

Teaching as love for the world and love for the child

The critical potential of Waldorf education in the light of Hanna Arendt

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ABSTRACT. This article is a theoretical discussion where the critical potential of Waldorf education is articulated in the light of Hanna Arendt's philosophy of education. Her essay *The crisis of education* is the basis for the analysis together with Rudolf Steiner's pedagogical lectures and contemporary descriptions of Waldorf school practices at an elementary school level. I find that Waldorf education represents an embodiment of Arendt's ideas of schools and teaching, while Arendt adds new arguments for the critical potential of Waldorf education. Despite some ontological differences, Arendt and Waldorf education share the paradoxical idea of teaching as a conservative, teacher-centered practice on one hand, and as a preparation for emancipation and democratic citizenship on the other.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy; Waldorf education; Hanna Arendt; elementary school curriculum

Introduction

In 1958, Hannah Arendt wrote her widely debated essay, *The crisis of education*. Her philosophy of education presented in this essay has been taken further and inspired many contemporary educational thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Gert Biesta, Jacques Rancière, and others (O'Byrne, 2005). Their common agenda is in different ways to argue against the instrumentalization of education and renew its critical, democratic, and even revolutionary potential. Thus, to be educated should not be an adjustment to the existing social and economic order, but a possibility to acquire tools to transform it. The question is what kind of education suits this purpose best.

Arendt's originality among these critical educational thinkers lies in her paradoxical emphasis on teachers' authority as representatives for the world. She advocates for schools to stay conservative and rooted in tradition to prepare the next generation for their task of renewing the world. The necessity of the teacher's authority is also emphasized in Waldorf education (W.e.), at least on an elementary level, and so is the emphasis on traditions and cultural expressions from the past (Dahlin, 2017). It seems like W.e. practices the way Arendt preaches. *This article is an attempt to rethink the critical potential of Waldorf-education. by applying Arendt's educational thinking, to give critical educational praxis a possible way forward.*

This attempt rests on the assumption that W.e. has a critical potential. I will argue for the validity of this assumption. To do so, a description of W.e. is needed, both how the basic purpose of education is expressed and how its forms and content are described in the elementary school curriculum. In addition to Rudolf Steiner's own educational lectures, I lean on a variety of contemporary descriptions of W.e. praxis. But first,

I will examine Arendt's philosophy of education further, based on the essay, *The crisis of education* (Arendt, 2006).

Arendt's philosophy of education

Arendt's philosophy of education is part of the larger family of critical educational thinkers that goes back to the impulse from critical theory and the Frankfurter school in the 1930th (Jay, 1996). In the post-world-war era, critical theory inspired several educational ideas that in different ways expressed the purpose of education as liberation, democracy, responsible citizenship, and to establish immunity against barbarism and totalitarianism. Theodor Adorno's *Education after Auschwitz* (Adorno, 1998) is an example of the latter. Habermas, Klafki, Freire, Ranchiere, Biesta, and Arendt are other voices with different approaches to sharing the same idea.

Arendt's essay *The crisis of education* was first published in *Partisan Review* in fall 1958. Her educational interest arose from the question concerning the civil-right movement in the US at that time. One year earlier, Elisabeth Eckford made the headlines by being pictured as she approached Little Rock High School in Arkansas, a school mainly for the white population. Eckford became a visual icon for the struggle to get equal access to education for both white and colored students. Following that event, Arendt wrote what she called *Reflections on Little Rock* (Arendt, 1959). The article became a subject for intense debate. What Arendt did was to use the black community in Arkansas' choice of action as a symptom of an adult world that refused to take responsibility, that had abdicated and let their children take the fight on their behalf. Eckford, 15 years old, confronted the mob of angry white citizens together with her peers without support from the adults in her community. She was labeled by Arendt as the unwanted child in the white community, and at the same time, the abandoned child in the black community (Lebeau, 2004).

Her reaction to the Little Rock-affair shocked the US's progressive public life since Arendt normally were linked to progressive ideas like equal right for all to take part in every aspect of public life, regardless of race, social class, or gender. Though her critique of the black community perhaps was done on failing foundation¹, Arendt made her point for the sake of progressivism. This seemingly paradoxical position points towards what she about the same time developed in the *crisis of education*, her discouraging diagnoses of education in general.

I will point out two main arguments in Arendt's essay. 1) Her diagnosis of the culture, especially her view on childhood and adulthood. 2) Her idea of the schools as institutions and their form and content.

Arendt's view on childhood

Arendt's point of departure is her distinction between the political and the private sphere, and that children need to grow and develop within the shelter of family life, or the private sphere, and hence, being protected from the rights and responsibilities in the political sphere. But this statement needs to be seen in the light of one of her most important concepts, *natality*, or being *newborn* in the world.

This concept was developed in her perhaps most important work, *The human condition* (Arendt, 1998). Here she describes *human action* or deed as the only things we do in freedom, and the thing we do that makes us human. She distinguishes between *action* and two other forms of human activity, *work*, and *labor*, which are things we do, based on external demands from nature or society. Work and labor are things we do that are expected of us, that we are determined to do.

However, by our actions, we can put something into this world, which is new, unseen, and cannot be predicted. Arendt writes:

1. She was, e.g., unaware that Eckford's parents and other adult relatives were strictly advised against showing up outside the school that morning by the police (Lebeau, 2004).

The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique so that with each birth, something uniquely new comes into the world (Arendt, 1998 p. 178)

Hence, the world is somehow recreated by every newcomer, and *natality* is the ability to act as if history did not exist. With every newborn, the world starts all over again every single time. But the concept of natality or newborn is not referring to physical birth. Arendt writes: „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“ (Arendt, 1998, p 176). In her essay on the crisis on education, this second birth, the birth of a political being, must be interpreted as being an adult or finally educated.

To be a child is to arrive in the world with a potential for renewing and reshaping it. This potential needs to be sheltered from the existing world, like the child's eyes have a potential for seeing long before the physical birth but are sheltered in the uterus as they are developing.

To shelter the newcomer from the old world also means shelter the old world from being destroyed by the still not developed potential for reshaping it that every child carries with them. Children must be kept away from the world and sheltered in the private sphere by their parents both for the sake of their development as for the sake of the old world.

This basic idea of childhood is, according to Arendt, at stake in postmodern societies. She writes: „The crisis in education is most likely connected with the crisis of tradition, that is with the crisis in our attitude toward the realm of the past“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 190). Here she describes one of the most conspicuous aspects of the postmodern world. Man is no longer connected to the past, to the traditions, beliefs, and values of their ancestors. Consequently, no one can by the laws from the past be regarded as natural authorities in society, as it was in the Roman-Christian tradition that we have left behind.

Arendt does not want to re-establish the Roman-Christian tradition. She points out some of the positive outcomes of a postmodern democracy, such as the liberation of the woman and the working class and the acknowledgment of every man's right to be heard as equal in all aspects of public life. The crisis in the postmodern society, however, occurs when the same right is given to children.

Children belong by nature in the private sphere, shield from public life by their parents, according to Arendt. At the start of her essay, she criticizes the tendencies, especially in contemporary sociology of childhood, to look at childhood as a social class representing their own culture. Children as a group must then be granted rights to be seen and heard as equal participants in public life like other sub-groups, e.g., women, the working class, and ethnic minorities. She calls this a betrayal against children and their right to be sheltered in the private sphere as they are developing.

The betrayal is twofold since it not only exposes children „in the light of the public existence“ too soon (Arendt, 2006, p. 188) but also makes them dependent on the brutal social laws among their peers. She writes: „by being emancipated from the authority of adults, the child has not been freed but has been subjected to a much more terrifying and truly tyrannical authority, the tyranny of the majority“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 178). The point she makes here is that any kind of rebellious act is impossible to do against the majority of peers. Since she declares rebellious acts as the ontological purpose of being newborn, children need to be embedded in the adult world, which they eventually will revolt against. By being emancipated from the authority of adults, children are deprived of their ontological purpose.

The term *ontological purpose of being newborn*, indicates that to be fully human, is to make changes for the better in the world, as also stated by Paulo Freire (2018)². To expel children from the possibility to become someone that makes such changes, is to deprive them of their humanity.

2. „At all stages of their liberation, the oppressed must see themselves as women and men engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human“ (Freire, 2018, p. 65-66).

For Arendt, *the authority of adults* is, as previously mentioned, primarily a question of family life. The privacy of family life is, according to Arendt, a *pre-political sphere* „where authority seemed dictated by nature itself and independent of all historical changes and political condition“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 188). There are historical examples of how other social groups, e.g., women and non-white, were seen as, by nature, under the authority of others, the white male. While these examples of alleged natural laws were rejected a long time ago, children as a social group should be treated differently. The reason is, according to Arendt, that: „childhood is a temporary stage, as preparation for adulthood“ (p. 181). They are still in the process of becoming human. This way of perceiving childhood sounds highly controversial in the present educational discourse, as it did in the late 50th. Based on the UN's declaration of children's rights, every modern curriculum speaks of children as competent agents with a right to participate in decision making and hence have a voice in all aspects of public life (Verhellen, 2000). Consequently, Arendt's idea of childhood gave birth to a perception of schools that differs from current ideas of democratic education.

Arendt's view on schools

Schools should be, according to Arendt, a link between the private and the public sphere. They „represent the world, although it is not yet actually the world“ (Arendt, 2006, p.185). Schools are still a place for protection, not only to protect children from public life but also to protect them from the private sphere. A school creates an autonomous space in between both. Arendt further discusses the autonomy of schools in an unpublished article from 1971. Here, she argues strongly against the tendencies to adjust the content and forms in education to the needs and fads in the society, and she stated that „... learning can exist and flourish only if it is done for its own sake“ (Arendt, 1971, p. 12)³. This non-instrumental way of conceiving education coincides with John Dewey's pedagogical creed, where he states that attending school is „... a process of living and not a preparation for future living“ (Dewey, 1897, p. 79).

In schools that exist and work somehow disconnected from both the private and the public share, children meet teachers whose task is to display and explain the old world for them. Anne O'Byrne interprets Arendt like this:

If the elementary school teacher is in the process of introducing her pupils to the world, she must share with them the somewhat sheltered place of the school. Still, she must stand, as it were, at its edge, in the place where she can gesture towards the public world, describing it as ‚our world‘ (O'Byrne, 2005, p. 398).

To stand *at the edge* of the school, pointing toward ‚our world‘ implies that teachers need to be representatives of the world and take responsibility for it as they face the children. Arendt writes: „In education this responsibility for the world takes the form of authority“ (p. 186). In other words, the natural authority that is inevitably absent in the postmodern society must still be a living reality in the sheltered space called *a school*, but only if it is embedded in responsibility for the world which the teachers represent.

If teachers, by taking responsibility for the world as it is, are to become authorities in schools, two things need to be done with the content and form of teaching, according to Arendt. First, schools need to be conservative, and second, the progressive idea of *child-centered education* needs to be problematized.

Conservatism is again an unexpected term for an educational philosopher in the tradition of critical theory. Hence, Arendt states that „In politics this conservative attitude – which accept the world as it is, striving only to preserve the status quo – only lead to destruction“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 189). Consequently, other radical educational thinkers, like Paulo Freire (2018), would turn the school into a revolutionary workshop, where the ability to reshape the world is being practiced by students and teachers together. But since education, according to Arendt, do not belong to politics but exist as an autonomous space between the political and the private, conservatism is possible and even needed, and here is the reason why:

The child whose task is to reshape and renew the world, needs to do so in absolute freedom when the time comes, which implies that the progressive teacher who foresees this needs to restrain himself to make this happened.

3. This remark was originally aimed at higher education.

„We destroy everything if we so try to control the new, that we, the old, can dictate how it will look“,

Arendt writes, and goes on:

„Exactly for the sake of what is new and revolutionary in every child, education must be conservative; it must preserve this newness and introduce it as a new thing into an old world“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 189).

As an implication of the school as conservative, Arendt seems to be strongly against the progressive idea of child-centered education. She raises a strong argument against the tendency to shape the content and forms in school based on children's lives, interests, and experiences.

It is, according to Arendt, two reasons for this. First, the teacher cannot be an authority who takes responsibility for the world unless the content and forms in school primarily come from the teacher's own lived experience. It is impossible to point toward the old world and call it 'our world' if the child's world is in the center of attention. Second, it is not easy to make school an autonomous space outside both the private and the political sphere if the social demands of the private sphere or the political sphere's economic needs dictate what is going on there. Children need to be introduced to something unfamiliar in school. To teach is somehow to hand over a gift that neither the child nor society have asked for.

The school needs to be what Ranciere (1991) calls *thing-centered*, not child-centered, and to do so, the teacher needs to take the anachronistic role of authority, and the school needs to stay conservative in form and content. Schools need to be both thing-centered and hence, teacher-centered. However, the teacher can be in the center only if he or she shows and makes the children aware that certain things matter, that something is worth paying attention to in this world (Vlieghe, 2018). Arendt calls it the teacher's love for the world.

Waldorf education as a conservative, teacher-centered practice

The idea behind this article is to investigate if Arendt's philosophy of education can be a way of articulating the critical potential of W.e. This idea is first and foremost based on the assumption that W.e. has a critical potential, meaning that educational institutions based on W.e. principles have an emancipating purpose toward the child and a humanizing and transformative purpose toward the society. It rests on the assumption that W.e. is conservative in its form and content, and at the same time, teacher-centered. I will, in the following, argue for both premises.

The critical potential of WE

The impulse behind W.e. in its origin had a social and cultural engagement far beyond acquiring skills and knowledge (Carlgren, 2008; Mazzone, 2001; Nome, 2019). If the common idea of critical pedagogy awoke in the aftermath of WW2, as demonstrated in Adorno's essay *Education after Auschwitz* (Adorno, 1998), W.e. appeared in the aftermath of WW1. One could say that Rudolf Steiner's main idea behind the Waldorf school initiative was to create an education that could ensure that such a catastrophic social disaster never happened again (Mazzone, 2001).

Steiner himself articulated this idea several times. The social and political potential of W.e. was, e.g., discussed in the six lectures he held in August 1919 just as the first Waldorf school started, called *Education as a Social Problem* (Steiner, 1984). The question Steiner asks in these lectures is this: „How we have to deal with children so that they, as adults, can grow into the social, democratic, and spiritually free areas of living⁴ in the most comprehensive way?“ (Steiner, 1984, p. 13). Steiner's idea is further developed in the book *The threefold social order* (Steiner, 1972).

According to Steiner, *the threefold social order* is a model for how society as a healthy social organism should be organized. It implies that society can be schematically divided into a cultural, a political, and an economic sphere. It will only be a healthy organism if the three main qualities from the French revolution, *Freedom,*

4. In the original German version, *the spiritually free areas of living*, is called „*das liberale*“

Equality, and *Fraternity*, are applied in these spheres in the right manner. Freedom should be applied in the cultural sphere, equality in the political, and fraternity in the economic sphere (Mazzone, 2001).

The way education can serve this process, according to Steiner, is by letting imitation of role models dominate early childhood, letting a relationship based on authority and discipleship dominate elementary school-age, and letting independent judgment and responsibility dominate secondary school-age. Imitation in early childhood will be transformed into the ability to conduct freedom in cultural life as adults. Discipleship in elementary school will be transformed into executing equality in political life, and independent judgment as adolescents ensure the sense of fraternity in economic life (Mazzone, 2001; Steiner 1984).

Hence, the aim of W.e. is to make it possible to shape society into a healthy social organism by caring for the next generation in a specific way in school (Mazzone, 2001), and it has since the 1920th been an important motivation for Waldorf school teachers (Carlgren, 2008). In addition to *Freedom*, *Equality*, and *Fraternity*, the development of an intuitive moral engagement has also been a goal for W.e. through the last century, as expressed by Joan Armond (1997, p. 3): „The overarching goal [of W.e.] is to help children build a moral impulse within so that they can choose, in freedom, what it means to live morally.“ Bo Dahlin puts it this way: „Teaching is the art of helping the students to realize their essential humanity“ (Dahlin, 2017, p. 85). The form and content in W.E. are organized according to this greater good that reaches far beyond acquiring skills and competencies.

To make this possible, schools need a sheltered place in society. The idea of *the threefold social order* also implies that educational institutions should be considered as part of cultural life. Hence, teachers should be granted the same liberal rights when teaching as those who perform art. According to Steiner, school is not part of either the economic or the political sphere and should not be ruled based on the principles of either *equality* or *fraternity*, but should entirely be based on liberty (Mazzone, 2001; Steiner, 1972).

Basic elements of the form and content in WE.

As I stated, the ability to conduct equality in the political sphere rest on specific ways in which teaching is performed in elementary school, according to Steiner (1984). The following examples of the form and content of W.e. are taken from the elementary school curriculum. Elementary school age is the age where education and teaching are introduced to a child for the first time, hence, where the nature of education gets the most visible.

When Dahlin (2017) explains what education is from a W.e.-point of view, he states that to be taught by others is basically an unnatural thing. Teaching tends to cause resistance in a child, a resistance that needs to be transformed into a willingness to be taught by the teacher due to his or her authority. This is a perspective that differs from the mainstream reform pedagogy or progressive educational principal, in which the teachers' role is to be supportive facilitators of self-regulated learning based on the students' own lived experiences (Hayes, 2006).

According to a W.e.-paradigm, the world, organized as it is in the different school subjects, must be given to a child by someone who has the authority to do so. Dahlin (2017, p. 89) states: „... the teacher must be ensouled by the subject taught, and the subject must be surrounded by the authority of knowledge and culture, which the teacher must embody“. In contrast to mainstream progressive education, it is the teacher's lived experiences with the world's phenomenon that matters, not the child's own experiences. The teacher's role is to represent the culture as experienced by him or her through an oral and affective presence in the classroom. The term *culture* must not be narrowed down to a specific national or ethnic frame but ideally be expanded to include all global human heritage.

Another element of W.e., as to form, is the emphasis on class-teaching. The teacher addresses the whole class, and the teacher's role is not to be an individual coach based on the idea of serving every child's own preferences (Dahlin, 2017). Thou, the guidelines in the curriculum regarding when a child should be introduced to specific content and methods, are based on Steiner's ideas on child development (Uhrmacher, 1995), it is not strictly child-centered in the way I use the phrase in this article.

In this article *child-centered education* is used as the idea of every child's right to have an individually designed education based on his or her desires, needs, and abilities, much like what we know as *adapted education* (Mordal & Strømstad, 1998). W.e. at an elementary level is based on collective class-experiences as a core quality, and hence, nuances the idea of adapted education. To be a pupil is to listen to, respond to and work with a content given by a teacher, together with others with nothing else in common than a shared sense of the teacher's natural authority.

While working with the letter 'B' for several days in class one (Burnett, 2007), every child in the group is occupied with it, though some might know this letter well in advance. Beyond learning the letter 'B', the outcome is the experience of meeting this particular part of the cultural world in a particular way as a group, and that it is given to them by a teacher.

Hence, it is not up to the individual child to define what is worth paying attention to. It is defined in advance what is considered valuable and worthy of attention. Consequently, classical cultural expressions, myths, art, and biographies from the past are often emphasized in the Waldorf-curriculum (Uhrmacher, 1995). The curriculum should "... lead the children in a vivid and imaginative way through the various stages which man himself has passed through in the history of civilization" (Steiner, 1995, p. 37).

It is neither coincidentally *how* a class is supposed to work with specific content. The value of specific methods is also given and managed by the teacher in a W.e.-setting. A teacher that introduces pupils to the capital letters, seeks carefully for images where initial sound and pictorial form are integral. Pictures of "... A bear lumbering forward with outstretched paws; the billowing sails of a boat or the folded wings of a butterfly" (Burnett, 2007, p. 324) can be drawn and painted, out of which the child gradually gets a capital 'B' based on the shape of the bear, boat, or butterfly. To link the image to an adjective adds an aesthetic and even moral dimension to the letter and its sound. The *Kind King* is better than the *Cowardly Courtier* (Van Alphen, 1997). Hence, teachers exercise basic moral and aesthetic judgments on behalf of their pupils by their choice of content and methods.⁵

To sum up so far, W.e. is in its origin and traditions, oriented toward a broader horizon than acquiring skills and competencies. It shares many of the same basic ideas that we find in critical pedagogy. In W.e. it is articulated as shaping society into a healthy social organism by caring for the next generation in a specific way in school (Mazzone, 2001). Alongside, it seems obvious that it also has conservative, teacher-centered aspects, at least at an elementary level.

The fact that classical cultural expressions, myths, and biographies from the past are emphasized, and that the teacher's action in the classroom should be an embodiment of this heritage, is what I interpret as conservatism. The fact that a child's willingness to connect to a specific content, rests on the teacher's authority in the classroom, is what I interpret as teacher-centered education.

In the following discussion, I will place W.e. under the lens of Arendt's educational critique, to see if this paradoxical way of schooling is a way forward for critical educational praxis.

Discussion

The critical perspectives in both Arndt's philosophy of education and in W.e. give similar paradoxical pictures of what education for emancipation may look like and how an emancipatory teacher may work. However, the critical perspectives in W.e. and in Arendt's essay have slightly different forms of expression. While Arendt (2006) writes about *the revolutionary potential in every newcomer* and their *renewing of the world*, W.e. spokesman use phrases like *realizing the essential humanity*, *building a moral impulse within*, and *creating a healthy social organism* (Armond, 1997; Dahlin, 2017; Mazzone, 2001). However, despite these differences, both share the same basic idea. The form and content of education impact how society can be transformed,

5. One of the most stunning examples of aesthetic judgment is how Steiner gave instructions on how to introduce combinations of colors to children in class one. After painting two pictures with a yellow background, one with a blue field in the middle, and one with a green one, the teacher was instructed to give the class an aesthetic judgment about the difference by saying: Blue on a yellow background is more beautiful than green on a yellow background (Steiner, 2011, p. 45).

and there are similarities in how teaching should be done to get there. In this discussion, my main point is how both W.e. and Arendt address the task of teaching as a *gesture of love*.

Waldorf education and Arendt vs. progressive education

Progressive education since 1900 has roughly been divided into two different traditions. One is mainly concerned with the individual growth and development of each child, and the other is more concerned with the social, political, and democratic growth and development of societies (Mazzone, 2007). Steiner emphasizes the individual psychological aspects of it. For him, a healthy social organism is an extension of the healthy individual human constitution. Education aims to facilitate the development of a harmonic relationship between the cognitive, emotional, and physical sides of a human being. The individual child's healthy constitution is his main concern, and a healthy society follows (Steiner 1984).

For Arendt, as mainly a political thinker, her main concern is how democracy is constituted as a plurality of different actions, intentions, and desires on the common ground we all share. She sees democracy as a dialectic process between the different individual actors and the community they constitute (Arendt, 1998). Her educational philosophy is an argument for how a child should be cared for to become such an individual political actor or grown-up.

Though they share the idea of emancipation and moral responsibility as the ultimate goal of education, there are obvious differences. Steiner leans strongly on idealistic metaphysical images of man, and Arendt leans strongly on dialectic political theory. However, when it gets down to the form and content of schooling, there are striking similarities between W.e. and Arendt.

They both share the idea of schools as autonomous institutions and hence, argue against instrumentalization, politicization, or commercialization of education. They also seem to be out of tune with mainstream progressive pedagogy, where non-hierarchic dialog, self-management, non-directivity, and individualization are ideals (Hayes, 2006). The progressive movement that, especially in the 60th and 70th, revolted against authorities started with the schoolmasters (Gadotti, 1996). Both Arendt and Steiner went the opposite direction and strived to reinforce teacher's authority in school in the name of the same progressivism (Dahlin, 2017).

In W.e., authority rests on the fact that teachers have embodied the cultural heritage. The phrase embodied point to the fact that the teacher's oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom makes the cultural heritage visible and audible for the children. That is why W.e. at an elementary level have limited use of textbooks and other media representations of the world except what the teacher can embody himself. Consequently, storytelling by heart as a method, is essential (Dahlin, 201).

Love for the world and love for the child

For Arendt, the teacher's authority rests on the fact that he or she carries the responsibility for the world. What this implies gets clearer at the end of her essay, where she states: „Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it“ (Arendt, 206, p.193). She claims that it is the teacher's ability to show love for the world and the cultural heritage that constitutes authority in the classroom.

In a W.e.-classroom, *the love for the world* is shown through storytelling and the grand narratives that represent the norms, aesthetic values, and moral impulses that a child is born into and narratives that represent the knowledge and skills that are valued and cherished as parts of the global human heritage. Telling fairytales in class one is a way to display the love for the moral impulses embedded in these agent stories, and the love for the letters and numbers that is valued as basic knowledge and skills. Both the letter 'K' and the moral qualities in the king's brave fight against the dragon are retrieved from the same narrative.

According to Arendt, it is not only the world that needs to be loved by the teachers. She continues:

And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 2006, p. 193).

Education is a gesture of love toward the next generation from the previous one. For Arendt, the *love for the child* is complex. As she states in the quote, the love for the child implies „not to expel them from our world“. She calls *expulsion* the tendencies to look at childhood as a social class of its own, and hence as a group that should be granted rights to be seen and heard as equal participants in public life. Children are consequently left alone totally depending on the brutal social laws among their peers, and what Arendt calls „the tyranny of the majority“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 178).

She calls this a betrayal against children and their right to be sheltered in the private sphere as they are developing. In schools, children are brought into a middle-ground between the private and the public sphere, but where they still should be sheltered from being exposed „in the light of the public existence“ (Arendt, 2006, p. 188). Democratic education, according to Arendt, is paradoxically not being democratic in school.

W.e. takes the same paradoxical position. Education for freedom is not to grant freedom to children in school. Dahlin states: „Only a child who in the period between seven and fourteen years old has felt genuine respect for their teacher, can later develop true personal freedom“ (Dahlin, 2017, p. 95). Genuine respect is what I have referred to as *discipleship*. Steiner puts it even more harshly: „Nothing is worse than for a child to get accustomed to making his so-called own judgement too early, prior to puberty“ (Steiner, 1984, p. 15). So, it is also in W.E. an act of love to protect children, in this case, protect them from making their own judgments and conduct their freedom too soon.

The Transformation from discipleship to equal rights.

In W.e., the bridge between discipleship as pupils in elementary school and experiences of equality in the political sphere as an adult is not easy to grasp or articulate. This bridge is one of many complex images of transformations in child development in Steiner's thinking. Many of them rest on his metaphysical reflections, or *spiritual science* as he calls it. This one might not be all that esoteric, though. One could say that pupils in a class, despite individual differences, are equaled through being disciples under the same law of what is right, valuable, and beautiful that the teacher represents.

They can then transform this experience, of being equal under the same law, into accepting the democratic principle of equality in society. Despite differences in intentions, needs, and desires, we are all been granted the same rights to be seen and heard, and we all share the same responsibility for the society we are part of. This transformation is a consequence of class teaching. If teaching gets too individualized and customized to each child's preferences, a non-such transformation could occur.

Arendt adds another dimension to this idea of transformation. For Arendt, education is a process of preparation. It prepares the next generation, or the newborn, for their task of reshaping the world. Reshaping the world needs to be done in absolute freedom by every new generation, as something unpredicted to the previous generation. Hence, teachers need to restrain themselves from pushing their ideas of what the world could look like, and that could only be done if teachers are fully committed to and responsible for the world as it is. That is why education needs to stay conservative, and teachers need to be authorities in their classes based on their ability to stay responsible for the world. Consequently, children should not be put in a position in the school where they are left with the responsibility for a world that is not theirs'. If the newborn should be able to reshape the world and renew the social, political, and economic life, they must not be stuck with the responsibility for faults of the past.

Conclusions and limitations

Education in critical pedagogy aims to educate for social changes, for liberation and empowerment, for the sake of mankind and the nature it is a part of. Schools should be a place for preparation for the newborn that someday will make this happen. According to Arendt, where the natality of those who will renew the world is sheltered from making independent judgments and being a responsible public citizens as they grow and develop.

Like the human body is sheltered in the uterus before the physical birth, the potential for a revolutionary act is sheltered under the wings of the teacher, whose authority hangs on his or her ability to love the world enough to undertake the responsibility for it. She also loves the children enough to provide an autonomous sheltered place for them between the social demands of the private sphere and the political demands of the public sphere. That is what we call schools.

Arendt's philosophy of education is an abstract construction of thoughts and not easily transformed into concrete educational practice. She gives us, however, a stringent idea of schools, of childhood, and of teaching that provides a sustainable theoretical argument for important elements of W.e., and hence, an argument for its critical potential.

The long tradition of W.e. practice throughout the world has developed educational forms and contents that operationalize teaching as performing liberal art in autonomous schools, and on an elementary level, based on the teacher's authority. Through his or her oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom, the world as it is, and the world the teacher loves, is displayed for the children. That is why it is the life experiences of the teacher that matters, not the life experiences of each child, as Steiner said: „When a child undertake what he does because a revered personality in his surroundings says to him `This is right, this should be done`, then it's the greatest blessing that could happen to him“ (Steiner, 1984, p. 15). This attitude is what Arendt refers to as love for the world and love for the child.

This position is out of tune with many of the current ideas of education. Still, it might just be what makes education for emancipation and social change possible, according to Arendt. My claim is that W.e. represents an embodiment of her idea of schools and teaching, while Arendt adds new stringent arguments for the critical potential of W.e. In my view, W.e. seen through the lens of Arendt might represent a fruitful way forward for critical pedagogy.

There are, of course, limitations to this claim. Steiner's metaphysical reflections on child development and its impact on education are far more complex than transforming discipleship in school to equality as grown-up democratic participants. Some of it rests entirely on his alleged clairvoyants and what he refers to as man's spiritual nature. I have deliberately chosen some of the more accessible ideas in his educational theory. This limitation is not done to disregard other parts of his theory, but to recognize those parts suited for a dialog with Arendt's critical educational thinking. One could say that both parts of a dialog need to have the same limit to their senses to get a real exchange of ideas.

Another limitation is that I have reduced Arendt's educational thinking to a question of elementary school practice, even if she does not make this limitation herself. By narrowing my field of view this way, I have been unable to reflect thoroughly on the totality of the critical potential in W.e. To do so, one needs to pay more attention to the idea behind the didactic choices in early childhood and secondary school. I will give an example of the latter.

W.e. implies a transformation of practice from elementary- to secondary school, from authority-based teacher-centered teaching to a more cooperative dialog-based relationship between teachers and students.

One interesting premise remains, though, that still makes Arendt relevant. W.e. keeps on being world-centered and not child-centered. The difference is that *the world* is no longer represented by the teacher's oral, affective, and bodily presence in the classroom. It is being investigated by students and teachers together, as facts of life that are worth paying attention to, that exist independent of both students' and teachers' own life experiences. Despite the lack of teacher authority, this is still possible to argue for based on Arendt's thinking.

In *We.*, it is, e.g., an idea that the existential burdens of being adolescent could escape unhealthy narcissism if it is mirrored in the reading of great biographies from the past (Dahlin, 2017). Some of these biographies reveal the forces behind important historical and social changes in a way that could transform self-pity into critical thinking. I will end with one short example.

The story of Galileo Galilei and his revolt against the authority of the church and its alleged truths vs. science could be mirroring the growing will to revolt against the world as it is delivered from past generations, what I have referred to as *the ontological purpose of being a newborn*. So, it would be fruitful to continue the dialog between Steiner and Arendt to further rethink the critical potential in Waldorf-education.

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