶ Birmingham, *Hannah Arendt*, 24.

¹⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁸ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 179.

Seyla Benhabib explains Arendt's notion of a first and second birth as the biological dimension and the psychic-social dimension of the birth of a human infant.¹⁹ Our first birth is physical, our second birth is related to a community we are born into. Benhabib describes the second birth similar to Birmingham. She describes the relation between action and this psychic-social, second birth as:

The human infant becomes a self by learning speech and action in the human community into which it is born. Through this process, the infant also becomes an individual, that is, the unique initiator of these words and deeds, the carrier of this life story".²⁰

Benhabib's description shows another dimension of natality. She argues two processes are going on at once: by learning speech and action the newcomer learns to initiate what is new and belongs to this individual *and* initiates "what is expected of one by the community".²¹ According to Benhabib it is in the second birth that the newcomer starts to show himself as an individual, but at the same time acts in a way that fits the community he is born into: "socialization and individuation are two sides of the same coin".²² Apparently the disclosure of the individual can only fully be understood against the background of a community, or more precise: within what Arendt describes as 'a web of relationships'. For Arendt human action is always an interaction: it goes on between men. This corresponds to what Arendt calls the human condition of 'plurality': "to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world".²³ Through the ways in which human beings interact in speech and action they constitute what Arendt calls an '*inter-est*': "which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together".²⁴ This invisible in-between is what Arendt defines as the 'web of relationships':

This second, subjective in-between is not tangible, since there are no tangible objects into which it could solidify; the process of acting and speaking can leave behind no such results and end products. But for all its intangibility, this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common. We call this reality the "web" of human relationships, indicating by the metaphor its somewhat intangible quality.²⁵

Arendt unites the disclosure of who someone is with the community someone is born into. The human life unfolds itself in the world in interaction with others.

Well now what does the 'web of relationships' mean for the phenomenon of natality? Benhabib illustrates this with an example of the

¹⁹ Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt*, (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2003), 109.

²⁰ Benhabib, *Reluctant Modernism*, 109.

²¹ Ibid., 110.

²² Ibid., 110.

²³ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 7.

²⁴ Ibid., 182.

²⁵ Ibid., 183.

unborn child. Even before the child is born the family has all kinds of expectations: they create a web of stories and relationships that will accompany the child during its life. We come into the world as newcomers, but fall into an already existing web of stories and relationships that will influence who we become. According to Arendt: "The disclosure of the "who" through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt".²⁶ So natality concerns the newcomer that by birth is able to initiate something new. At the same time human beings are born into a world of already-existing relationships that shape their life stories.

Now, what does this imply for my research question? According to Arendt there is a "natural relationship between grown-ups and children, which consists among other things in teaching and learning".²⁷ How does Arendt relate the concepts of natality and education? We have seen two important dimensions of natality: natality is about disclosing oneself: a process of individualisation, but always in a web of relationships: a process of socialization. In *The Crisis in Education* Arendt describes natality as the essence of education. But what does this mean? In the third part of her essay she describes the relation between the teacher and the child:

Thus the child, the subject of education, has for the educator a double aspect: he is new in a world that is strange to him and he is in process of becoming, he is a new human being and he is a becoming human being.²⁸

Arendt describes a double aspect in education: on the one hand the student is a new human being in a world that is strange to him. The child is "new in relation to a world that was there before him".²⁹ On the other hand the child is in a process of becoming: it is a not finished human being who needs special protection and care.

So what is the meaning of these two aspects and how are they related to what Arendt describes as natality? First of all the child is new in a world that is strange to him. In natality we saw the newcomer is born into an already existing web of relationships. In relation to education Arendt describes how newcomers come into an already existing world. "It is the very nature of the human condition that each new generation grows into an old world".³⁰ So what is the relation between being born into an existing web of relationships and coming into an already existing world?

Arendt discusses the concept of world more extensively in *The Human Condition*, where it constitutes the place of the *vita activa*: her idea of active citizenship. "The *vita activa*, human life in so far as it is actively engaged in doing something, is always rooted in a world of men and of manmade things".³¹ Arendt makes a distinction between earth and world. Earth refers to the globe, to nature. World on the other hand is manmade and refers to the

²⁶ Ibid., 184.

²⁷ Arendt, "The Crisis," 184.

²⁸ Ibid., 185.

²⁹ Ibid., 185.

³⁰ Ibid., 177.

³¹ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 22.

home where we are born into:

The world, the man-made home erected on earth and made of the material which earthly nature delivers into human hands, consists not of things that are consumed but of things that are used. If nature and the earth generally constitute the condition of human *life*, then the world and the things of the world constitute the condition under which this specifically human life can be at home on earth.³²

Our world consists of objects that help us orient in our daily activities. These objects also create durability: objects can exceed our lifetimes. The arts are created and performed by human beings and therefore are a part of what Arendt calls world. However, according to Arendt the arts take in a special place among things in our world because artworks are not used or consumed.

Among the things that give the human artifice the stability without which it could never be a reliable home for men are a number of objects which are strictly without any utility whatsoever [...] Moreover the proper intercourse with a work of art is certainly not “using” it; on the contrary, it must be removed carefully from the whole context of ordinary use objects to attain its proper place in the world.³³

The human made world is what precedes us: we are born into an already existing world, continued by generations. The task for the teacher Arendt describes is to introduce students to this world: “The teachers qualification consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it”.³⁴ With this in mind I say teachers of art are responsible to prepare the newly born generation for the world of art that was already there before they entered. When teachers introduce students to the world of art they turn to existing artworks and to the existing practices of crafts and creating art. Existing practices of crafts and creating art are about choosing materials and practicing the corresponding techniques. I will give two examples of how I introduce students to existing artworks in my practice as a teacher. One of my favourite ways to introduce students to artworks is by linking the work of artists to the work students are making themselves. I point to artworks that are similar in concept, colour or material to the work that the student is making. My aim is to give them a frame of reference of already existing art. Through this framework the student can find inspiration and they develop the ability to choose what fits their intentions in an artwork. In this way students also become aware of how their work relates to the history of art. Arendt defines history as “the storybook of mankind”.³⁵ Through making art, the student becomes, from the point of view of Arendt, one of the agents who are the subjects of the stories that together form the history of art. Another way to introduce students to the world of existing artworks is to teach them about the terminology in which we discuss artworks. An example of language is how students learn to apply terms like rhythm or timbre to describe music. The

³² Ibid., 134.

³³ Ibid., 167.

³⁴ Arendt, “The Crisis,” 189.

³⁵ Arendt, “Human Condition”, 184.

teacher provides them with necessary knowledge to communicate with others about music in a way that is understood by everyone.

Now I return to my question: what is the relation between the first aspect of education, introducing newcomers to a strange world, and natality? Art education introduces students to the existing world of art that is strange to them: they learn about already existing artworks and practice techniques to create artworks themselves. However, through education they learn just as much about how human beings interact in speech and action about art. This aspect that goes on between human beings belongs to the existing web of relationships I earlier discussed as an aspect of natality. My examples show that the teacher teaches the student how to interact about art in terminology and speech, but also how to interact with existing artworks when creating art. When we create art we make something but we also act in certain ways by looking for inspiration and finding out how our stories are connected to the history of art.

The second aspect of education Arendt mentions is that the child is in a process of becoming. This process of becoming corresponds to life and its development. According to Arendt all living things share this process, but the becoming of the human being is something special because of its relationship to the world. From this point of view education does not only have the responsibility for the life and development of the human being, but also for the continuance of the world:

Because the world is made by mortals it wears out; and because it continuously changes its inhabitants it runs the risk of becoming as mortal as they. To preserve the world against the mortality of its creators and inhabitants it must be constantly set right anew.³⁶

According to Arendt education has to prepare newcomers to participate in the world but also to continue the existence of the world. Apparently the preservation of the world can only be guaranteed by 'setting it right anew'. Arendt argues: "Our hope always hangs on the new which every generation brings".³⁷ Newcomers will have to bring the new into an old world. But how do teachers prepare their students for this? My question was how education and Arendt's notion of natality are related. Through educating the child as a becoming human being the teacher supports the child in the process of individualization. Every birth means someone can start the new, the unexpected: "It is the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before".³⁸ A new child comes into the human world without the ballast of what already existed or happened. This also shows why natality in education is rather a modern concept: Arendt focuses on the human ability to bring to the world fresh new things that are not hindered by history or tradition. Arendt emphasizes teachers should present the world to their students *as it is* "the function of the school is to teach children what the world is like".³⁹ Only in this way students will come to understand what needs to be challenged and changed.

³⁶ Arendt, "The Crisis, 192.

³⁷ Ibid., 192.

³⁸ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 177-178.

³⁹ Arendt, "The Crisis," 195.

But an important question remains unanswered, for what does it mean to teach a child in its process of becoming, in which the new unfolds to be able to remake the world? It is unclear what kind of relationship and processes are essential for the teacher and the student to make teaching and learning to initiate the new successful.

Since the main question of this thesis revolves around art and education, I will now turn to an example of art. How does an artist initiate the new in the art world? The best examples of how artists bring in the new can be found in the period of Modern Art. In Modern Art artists left behind centuries old traditions to establish new forms of art. For example in 1913 composer Igor Stravinsky and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky created the orchestral work and ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*. At the first performance their work caused a scandal. Already at the very start, the public reacts to the music:

As the first few bars of the orchestral work *The Rite of Spring* – *Le Sacre du Printemps* – by the young, little-known Russian composer Igor Stravinsky sounded, there was a disturbance in the audience. It was, according to some of those present – who included Marcel Proust, Pablo Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Maurice Ravel and Claude Debussy – the sound of derisive laughter.⁴⁰

The dance couldn't count on much appreciation either because the movements, stomping and stamping with curved backs, were a world away from the elegance of the classical ballet. The public responded with an uproar, in which vegetables and other objects were thrown to the stage and forty people were ejected with force. Afterwards the reviews came: "The reviews were merciless. 'The work of a madman ... sheer cacophony,'" wrote the composer Puccini. "A laborious and puerile barbarity," added *Le Figaro's* critic, Henri Quittard".⁴¹ Although the aversion of *Le Sacre* changed over time, it is clear that at first the renewal of ballet was not appreciated by the public. In the twentieth century more experiments and new approaches of dance and music followed, causing the art world to change for the long term. *Le Sacre* grew out to become one of the most important artworks of the twentieth century.

But what is the relation of this example to how teachers can prepare art students to initiate the new? The example shows that initiating the new into the world can cause a lot of resistance. And how will newcomers, as becoming human beings, be able to judge what is needed in the world? Arendt writes in *The Crisis in Education*:

The responsibility for the development of the child turns in a certain sense against the world: the child requires special protection and care so that nothing destructive may happen to him from the world. But the world, too, needs protection to keep it from being overrun and destroyed

⁴⁰ "Rite that Caused Riots: Celebrating 100 Years of The Rite of Spring," *The Guardian*, accessed October 19, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2013/may/27/rite-of-spring-100-years-stravinsky>

⁴¹ *The Guardian*, "Caused Riots."

by the onslaught of the new that bursts upon it with each new generation.⁴²

According to Arendt in education we take responsibility for the world and the development of the child. Apparently both need protection. What does this mean? Arendt does not write a lot about children, she is a political thinker. Her understanding of the human condition is about the *vita activa* and restoring active citizenship and political action. In *The Crisis in Education* it becomes clear she does not consider children as active citizens yet: “the child is a developing human being, ... childhood is a temporary stage, a preparation for adulthood”.⁴³ Arendt describes the child as the newcomer that has been born into an already existing world, which he does not know yet. Citizenship would be too much of a burden for children. Wouter Pols, researcher and teacher-educator, describes how Arendt's way of looking at the education of children resembles the Greek notion of *paideia*:

Arendt, with her ideas about the separation of children and adults, pedagogy and politics, takes in a much more classical, Greek point of view of *paideia*. *Paideia* concerns a wide, cultural education. Only when this education is finished the young one can participate in the adult, political life.⁴⁴

Through *paideia*, a finished education, the world is protected from newcomers that do not know how to participate in the existing world yet. Arendt claims the child also needs protection against the world. According to Arendt the child should not directly be exposed to the public realm, it is the task of the school to prepare the child to enter the world. The place where children are prepared for action is not public space, but the classroom.

The Classroom

According to Arendt the classroom is a place between the private home and the public. The aim of education is to give a student an introduction to the world. The family home protects the young child against the world. The family home is a private place: the four walls form a shield that protects children from the world and the public realm. Education takes place in a non-public space. The school has an intermediary function between the public space of the world and the security of the private home. Arendt describes this in the following words:

Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is rather the institution that we interpose between the private domain of home and the world in order to make the transition from family to the world possible at all. Attendance there is required not by the family but by the state, that is by the public world, and so, in relation to the

⁴² Arendt, “The Crisis,” 186.

⁴³ Ibid., 184.

⁴⁴ Wouter Pols, *In de Wereld Komen; een Studie naar de Pedagogische Betekenissen van Opvoeding, Onderwijs en het Leraarschap*, (Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Garant, 2016), 83. Translation: A. Schepers.

child, school in a sense represents the world, although it is not yet actually the world.⁴⁵

In her description of school Arendt makes a clear distinction between the private and the public realm. Seyla Benhabib criticizes this strong distinction. Benhabib argues that the private domain is not as separate from the public domain of the world like Arendt suggests. The parents also teach the child about the world. They teach the child about the world around us in the way they act and speak about it. Benhabib writes:

Are not the walls that Arendt sought to erect between the public and the private more porous and more fragile than she would lead us to believe? If the adult members return to the family from the world outside, how well and how much can they leave behind the world of work and labor when crossing the threshold?⁴⁶

Benhabib reminds us to bring questions to Arendt's work that let it say what it has to say anew.⁴⁷ Arendt describes the classroom as a space of being "in between": a space that is not yet the actual world. However, nowadays education and the actual world are less and less separated through an increasing collaboration. For instance during the project 'Young Classical Talent Award' one of my students who plays the violin very well performed in the town's concert hall as part of an assignment, supported by an actual orchestra in a public event. This example leads me to a new understanding of Arendt's description of the "in between" of the classroom. Art education takes place in a space that balances the private and the public: this does not mean the outside world is blocked. On the contrary: education can move between private spaces and the public world.

The example of my student who played the violin in front of hundreds of people became possible through her perseverance and the guidance of several teachers. Although we can criticize Arendt's walls between the private and the public, this does not change the fact that the classroom, like Arendt argues, is a safe place where teachers educate children to enter the public domain. Teachers represent the art world. Arendt mentions this in part III of the essay *The Crisis in Education*: "Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying to the child: This is our world".⁴⁸

Until now I have explored what Arendt understands as the essence of education. But the main question of this thesis is about *art* education. So now it is time to turn to what Arendt has to say about art. In what way does Arendt describe the *art* world and what can this tell us about how teachers represent it in their classrooms?

In the classroom the arts are roughly represented in two categories: the visual arts and the performing arts. Artistic disciplines that belong to the visual arts are painting, drawing, film, photography and sculpture. Music, dance and theatre belong to the performing arts. Arendt makes a similar distinction in her

⁴⁵ Arendt, "The Crisis," 188-189.

⁴⁶ Benhabib, *Reluctant Modernism*, 136.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁸ Arendt, "The Crisis," 189.

essay *What is Freedom?*⁴⁹ She distinguishes two categories in the art world: the creative arts and the performing arts.

The Creative Arts and the Performing Arts

According to Arendt the creative arts are the arts that are most related to private space. The creative process itself is not exposed to an audience, only the product that is the result of the creative process. This is why the creative arts belong to private space: “the creative process is not displayed in public and not destined to appear in the world”.⁵⁰ But do Arendt’s thoughts about the creative artist also fit the art student? Students practice their skills in the creative arts in a classroom. The process of practicing is not that private: they are guided by the teacher and surrounded by peers. The teacher and classmates demonstrate their skills; students can imitate, rehearse and make the skills their own. The learning process is supported by the semi-public space of the classroom. The classroom is not the only place where students develop their skills in the arts: often I allow my students to work on assignments outside the classroom in their own chosen time and place. The reasons for this are partly practical: there is not enough time available to do the complete assignments at school. At the same time this method has a great advantage: students are allowed to work on the creative process in their own private space. In this space they experience the freedom to create concepts that are unique and often show, or in this case: visualise, deep thoughts. Seen from the perspective of Hannah Arendt this is not surprising: engagement in the creative arts typically takes place in private space.

According to Arendt the creative arts are not limited to private space: the products that are the result of the creative process can be shown in public space: an exhibition. Exhibitions can take place in several kinds of public spaces: from art galleries to the street. For Arendt this is what matters for the world: the finalised artworks that are shown in public space: “it is not the free creative process which finally appears and matters for the world, but the work of art itself, the end product of the process.”⁵¹ The artworks by students are not often shown in public space, most of the time they are exhibited in the protected spaces of the school. However nowadays public spaces also provide room for student artworks: for example the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven provides space for students to exhibit their artworks in the exhibition *Radically Mine* every year.⁵²

According to Arendt the performing arts belong to public space. Arendt explains performing artists need some kind of stage and an audience to show their virtuosity. They need a “publicly organized space” and “depend upon others for the performance”.⁵³ But again, can we translate Arendt’s thoughts about the artist to the student and the classroom? In the classroom students and teachers (and sometimes parents when they are invited) form the audience that enables the performance. The space in which students perform

⁴⁹ Arendt, “What is Freedom,” 153-154.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 153-154.

⁵¹ Ibid., 154.

⁵² “Programma,” Van Abbemuseum, accessed September, 19, 2019, <https://vanabbemuseum.nl/programma/programma/radically-mine-3/>

⁵³ Arendt, “What is Freedom,” 154.

varies in closeness to the private and to the public. For instance: students can perform in the safety of their own classroom. The teacher can make sure the door is closed and no unexpected visitors will enter the room. The teacher also ensures the audience treats the performing students with respect. The students can also perform in a space that is very much like public space, which was the case in the classical music project I mentioned before.

Arendt provides us with a better understanding of the spaces in which teachers represent the art world, but we still do not know *how* they represent the art world. Arendt does not only relate two kinds of spaces to the categories of the arts, but also two different human activities. The creative arts are the arts of making. The creative arts “bring forth something tangible and reify human thought to such an extent that the produced thing possesses an existence of its own”.⁵⁴ She makes clear we should understand the performing arts in a different way: “the accomplishment lies in the performance itself and not in an end product which outlasts the activity that brought it into existence and becomes independent of it”.⁵⁵ The performing arts belong to the human activity of action.

In the next chapter I will turn to Arendt’s framework of human activities to explore through what kind of activities the art world is represented in the classroom.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 153.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 153.

Art Education and The Human Condition

Now I turn to the activities of teachers, students and artists, to further explore the meaning of art education. So I make an appeal to Arendt's framework of human activities: what kinds of human activities belong to art and art education? And does Arendt's framework help us further in understanding the differences she described between the creative and performing arts? In my own practice as a teacher I design the curriculum, create assignments and tests and most of all I interact a lot with my students, their parents and my colleagues. Will Arendt's framework help us determine which activities are essential to represent the art world in the classroom?

The framework Arendt described in *The Human Condition* in 1958 is problematic for my questions because Arendt created it to ensure political action. So is it useful to look at art from the perspective of political action? I argue there are at least three difficulties when we look at art in this way. The first one is obvious: most art is not about politics: there are many artworks that are created without any political intention or political message. The second difficulty is that art is multifaceted. We can experience art from many different points of view such as religion, entertainment or aesthetics. It is often not clear to which of these categories artworks belong. For example Banksy is most famous for his street art that adds social commentaries to public space.⁵⁶ Although one certainly can consider his art political, like his painting of the British Parliament overrun by chimpanzees, this is certainly not the only way to understand his work.⁵⁷ Banksy is very famous and popular. His work has become so popular that works that were intended to be displayed in public space ultimately find their way to private collectors that pay enormous amounts for it. Through his popularity Banksy's works have become just as much investment objects as products that express a political voice. One could also claim his works have become part of the entertainment industry: as for exhibitions of his work attract incredible amounts of visitors worldwide. The third difficulty appears when we look, for instance, at the films of Leni Riefenstahl. Many consider her films as political art: films like *Olympia* (1936) and *Triumph des Willens* (1935) were assigned by the Nazi-regime. The problem is: Riefenstahl herself denies any part in the political message in the films. She refused to take responsibility, the Guardian quoted her in 2003: "I had no political reasons for making these films," she said last year. "There was one Hitler and one government. Everyone shouted: 'Heil Hitler'. It was normal at that time. You have to put yourself in the past to look at it from the right perspective."⁵⁸ What that perspective would be according to Riefenstahl remains unclear, but the fact is that in this case the artist herself claims to have had no political intentions, even though the films are clearly commissioned for political reasons. This example reveals how complicated it

⁵⁶ Website of the artist, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.banksy.co.uk/>

⁵⁷ "Banksy's Devolved Parliament: How much did the painting sell for and when was it created?," Metro, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://metro.co.uk/2019/10/04/banksys-devolved-parliament-much-painting-sell-created-10860863/>

⁵⁸ "Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's favourite film propagandist, dies at 101," The Guardian, accessed October 12, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/sep/10/film.germany>

is to define art as political. Even though the message of the party that commissioned the films was very clear, the perspective of the artist does not reveal the same intention.

Considering art straightforward from the perspective of political action is problematic. And what about education? Can education be political? For this question we can turn to Arendt herself. According to Arendt education certainly is not political. First of all she mentions this explicitly in *The Crisis in Education*: “Education can play no part in politics, because in politics we always have to deal with those who are already educated”.⁵⁹ Through this claim Arendt shows that in her understanding of education she only refers to children: adults are excluded. Education is about preparing children to take in their place in the world. We should remember that for Hannah Arendt the political is expressed in public space. Children do not yet participate in the public world and therefore cannot be considered as citizens. The space for education is not public space, but the classroom. Arendt argues:

Normally the child is first introduced to the world in school. Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is rather the institution that we interpose between the private domain of home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all.⁶⁰

Children do not have to bear the responsibility of good citizenship yet. For this they have to develop the political capacity of judgment. According to Arendt this capacity can only be practiced within a community, guided by a developed sense of what it means to be a part of that community. She writes on this in *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*: “One judges always as a member of a community, guided by one's community sense, one's *sensus communis*”.⁶¹ Maurizio d'Entreves explains Arendt's vision on judgment in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as follows:

For Arendt the capacity to judge is a specifically political ability insofar as it enables individuals to orient themselves in the public realm and to judge the phenomena that are disclosed within it from a standpoint that is relatively detached and impartial.⁶²

It is clear Arendt does not consider children to be ready to bear the responsibility for judgment yet. So according to Arendt education and the political are separate worlds: politics belong to public space and education is limited to the in-between space of the classroom where children are prepared to become active citizens.

In the previous paragraphs I have described my reservations concerning Arendt's framework for exploring the activities in art and art

⁵⁹ Arendt, “The Crisis,” 177.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 188-189.

⁶¹ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 75.

⁶² Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2019 Edition, s.v. “Hannah Arendt.” 2019

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/arendt/>.

education. Still this does not mean we cannot use her framework. In *The Human Condition* Arendt offers us, besides her mission to revive active citizenship, an insight in the nature of human activity. This is why this famous part of her philosophy, to a certain degree, offers us valuable insights in the nature of art and education. I will now explore what Arendt's framework can clarify about human activities in art and art education.

In *The Human Condition* Arendt introduces us to three fundamental human activities: labour, work and action. According to Arendt "They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man".⁶³ I will limit my discussion of the human activities to the activities of work and action, because we have seen in the previous chapter that these are the human activities Arendt relates to the creative arts and the performative arts. I will start with the human activity of work, the activity Arendt associates with the creative arts.

Work

In *The Human Condition* creative artworks take in a special place among the objects in our world. Arendt discusses the work of art as the result of the human activity of work. The human activity of work produces or reifies, but among these objects that are the result of work, the artwork is something special. The intercourse with an artwork is different from other objects because we do not "use" it. In this sense the artwork is removed from daily life. The durability of the artwork makes it into an object that can exceed a lifetime: "Thus, their durability is of a higher order than that which all things need in order to exist at all; it can attain permanence throughout the ages".⁶⁴ The permanence of an artwork gives stability to our world: artworks will be there when I enter the world and they will still be there when my life is over. Artworks exceed the mortality of our lives, at the same time: realising an artwork can give permanence to my time here on earth. Creating artworks is an expression of the building of our human world.

Now I will discuss two of what Arendt considers as aspects of artworks and their meaning for art education: the temporal aspect of artworks and the possibility of self-disclosure in an artwork. After this I will turn to the essence of work and consider what art education, seen from Arendt's perspective of work, produces.

First of all, when we look at Arendt's notion of artworks from our current perspective we can notice a change in the art world. According to Arendt an artwork is a work of durability. Contemporary art differs from her notion: artworks are not necessarily made to last. Where artworks used to be works that exceeded a lifetime, their existence can now be limited to a few minutes. Apparently artworks are no longer what Arendt describes as "untouched by the corroding effect of natural processes".⁶⁵ The project 'Brief Encounters' shows us a good example of these fleeting artworks. In this project the visitor experiences sculptures that are not there for eternity instead they are limited by time. The artist Lee Mingwei found inspiration in a visit to Myanmar. Before a visit to the temple visitors were asked to take off their shoes. Volunteers

⁶³ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 167.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 167.

constantly swept the path towards the temple: out of gratitude, but also because of the meditative quality of the activity itself. In the performance *Our Labyrinth* Mingwei lets a dancer sweep a mixture of grains and rice in a self-chosen pattern. In a videofragment he explains: "There is a broom. ... The gesture is not about cleaning the path. It is creating and destroying pattern at the exact moment of what happens".⁶⁶ One could say this artwork is a performance, a discipline in creative arts that already has a close connection to the performing arts. Still, the project 'Brief Encounters' chooses to consider this kind of artworks as 'event sculptures': artworks, sculptures that are produced for a limited amount of time.

This example can have us wonder: are the creative arts losing their capacity for permanence? Can artworks be just as temporal as other objects in our human world? What could be the new essence of art that appears in this example? Artworks that resist time give form to our longing to overcome mortality. Contemporary artworks that are limited in time accomplish the opposite: they remind us of our limited time on earth. Although these questions and considerations would be interesting for further exploration I will for now move past them and return to art education.

So what does this different attitude towards the durability of artworks mean for art education? First of all we should be aware that the activity of producing artworks in an educational space couldn't be considered the same as making artworks in the art world. Some of the students carefully keep their artworks, but a considerable percentage of the produced artworks sooner or later end up in the rubbish bin. The feature of durability: creating objects that withstand time does not seem to apply to art made in schools. The reason why these artworks are only kept for a limited amount of time has nothing to do with artworks that remind us of our mortality. Artworks in schools seem to form another category although I would not refer to this as 'school art'. School art is the category of works made in school that have little to do with the actual art world. This category of artworks is about works that are produced to rehearse. Can we still call them artworks? Yes, but they are not produced for public space or building a stable human world. They are created in the environment of the classroom: most of these artworks are meant for a space in between the private and the public. A space where students spend a limited amount of time: it is not meant to have certain permanence; it is a place of passage.

A second feature of art can be the self-disclosure of the artist. According to Chris Higgins, who writes on Arendt and the ethics of teaching, we could claim the work of the artist is about "self-disclosure and the cultivation of one's distinctive voice".⁶⁷ Like many modern artists Picasso and van Gogh painted in their own recognizable way and disclose a very personal world through their paintings. Arendt refuses the notion of an artist that discloses his individual personality. First of all the profession of the artist is about work: artworks are the product of work. Although there is a temptation to speak of the work of the artist as work and action she maintains it cannot be anything else than work. Although the modern age considers artists so

⁶⁶ "Lee Mingwei: Our Labyrinth," YouTube video, 8:26, "Lane216East," July 26, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWcKtYVd08k>

⁶⁷ Chris Higgins, *The Good Life of Teaching : An Ethics of Professional Practice*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 102.

often as geniuses, this does not change the fact that “the essence of who somebody is cannot be reified by himself”.⁶⁸ The artwork is not a mirror of a living person. This means education in the visual arts is not about individual expression. This point of view is partly shared by Gert Biesta, a theoretical pedagogue, who notices a double crisis in art education in the book *Door Kunst Onderwezen Willen Worden (Letting Art Teach)*.⁶⁹ He describes the second aspect of this crisis as the “ ‘expressionist’ justifications of the role of the arts in education”.⁷⁰ It is not enough, according to Biesta, to focus on giving the students the opportunity to discover their own voice and identity through art education. A second step is needed: we need to ask questions about the quality of that expression:

The quality at stake here is not the aesthetic quality for itself [...] but what we could call the existential quality of what is expressed, a quality that has to do with how children and the young in a good way can exist, individual and collective, in and with the world.⁷¹

Biesta seems to disagree with Arendt on the fact whether art can reflect the identity of the artist. For Biesta, the arts fulfil an important need in education to give space for creativity and individual expression of the students. However, according to Biesta, the quality of this expression should be questioned. Although Arendt and Biesta claim different points of view on art and expression, in both their claims we can find arguments to renounce from embracing a strong expressionist value in the meaning of art education.

Now, as I announced, I will consider what art education, seen from Arendt’s perspective of work, produces. The essence of the human activity of work according to Arendt is that something is produced or reified: “the human artifice”.⁷² Of course the students produce artworks, but education goes on between children and adults and therefore also involves the activities of the teacher. The only teaching activity we could consider as work is the creation of the curriculum: the curriculum is something the teacher produces. The created curriculum shows itself in the form of objects: books or digital learning material. But the activities of the teacher involve much more. For example Higgins⁷³ describes activities like ‘care’ and ‘instruction’. The teacher gives instruction in particular subjects and shows “care for the child as a developing subject”.⁷⁴ The outcome of instruction, a well-designed curriculum and care are educated students. We cannot claim a teacher produces educated students: they are persons, not objects. In *The Beautiful Risk of Education* Biesta argues in a similar way: we should never think of education “only as a process of production”.⁷⁵ But he uses the word *only*. So does Biesta in a way consider it as possible that education ‘produces’?

⁶⁸ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 211.

⁶⁹ Gert Biesta, *Door Kunst Onderwezen Willen Worden*, (Arnhem: ArtEZ Press, 2017).

⁷⁰ Biesta, *Door Kunst*, 37.

⁷¹ Ibid., 59. Translation: A. Schepers.

⁷² Arendt, *Human Condition*, 136.

⁷³ Higgins, *Good Life*, 210-211.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 210.

⁷⁵ Gert Biesta, *The Beautiful Risk of Education*, (London: Routledge, 2013), 133.

To answer this question I will first explain how Biesta argues along a line following Aristotle. Aristotle makes a distinction between the theoretical life and the practical life. The theoretical life concerns the eternal; the practical life has to do with the world of change, the things that can vary. So when it comes to education we should focus on what Aristotle has to say on the practical life. Aristotle distinguishes two modes of acting in our practical life: praxis and poiēsis. Poiēsis is the productive activity. Biesta defines poiēsis as: “*Poiēsis* is, in short, about the creation of something that did not exist before”.⁷⁶ For Biesta education consists of poiēsis *and* praxis. At least, this is what we may conclude when he uses the word ‘only’ in the mentioned quote. This does not seem to correspond with Aristotle’s description:

Production and action are different [...]. And so the state involving reason and concerned with action is different from the state involving reason and concerned with production. Nor is one included in the other; for action is not production and production is not action.⁷⁷

Aristotle separates poiēsis from praxis in this way: “Since production and action are different, craft must be concerned with production, not with action”.⁷⁸ Aristotle relates poiēsis to craftsmanship. Jacques Taminiaux, who writes about Arendt and Heidegger in *The Thracian Maid and the Professional Thinker* describes the Aristotelian relation between poiēsis and craftsmanship. In the introduction he writes:

By contrast, the *telos*, end or goal, of both *technē* and *poiēsis* does reside in the product; it is the work itself in which the productive activity reaches its accomplishment, [...]. This *telos* is not in the producer because, once completed, the work becomes independent from the producer. Moreover, as soon as it is there, the product may become an instrument for various goals and it may be used to satisfy the needs of many individuals.⁷⁹

‘Technē’, craftsmanship, and ‘poiēsis’ are revealed in a product. The ‘telos’, an end or goal, of poiēsis lies outside the one who produces. This means poiēsis is not performed as a goal in itself: the maker aims at creating something. However, does this mean Aristotle considers the end of poiēsis necessarily as an object? In the first chapter Taminiaux explores the relation Aristotle makes between poiēsis *technē* further:

This disposition is called *technē*, a word which may be translated as know-how. [...] The one endowed with this know-how deliberates successfully and therefore discovers correctly those means, materials, contraptions and measures that will guarantee the implementation of the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 132-133.

⁷⁷ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Translated by T. Irwin, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999): 88, 1140a.

⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 89, 1140a.

⁷⁹ Jacques Taminiaux, *The Thracian Maid and The Professional Thinker: Arendt and Heidegger*, Translated by M. Gendre, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 5.

product he or she intends to fashion or the manifestation of the effect he or she seeks”.⁸⁰

This definition of *technē* reveals that Aristotle’s notion of *poiēsis* can also be explained as an *effect*. Taminiaux mentions “the restored health in the patient” as an example of such an effect.⁸¹

So to return to my question: how can education be about ‘making’ according to Biesta? Biesta considers *poiēsis* as “bringing about something”.⁸² He does not explain this further but gives two examples. His first example is in line with my argument: education creates effective curricula. His second example is that making action (*poiēsis*) is also about students who become “good citizens, skillful professionals, knowledgeable human beings”.⁸³ This fits Taminiaux’s interpretation in which the end of *poiēsis* can be a product, but also an effect.

But would Arendt consider education as ‘making’? It is often suggested, by philosophers like Habermas, that Arendt saved Aristotle’s notion of ‘*praxis*’ and ‘*poiēsis*’ from oblivion. Arendt’s definition of *poiēsis* doesn’t stroke with Biesta’s rather loose interpretation of *poiēsis* as “bringing about something”. In *The Human Condition* Arendt criticizes modern time and how *homo faber* has turned fabrication into instrumentalism.⁸⁴ She argues:

The issue at stake is, of course, not instrumentality, the use of means to achieve an end, as such, but rather the generalization of the fabrication experience in which usefulness and utility are established as the ultimate standards for life and the world of men.⁸⁵

Although the problem is not instrumentalism itself, the fact that it is present in every aspect of life is what troubles her. Economy, means and ends, has become part of every aspect of society. Society has become a society of labour. According to Arendt in modern time the public realm has lost its capacity for political action, because economy and the state are no longer distinct. Dana R. Villa describes Arendt’s theory of political action in her book *Aristotle and Heidegger*.⁸⁶ Villa argues it is Arendt’s aim to clearly separate work and action, *poiēsis* and *praxis*, to reinstate *praxis* in its meaning giving form: “The recovery of the distinction between *praxis* and *poiēsis* is clearly essential to delimiting a public realm distinct from the state and the economy, and to preserving a space for freedom and the expression of plurality”.⁸⁷ So in her framework of the human condition Arendt makes a clear distinction between action and work, in which work is the human activity that produces something. Action is the human activity Arendt esteems most: this is the human activity that goes on between people and is the condition “of all

⁸⁰ Taminiaux, *Thracian Maid*, 36.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁸² Biesta, *Beautiful Risk*, 133.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁸⁴ Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), ProQuest Ebook Central: 38.

⁸⁵ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 157.

⁸⁶ Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger*, ProQuest Ebook Central

⁸⁷ Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger*, ProQuest Ebook Central: 38.

political life”.⁸⁸ Arendt’s translation of Aristotle’s philosophy into a strong distinction of work and action leaves no space to consider education as work that *brings about something*. Following Arendt’s notion of work we cannot consider art education as work because work always *produces or reifies* something.

Resistance

For now I have mainly discussed in what ways art education is not like Arendt’s concept of work. Finally I will turn to the writings of Gert Biesta and Richard Sennett, a student of Hannah Arendt, to discuss an aspect of work that we *can* find in art education.

I already mentioned resistance in the example of *Le Sacre* as an encounter with a resisting audience. Sennett and Biesta discuss the concept of ‘resistance’, in a way that matches Arendt’s notion of the human activity of work. The creative artist encounters resistance when he produces or reifies: he transfigures a material. Both Sennett and Biesta discuss this encounter with the material through the concept of resistance. Before I go on to discuss the notion of resistance in the work of Sennett I should first explain in what way Sennett disagrees with Arendt. Sennett describes that Arendt in *The Human Condition* distinguishes between ‘animal laborans’ and ‘homo faber’: “Thus, in her view, we human beings live in two dimensions. In one we make things; in this condition we are amoral, absorbed in a task. We also harbor another, higher way of life in which we stop producing and start discussing and judging together. Whereas *Animal laborans* is fixated in the question “How?” *Homo Faber* asks “Why?”⁸⁹ Arendt relates homo faber to the human activity of work: “the work of our hands”.⁹⁰ Animal laborans is connected to the human activity of labour: “the labor of our bodies”.⁹¹ According to Arendt the homo faber is related to a higher part of society: the homo faber is the human being that stops laboring and is occupied with art, philosophy and politics. For Sennett the craftsman and the artist are not that different. Sennett disagrees with Arendt’s division: he holds a more balanced view in which “thinking and feeling are contained within the process of making”.⁹² We have not encountered the human activity of labour yet, because Arendt only discusses the arts from the perspective of work and action. The category of labour only becomes relevant when we enter the discussion in art education about teaching art as a craft or art as a conceptual practice. I want to stay away from this discussion and focus on what Sennett has to say about resistance.

Sennett defines resistances as “those facts that stand in the way of the will”.⁹³ He distinguishes two sorts of resistances: found and made. The craftsman works with the resistances he finds: a carpenter that finds unexpected knots in a piece of wood has to look for ways to make that work. The artist works with problems, resistances she puts on her own path. For

⁸⁸ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 7.

⁸⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008): 6-7.

⁹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *Human Condition*, 136.

⁹¹ Ibid., 136.

⁹² Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 7.

⁹³ Ibid., 215.

example a painter can decide to scrape of a perfectly well portrait and decide to start over. Sennett argues these two resistances may seem very different, but similar techniques in dealing with these resistances turn out to work well. He discusses three skills that stand out.

1. Reformatting that can inaugurate a leap of imagination
2. Patience
3. Identify with the resistance

Biesta also turns to the concept of resistance in his book *Door Kunst Onderwezen Willen Worden (Letting Art Teach)*. Biesta argues that we meet resistance in our encounter with the world. When we encounter resistance we realise the world is not our construction: it exists in its own way. Biesta argues that we are in the world through dialogue. We stay away from two opposites: a frustration with resistance that makes us press harder and a retreat of the world. Biesta looks at art from the same perspective: arts as being in dialogue with the world. Art is “the encounter with the reality of paint, rock, wood, metal, sound, bodies including the own body, and create forms from there”.⁹⁴ The meaning of art exists in an exploration of what it means to be in the world, in the here and now. Biesta makes it clear resistance is not only a feature of the visual arts; in the performing arts the resistance of the instrument and the own body come forward.

So how is the concept of resistance helpful in my quest for the meaning of art education? First of all I argue that Sennett and Biesta provide us with a concept that helps us understand how teachers can prepare students to bring in the new in the art world. Teachers can prepare their students by getting them acquainted with the resistance of a material. Biesta does not make the distinction Arendt makes: for Arendt the resistance of the material would belong to the category of work. The resistance of an instrument, a body, like the performative arts, belongs to the category of action.

The second insight the concept of resistance brings is not specifically related to art education. Resistance follows Arendt’s notion that education should prepare students to enter the already existing world. Sennett and Biesta show us how the experience of making things can shape our dealings with the world and relations. The experience of overcoming can help us explore and improve our relations with others and the world. A quality the artist, like we saw in the example of *Le Sacre* also needs in his encounter with an audience.

Action

Now I will turn to the category that Arendt esteems most: the category of action. The creative arts are related to the human activity of work, the performing arts are related to the human activity of action. Arendt does not discuss the performing arts extensively in *The Human Condition*; in the chapter on action she only mentions the performing art of drama shortly. Arendt refers to Aristotle to explain the word “drama”, from the Greek verb “dran”- to act, refers to the imitation of action.

⁹⁴ Biesta, *Door Kunst*, 68.

However, the specific revelatory quality of action and speech, the implicit manifestation of the agent and speaker, is so indissolubly tied to the living flux of acting and speaking that it can be represented and “reified” only through a kind of repetition, the imitation or *mimēsis*, which according to Aristotle prevails in all arts but is actually appropriate only to the *drama*, whose very name (from the Greek verb *dran*, “to act”) indicates that play-acting actually is an imitating of acting.⁹⁵

Arendt argues only drama can reveal the true meaning of action because the nature of drama is to repeat action and speech itself. This makes drama the political art by excellence: it shows the political aspect of human life through art. It is also the art form that has as its only subject the relationships between human beings.

This is also why the theatre is the political act par excellence; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others.⁹⁶

So what can Arendt’s notion of action reveal about art education? In the category of work the quality of dealing with resistance came forward as a skill that is worthwhile to teach: to prepare students to bring in the new in the art world as well as to help them deal with resistance in relations with others. We can find a similar skill in the category of action: courage. According to Arendt courage is the “willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one’s self into the world and begin a story of one’s own”.⁹⁷ In contrast to work, in which individual expression is impossible according to Arendt, one can disclose who somebody is through action and speech. Arendt argues:

In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and the sound of the voice. This disclosure of “who” in contradistinction to “what” somebody is- his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide- is implicit in everything somebody says and does.⁹⁸

Courage is indispensable for an actor to take the stage. It also takes courage to leave the private space and to show who one really is: one discloses *and* exposes one’s self. So bringing in the new through action is mainly about courage: the teacher should prepare her students to become courageous enough to enter the world and expose themselves. In this way courage becomes the foundation for acting in the world.

Finally I return, like I did in the category of work, to the essence of the category of action. The essence of the category of action lies in the interaction and relationships between human beings. According to Arendt in education

⁹⁵ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 187.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

teachers prepare the new generation to find their place in the world. Arendt describes education in a way that revolves around the relationship between young people and grown ups. Does this make the profession of the teacher, according to Arendt, all about action? Chris Higgins tried to answer a similar question. His question is: “where does teaching fit into Arendt’s *vita activa*?”⁹⁹ Earlier he already mentioned the problems to fit the occupation of the teacher within the category of action:

As framed, however, the category of action excludes all concrete occupations. Action for Arendt is reserved for largely unforeseeable encounters in which one suddenly confronts oneself and others with unpredictable results. Occupations, by contrast, all seem to require relatively high degrees of foresight and predictability.¹⁰⁰

From this point of view the occupation of the teacher, with its clear responsibilities and duties, could clearly not belong to what Arendt describes as the category of action. Arendt relates her category of action, the activity that she esteems most, to what Aristotle described as ‘*energeia*’:

It is this insistence on the living deed and the spoken word as the greatest achievements of which human beings are capable that was conceptualized in Aristotle’s notion of *energeia* (“actuality”), with which he designated all activities that do not pursue an end (are *ateleis*) and leave no work behind (no *par’ autas erga*), but exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself.¹⁰¹

So does the category of action tell us more about which activities of the teacher of arts are meaningful? I already mentioned how Arendt responds in her notion of the human condition to Aristotle’s philosophy: his notions of praxis and poiēsis. Jacques Taminiaux and Dana Villa argue Arendt did not simply rehabilitate, but critique Aristotle’s notion of praxis.¹⁰² So what is her critique? Aristotle applies a threefold division of human activities into production (poiēsis), action (praxis), and contemplation (theōria). Arendt criticizes Aristotle for subordinating action to contemplation. “Aristotle’s very articulation of the different ways of life, in whose order the life of pleasure plays a minor role, is clearly guided by the ideal of contemplation (*theōria*)”.¹⁰³ I already mentioned the problem Arendt saw in Modernity: a society in which the public realm is no longer separate from the state and economy. It is Arendt’s project to recover the public realm that gives space to freedom and plurality. The solution she argues is to recover the distinction between poiēsis and praxis. This results in the framework in which she makes a very firm distinction between labour, work and action.

In fact, her critique of Aristotle may not be justified. Aristotle considered

⁹⁹ Higgins, *Good Life*, 214.

¹⁰⁰ Higgins, *Good Life*, 86.

¹⁰¹ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 206.

¹⁰² Jussi Backman, “The End of Action: An Arendtian Critique of Aristotle’s Concept of Praxis,” *Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 8 (2010): 29-30.

¹⁰³ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 14.

contemplation as the highest form of action. Villa explains by quoting Aristotle:

Genuine self-sufficiency, according to Aristotle, is never found in action or speech, for these “attempt to gain advantages beyond political action, advantages such as political power, prestige or at least happiness for the statesman himself and his fellow citizens, and that is something other than political activity”.¹⁰⁴

According to Aristotle through contemplation it is possible to achieve the freedom of an activity chosen for its own sake.¹⁰⁵ Arendt considers this as the highest achievement in what she argues as being action instead of contemplation. The only way to consider education as action through the framework of Arendt is by looking at it as an activity that is chosen freely and for its own sake. This would not be in line with how Arendt describes the essence of education, as I have discussed in part one. This means Arendt’s notion of action can only give us a very limited understanding of the meaning of human activities in art education.

This leaves us with a problem. Activities that concern the relation between the teacher and her students cannot be described through Arendt’s notion of action, because she excludes action from the activities that belong to a profession. As I described at the beginning of this chapter: Arendt reserves the category of action for the political. This does not mean that important parts of our question about the nature of the activities of teaching art have to remain unanswered. To understand the profession and activities of teaching art we also need to turn to what Arendt directly has to say on education in *The Crisis in Education* and *The Life of the Mind*.

¹⁰⁴ Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger*, ProQuest Ebook Central: 65.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., ProQuest Ebook Central: 65.

Authority and Responsibility; Wonder and Attentiveness

I started my question to Hannah Arendt by turning to her essay *The Crisis in Education*. To get a better understanding of how Arendt sees the relation between grown ups and the young in education I will now return to this essay. First I turn to what Arendt has to say about the concepts of authority and responsibility to understand how Arendt characterizes the role of the teacher. After this I will explore the concept of wonder, which she already mentions in an essay in 1954 and further explains in her last work *The Life of the Mind*, to find out what it actually means to take responsibility for the art world.

Authority and Responsibility

Arendt mentions authority for the first time in the second part of *The Crisis in Education*. In this part she discusses assumptions that have caused the crisis in education. The first assumption is that there is such a thing as 'a child's world'. A world in which children are autonomous and this world should be left to them to govern. This would mean people of different ages, adults and children, are no longer together in the same world. The adult not only loses her authority but also the contact with the individual child: she can no longer tell the child what to do. The authority no longer lies with one person, but with the children's group. Arendt shows us the authority of a group is far more tyrannical than the authority of one person. The chances to rebel or to do something in one's own way are very small. When the child stands up to authority it is no longer one individual who stands up to the other: it is an individual that stands up to the majority of all the others in the group. So there are two ways in which "a child's world" will not work out: children are thrown back to themselves, because the contact with adults has gone lost and they are handed over to the group.

In part III of *The Crisis in Education* Arendt explains what constitutes the authority of the teacher. The authority of the teacher lies only partly in the qualifications of the teacher. Of course it matters: the teacher should know the world and should be able to instruct other about it. But "his authority rests on his assumption of responsibility for that world. Vis-à-vis the child it is as though he were a representative of all adult inhabitants, pointing out the details and saying to the child: This is our world".¹⁰⁶ Apparently Arendt sees a strong relation between authority and responsibility. How does she argue this?

Authority has a highly contested role in public and political life. According to Arendt this essentially means that people do not want to entrust anyone with the responsibility for the course of things in the world. In public and political life there is an ambiguity towards authority. When there is no authority, no one who sets the rules, this means responsibility for the world is required by everyone. But at the same time the responsibility for the world seems to be rejected:

If we remove authority from political and public life, it may mean that from now on an equal responsibility for the course of the world is to be required of everyone. But it may also mean that the claims of the world

¹⁰⁶ Arendt, "The Crisis," 189.

and the requirements of order in it are being consciously or unconsciously repudiated; all responsibility for the world is being rejected, the responsibility for giving orders no less than for obeying them.¹⁰⁷

We can see Arendt's argument in two examples of our contemporary world: in worldwide climate strikes we blame governments for not taking the appropriate measures to avoid climate change. At the same time we do not take responsibility ourselves by changing our life style. Second: public opinion is just as puzzling: the attention of the media is equally divided between the dangers of climate change and the denial of climate change. Media attention for climate change is not about taking responsibility, but appears to be about sensation.

In contrast to the political and public life Arendt argues in education there can be no such thing as an ambiguity towards responsibility. Children cannot simply throw off educational authority: "Children cannot throw off educational authority, as though they were in a position of oppression by an adult majority- though even this absurdity of treating children as an oppressed minority in need of liberation has actually been tried out in modern educational practice".¹⁰⁸ The adults are the ones who consider authority as no longer useful. The adults are the ones who no longer "assume responsibility for the world in which they have brought the children".¹⁰⁹ Arendt explains how this attitude can be understood in the light of modern estrangement from the world: even the adults are no longer secure about how to go about in this world: what one should know or master.

The essence of educational activity for Arendt is, surprisingly, conservatism: in the sense of conservation. The task of education is to cherish and protect: "the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new".¹¹⁰ Arendt's emphasis on conservation is in a way unexpected because she described natality as the essence of education. This means education has to prepare children to bring in the new, but at the same time teachers introduce newcomers to an already existing world. Only a conservative attitude can take responsibility for this world. This means we are always educating for a world that is becoming out of joint. To preserve the world it must constantly be set anew, for which our hope always hangs on a new generation. Teachers nowadays emphasize the fact we are teaching for a future we do not know yet: we do not know for what kind of professions or world we educate our students. Arendt shows us this phenomenon is not unique for our current situation: education has always been and will always be like that. The teacher has to take responsibility for the existing world and prepare her students to bring in the new, like I described in the previous parts.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 190.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 192.

Wonder

But what does it mean for a teacher to take responsibility for the world? What kind of educational activities reflect the responsibility of the teacher for the world, or in this case: the art world?

In 1954 Arendt uses the concept of 'thaumadzein' in a lecture series on action and thought, *Philosophy and Politics*. 'Thaumadzein', a concept used by Plato, is the opposite of 'doxadzein': forming an opinion about something. 'Thaumadzein' is to wonder: it is a state that cannot be related in words, "because it is too general for words".¹¹¹ This means wonder is speechless. Arendt describes how wonder, when it translates itself into words, does not lead to statements, but to ultimate questions: What is being? What is the meaning of life? Wonder leads to the experience of not- knowing. It constitutes man as a question- asking being. Without this essential feature of man, the answering quality of science would lose all its meaning. In *The Life of the Mind*, the final work of Arendt that was unfinished at her death, she describes how admiring wonder in the Greek world was reserved for the Gods. Men experience wonder when they are in the sudden presence of a God. It is a *pathos*: something that is experienced. It is not like action, the presence of the God is something that can only be endured. Arendt transposes this into admiring wonder as the starting point of thinking. What starts men wondering is something familiar and yet normally invisible.¹¹² For Arendt wonder is the starting point of philosophy.

But can wonder also be the experience that reveals the art world to students? In my practice as a teacher this experience seems essential for students who study art. When students produce their own artworks they have to open up to the wonder of the creative process. Students that expect to create something beautiful and innovative working along a clear path need to learn to let go of all their planned actions. Creating a beautiful portrait takes endurance: the endurance of not knowing how to go about. One has to overcome the rush to know. Creative processes often go beyond the accepted rules or unfold in a manner one could not have imagined in advance.¹¹³ One has to resist the desire to create the image one already had in mind in order to let the image unfold itself along the way. In another example: sometimes when students look at artworks they respond puzzled: 'I do not understand (why this is art)?' or 'My little brother could have made this!' Teaching students to stay with this inability to grasp an artwork learns students to deal with the unexpected, care for what we cannot grasp precisely because we cannot exactly know: some things in this world exceed our intentions and expectations.

But is there a necessary relation between 'art' and 'wonder' according to Arendt? She connects wonder to philosophy: wonder is the origin of philosophy. But would she consider the concept of wonder also specific for art

¹¹¹ Arendt, "Philosophy and," 97.

¹¹² Arendt, *Life of*, 143.

¹¹³ Mario di Paolantonio, "Wonder, Guarding Against Thoughtlessness in Education," *Studies in Philosophy and Education: An International Journal*, 38(3), (2019): 219.

and art education? To answer this I will first explore Arendt's thoughts on the nature of art in relation to thought.

In chapter 23 of *The Human Condition*, 'The Permanence of the World and the Work of Art', Arendt opposes thought and cognition. The process of cognition pursues an aim. Once the aim is reached, the process of cognition comes to an end. The aim of cognition lies outside itself; there is no such thing as cognition for its own sake. Cognitive processes manifest themselves in science: science looks for definite answers. Thought belongs to intellectual or artistic processes. Thought has no end and no aim outside itself. Thought is an on-going process. It is 'useless', just like the art it inspires: "the men of action and the lovers of results in the sciences have never tired of pointing out how entirely "useless" thought is- as useless, indeed, as the works of art it inspires".¹¹⁴ So is there no meaning at all in art? This is not an uncommon question, no wonder students often ask themselves why they should study art. And is there an answer to this question? As a teacher I sometimes wished there was. To explain the importance and value of art we use arguments about qualities children develop when they study art. They learn to reflect, creative thinking and learn to experiment to become innovative. Words that are very popular in society, but do not always seem to convince students and parents. I am not convinced myself: is there a meaning in art? On the meaning of thoughts Arendt argues: "The activity of thinking is as relentless and repetitive as life itself, and the question whether thought has any meaning at all constitutes the same unanswerable riddle as the question for the meaning of life".¹¹⁵

Whether art has a meaning is just as mysterious as the riddle of the meaning of life itself: we do not have the answer to this. The unanswerable questions about art are the same questions that we ask about human existence itself.

So how can we teach students to handle these unanswerable questions? These questions discomfort them when they look at the world in a curious way. Curiosity is a very popular concept to use in education nowadays: education should stimulate students' curiosity. In his essay on Arendt's notion of wonder in education Paolantonio opposes wonder and curiosity.¹¹⁶ To make this distinction he refers to Martin Heidegger, once one of Hannah Arendt's teachers.¹¹⁷ Curiosity is a problem-solving activity that is related to knowingness and purpose. When we are curious we seek to "know" the world by grasping and possessing it. Curiosity is a state of mind that is related to cognition. Curiosity is a state of mind that urges us to look for answers. "...curiosity appears as an attitude that seeks to "know" the world by grasping and possessing it: seeking to understand everything by objectifying everything".¹¹⁸ Paolantonio opposes wonder to curiosity: "In contrast to curiosity, the attitude of "wonder" retains an un-mastered and inoperative relation with what might turn up in the world".¹¹⁹

We cannot teach students to deal with unanswerable questions through curiosity. Seen from the perspective of Arendt, curiosity, just like

¹¹⁴ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 170.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 171.

¹¹⁶ Paolantonio, "Wonder, Guarding," 213-228.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 217.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 217.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 218.

cognition, is a manifestation that fits science. Through wonder we can deal with unanswerable questions. We cannot answer questions about the meaning of art, just like we cannot answer questions about the meaning of our lives. The answers to these questions are not within our reach and we should endure these uncertainties and uneasiness with the grace that belongs to wonder. Wonder is something that must be endured: a sense of perplexity and unknowingness.¹²⁰ When we wonder, we pause to observe human life itself. As art transfigures thoughts, in a way art urges us to stop and wonder. So we should stimulate our students not only to be curious, but to wonder as well. Through wonder they will be able to ask themselves the questions that belong to our human question-asking nature.

For Arendt the teacher that exemplifies the importance of wonder is Socrates. In *The Life of the Mind* Arendt chose Socrates as a model to clarify the question “What makes us think?” Socrates’ way of thinking is driven by wonder: Arendt tells us that his thinking is an urge to check with others whether they share with his perplexities and questions.¹²¹ The aimless nature of wondering is also present in Socrates’ teachings: he does not claim to teach anything. Socrates does not want to teach anything to others: he only wants to make them think.

But what is the nature of wonder in art education? What is the role of wonder in the interaction between the teacher and the students? Paolantonio follows Arendt definition of wonder. To explain the importance of wonder in education he argues:

We can say that wonder is really a certain *regard for* and *attentiveness to* the world that opens up to a *community of questions*: a dynamic drive towards articulating and sharing, in an open-handed manner, our perplexities with each other.¹²²

Paolantonio uses the word ‘attentiveness’ in relation to wonder. He argues this attentiveness is regard for the world, but it also attentiveness toward others. He describes this moment of wonder: “In this lingering moment, we might be compelled to pose new questions to ourselves and to each other regarding the miracle of the world and the relationships crisscrossing through it”.¹²³

Can this attentiveness be useful to describe the relationship between teachers and their students when they try to reveal the meaning of art? Can attentiveness be what teachers apply in the educational relation to enable their students to discover what art is all about?

Attentiveness comes forward in the way that the choreographer Akram Khan worked with his dancers in developing a contemporary version of the ballet *Giselle* (2016). He did not create the choreography in advance; he created it while working with his dancers. In this way he allows “the work to

¹²⁰ Arendt, *Life of*, 143.

¹²¹ Ibid., 172.

¹²² Paolantonio (2019). “Wonder, Guarding”, 220.

¹²³ Ibid., 220.

come from what he observes and senses as the work materialises".¹²⁴ In this practice we can see the arts educator that observes the qualities and questions of students that give direction to a class. In the video Khan talks about the creative process of creating the new version of the famous ballet and says: "But more importantly for me- has it changed them?"¹²⁵ He makes clear that creating the ballet is not something that can be considered as an expression of Khan's vision: it is a process that he shares with others. To create the ballet he has to direct his attentiveness towards how others experience the dance they are creating.

Kahn is a choreographer, not necessarily a teacher. Do the teacher and the artist have common ground: do they share the quality of attentiveness? And if they share this quality, does an artist express attentiveness in the same way as the teacher does?

The choreographer Khan expresses attentiveness towards the dancers: he works with them by letting them perform. He gives space to their process of creation by creating a choreography through dialogue. Arendt describes a difference between the creative arts and the performing arts. Naughton does not make a distinction and describes a parallel between Kahn's method and a method of the creative artist, using the example of Cézanne. Naughton describes how Kahn shows attentiveness towards his dancers like the creative artist shows attentiveness towards his materials: "the artist sees the potential within the scope of the materials".¹²⁶ Naughton uses this example to illustrate concepts by Deleuze and Guattari. He supports his argument by referring to a quote by Claire Colebrook: "Just as the artist sees the potential within the scope of the materials, so the dancer 'typifies and allegorises the human soul as liberated from mere life'".¹²⁷ It is not entirely clear how Naughton analyses these examples, but they show an interesting parallel to the matter I discussed in the part about Arendt's notion of work: the outcome of education cannot be considered as something that is *produced* by a teacher. In this example it is Naughton who does not seem to make a difference between working with persons or with materials. However, the concept of attentiveness gives us a new point of view in this matter. It implies a way of working *with* the objects and persons we encounter in the world, guiding and interacting with them more than producing them.

But what about the teacher of arts? To understand what attentiveness can mean in arts education I return to Arendt. For Arendt theatre is the art form that she esteems most, because of its relation to action, the human activity that goes on between people. Higgins discusses theatre in relation to education from the perspective of Arendt. One aspect of his argument is particularly useful: he makes an analogy between theatre and education, but emphasizes the classroom is not a theatre, obviously: the theatre belongs to

¹²⁴ "The Implications of 'Percepts, Affects and Concepts' for Arts Educators' in *Art, Artists and Pedagogy: Philosophy and the Arts in Education*, eds. Christopher Naughton, Gert Biesta and David R. Cole (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 47.

¹²⁵ "Akram Kahn's Giselle: The Creative Process," English National Ballet, accessed September 29, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cs2nsC_pchw

¹²⁶ Naughton, "The Implications," 46.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 46 and Claire Colebrook, "How Can We Tell the Dancer from the Dance?: The subject of dance and the subject of philosophy," *Topoi: An International Review of Philosophy*, 24 (2005): 7.

public space; the classroom is a space in between the private and the public realm. Still he claims “the teacher is like an actor/director, helping the students dramaturgically with questions of how to interpret and find themselves in the cultural, curricular material”.¹²⁸ I agree with Higgins’ argument: the attentive way in which the art teacher interacts with her students resembles the careful way in which a director can express attentiveness towards his actors. However, at the same time his argument also shows how the artist and the teacher are quite different: they perform and interact in a fundamentally different space. This implies a difference in the way they direct their attentiveness. The attentiveness of the artist is directed towards the public space of the world. The attentiveness of the teacher is directed towards the protected world of the classroom that is in between the private and the public.

Back to the Classroom: exploring a new private and public realm

So now we are back in the classroom of the teacher of arts. The aim of the teacher of arts is to introduce students to the art world as it is and to prepare them to bring in the new. According to Arendt creating art is not about reaching an end: art is a transfiguration of wonder. This does not mean there is no aim in teaching art. The teacher of arts presents the art world as it is in the protected space of the classroom. Students have to be able to find their way in the art world. The best way to find their way into the art world is trying to understand what the art world is about. Teachers should not present their art students with non-existent answers; they should enable their students to discover the wonder of the art world.

The protected space of the classroom is a space that student can explore safely, a space where experiments can take place without the interference of the public realm. This means a classroom is a space where students can practice wonder without being bothered by society’s rush for answers. This is the space where students can learn to explore the world in a way that does justice to our human existence: we can ask questions. Questions that do not always require an answer, as the aim to always find an answer ends the process of thought altogether. The art classroom offers a space where students can explore their own thoughts about the human world. They learn to think for themselves, apart from systems or routines. A process that, in the end, deserves a chance to continue outside of the classroom.

¹²⁸ Higgins, *Good Life*, 232-233.

Recommendations for the Practice of Art in Education

At the start of this thesis I described how, at the start of my teaching career, people asked me the question: “Don't you want to become an artist any more?” This question implicated I would leave the art world to enter the world of education. Although I did not become an artist, what is quite different from a teacher, still I did not leave the art world. There is a role for art in education. In this thesis I have explored the essence of the role of art in education, from which follow some recommendations for art education in secondary schools. These recommendations aim at an art education in which students and teachers practice the arts.

First of all we should remind the artist and the teacher share qualities, but inhabit different spaces. They work in different professions, with different intentions. The teacher of arts presents the art world to the students to help them find an understanding of art and an own way of dealing with the art world. The relation between the teacher and the student is different from the relation between the artist and her audience or the choreographer and performing artists. But in all situations: in art and education, the meaning initiates in the relationship. The teacher cannot create meaning without the contribution of the student; the artwork does not unfold itself without the presence of the spectator.

In this thesis I explained that according to Arendt art is not about the expression of the individuality of the artist. In my introduction I referred to the notion of ‘school art’. In this type of art the intellectual layer often misses, a lot of school art is the product of a straightforward assignment. Not all schools and teachers expect their students to create ‘school art’, but still art education that is about expressing the individuality of the student is not about preparing students for the art world. There are more meaningful ways to account for the presence of art in school curriculums: in this thesis I have found, through the philosophy of Arendt, that art in schools can be about wonder and transfiguring thoughts. Art education is about learning students to think for themselves, independent of existing routines. Art is a way to visualise these thoughts or students can actualise thoughts and relationships in performances.

Schools have embraced the motivating features of curiosity. Through wonder they can also embrace a more basic human quality: the ability to ask questions about our world. In the focus on curiosity or wonder the art world and the world of science are fundamentally different. This does not mean there can be no interaction: art and science can inspire one another, complete each other. When we look more in detail at the arts themselves creative arts and performing arts have their own qualities that exist next to each other. Although Dutch schools try to present school subjects more and more into integrated fields, we should be aware that this is not always possible in the arts. Of course the contemporary art world shows a lot of practices in which the creative arts and performative arts perfectly work together or even merge to something in which creative and performative art no longer can be distinguished. However there are a lot (more) examples in which the creative arts and the performative arts are practiced separately, because art practices differ in a fundamental way. Students can create their artworks in multiple places. They can move between the protected space of the classroom, public

space and even explore and work at home or in other private spaces. The creative process of the performing arts requires a space that is more or less public: depending on the experience or confidence of the student.

Finally: a teacher of arts is part of the system of education with all its responsibilities and duties. Duties such as to ensure good test results, answer for every activity and plan as much as possible in advance. Having noticed this, should the teacher of arts always go along with this? The aim of the teacher is to introduce students to the art world. Art is not about reaching an aim: isn't art about wonder in the first place? The teacher of arts should be able to balance between systems and routines of education and thinking for herself. Although the teacher is part of the routines of education, the teacher and the students are the ones that can bring in the new in education.

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