
WHY ARENDT? EMPLOYING HANNAH ARENDT'S CONCEPTS OF PLURALITY, THINKING AND JUDGEMENT TO INFORM A RECONSIDERATION OF *EDUCATIONAL* LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

Arendt was a severe critic of modernity and the tendency, in mass society, for people to be susceptible to whatever ideology is presented and whatever means is demanded without thinking. Arendt used the term 'dark times' to refer to the loss of individual thought, the loss of memory and respect for humanity, and people's inability to see what was going on in front of them. For Arendt, the common world we share exists as a result of the differences we reveal in dialogue—a world of inclusion and respect for the past and hope for the future and for inventing new and better ways for living together. In such a world there needs to be a plurality of people and a plurality of ideas—one 'vision', one dominant idea, one ideological explanation, neither requires nor permits exchange or contestation. When one idea prevails … 'all dissent is silenced or seen as obstructive'. In this situation, children do not learn from adults 'that the political world must have room for all people'.

In this paper, I identify why the resources of Hannah Arendt are useful to consider an alternative vision for *educational* leadership, which is linked to the cultivation of a dialogic teacher 'public space', where the diverse views and contributions of each teacher matter. Hannah Arendt identifies the capacity for humans to make a difference in the world and the responsibility for judgement, thinking and action in the company of others that accompanies this possibility. For Arendt, this possibility involves the awareness of other perspectives and the plurality of the human condition. Arendt's approach to her work was informed by her belief that 'people are individually and collectively responsible for attempting to understand what is going on in the human world'.

Introduction

Current dominant understandings of educational leadership have been imported from the business world, identifying three core tasks of expert school leaders—'articulating a vision, devising strategies to attain that vision, and empowering followers'. These understandings reduce 'leadership' to

'something that goes on in the head of the leader'–'something that is done to someone else, whether they like it or not' (Gronn, 1996 p.21). Such 'transformational' or 'visionary' leadership is seen as an instrument for attaining outcomes (p. 8), by asserting a 'technical rationality' (Adams & Balfour, 2009) and a denial of plurality through 'managed consensus' (Wrigley, 2003). Leaders are cast as 'engineers of school culture' which is 'to be adjusted at will' (Gronn, 1996, p. 22). The 'Romance of Leadership' (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985 p.79) is a deep-seated faith in 'the idea' of a 'leader' or 'leadership' as the causal entity which renders 'complex problems meaningful and explicable' (Gronn, 1996 p.12), diverting attention from the interplay of personalities, interests and perspectives which are part of the actual messiness of everyday school life.

Atkinson (2004) makes the point that in teaching and teacher education, 'there is surely a need to critique, to question, and to be open to new possibilities, rather than to simply endorse policy' (p. 112). We ought to be concerned with the 'loss of meaning' that comes with compliance to the mantra of accountability and policies which 'prohibit thinking outside the box, or at least construct it as a sort of heresy' (p. 112). Adapting what Elshtain (1981) says about political theory to education, educational leadership is:

> not about making the most efficient turbine engine ... It is about how people live their lives and create and recreate meaning anew with each new working day. (p. xvi)

Educational leadership might then be seen more as a shared responsibility, recognising that 'human meaning is not achieved in solitary singularity, either of ideas or people, but in the complex interactions of both in dialogical situations' (Wiens, 2000 p.304).

Why Arendt?

Arendt was a severe critic of modernity and the tendency, in mass society, for people to be susceptible to whatever ideology is presented and whatever means is demanded without thinking (Rogers, 2013). Arendt used the term 'dark times' to refer to the loss of individual thought, the loss of memory and respect for humanity, and people's inability to see what was going on in front of them.

> [E]verybody sees and hears from a different position … The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective. (Arendt, 1958 p.57-58)

Arendt's concepts of action and public space provide for individuals to act together without giving up their distinctiveness, seeking an elusive balance between conflicting ways of being and acting with others together around common projects. Using Arendt's notion of 'public space' (Arendt, 1958),

along with her views on thinking and judgement (Arendt, 1978a, 1978b, 1992), I propose a more democratic, dialogic view of educational leadership which recognises plurality, and identifies educational leadership in relationship, as acting 'in concert' with teachers to engage the collective responsibility for education of young people in 'renewing a common world' (Arendt, 1961, p. 196).

Arendt was born in 1906. As a young Jew working for a Zionist organisation, Arendt was arrested, escaped, and fled her homeland in 1933 to Paris, and was to remain 'stateless' for eighteen years. In 1941, after France fell to the Nazis, Arendt escaped from an internment camp, arriving finally in New York with little money and practically no English. Within a year, and consistently thereafter, she published articles of a political nature, in English, which she never fully mastered.[1] Ten years later, in 1951, she published *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, her first major book. In the same year, she became an American citizen.

In the work of Kant, which she first read at fourteen, Arendt found a way of:

> seeing the crisis of the twentieth century, i.e., the refusal of totalitarian regimes to share the world with entire races and classes of human beings … but also [found] ... a way to go beyond that crisis by accepting the challenge of restoring a common world. (Kohn, n.d)

The 'common world', according to Arendt, is a world of inclusion and respect for the past and hope for the future (Wiens, 2000, p. 260) and for inventing new and better ways for living together. In such a world there needs to be a plurality of people and a plurality of ideas—one dominant idea, or one ideological explanation, neither requires nor permits exchange or contestation. When one idea prevails … 'all dissent is silenced or seen as obstructive' (Wiens, 2000, pp. 272-273). Children do not learn from adults in this situation 'that the political world must have room for all people, as opposed to just containing the ones with which people choose to associate, or identify'(p. 273).

Hannah Arendt is generally seen as one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century. The resurgence of Arendt's work in the 1990s informed a renewed interest in the relationship of action to agency (Calhoun & McGowan, 1997 p.4) and plurality in a political community. Since her death in 1975, and particularly from the 1990s onwards, there has been a renewed interest in Hannah Arendt and a growth in the number of writers in education using her work, (eg, Duarte, 2001; Gordon, 2001; Schutz, 1999; Wiens, 2000).

[1] Her friend Mary McCarthy commented on how often she needed to edit Arendt's phrasing and stop her from writing a continuous sentence that might have been half a page.

'Banality of evil'

When Arendt described the 'banality of evil', it caused significant comment and antagonism, yet it appeared only once in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in the final sentence of the report, just before the epilogue, describing Eichmann's final comments before his death:

> It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us – the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-defying *banality of evil*. (Arendt, 1963 p.252)

In *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt offers an account which challenges our 'deepest assumptions about evil, namely, that it has to be inexplicable' (Neiman, 2010, p. 307), that much, 'if not all, of the world's evil can be understood … [without resorting to] evil intention' (p. 309). Despite much criticism and demands for explanation, Arendt only addressed herself to the question of 'banality of evil' in a private letter written to Gershom Scholem in 1963, in response to his criticism of the Eichmann book. In her letter, she explains that evil 'spreads like a fungus on the surface' while moral goodness 'emanates from the depths of the constantly self-questioning' (Kateb, 2010, p. 31).

Arendt also describes in *Thinking and Moral Considerations*, the shallowness of Eichmann rather than his wickedness and his 'curious, quite authentic inability to think' (Arendt, 2003, p. 159). The deeds are monstrous, but the doer is 'terrifying normal' – 'an ordinary bureaucrat, following orders (Yarbrough & Stern, 1981, p. 326). Cesarini (2003), with a much greater knowledge of Eichmann, essentially reaches the same conclusion as Arendt about the 'banality' which was that:

> if one really wants to understand the evil of our time … then we have to understand how ordinary 'normal' people can – without thinking – be caught up in committing or supporting monstrous evil deeds. (Bernstein, 2010b p.134)

Bernstein (2010b) argues that Arendt's service to our thinking is to highlight that although we are not living in a totalitarian society, the temptation to appeal to 'totalitarian solutions' is still very much with us (p. 135). In the context of *educational* leadership, the criteria for judging events of our time and if they lead to 'totalitarian solutions', or as Adams and Balfour (2009) term it 'administrative evil', is to look at what is 'before our very eyes'—not using *intention* 'to locate responsibility and blame' (Neiman, 2010, p. 311), but looking, as Arendt suggests, for evidence of denial of plurality.

'Dark times'

Bertold Brecht's poem '*To Those Who Follow in Our Wake*,' laments the inability to speak about the 'evil' in their midst under the Nazi regime. The poem inspired the title of Arendt's book *Men in Dark Times* (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 3).

> Truly, I live in dark times!
> An artless word is foolish. A smooth forehead
> Points to insensitivity. He who laughs
> Has not yet received
> The terrible news.
>
> What times are these, in which
> A conversation about trees is almost a crime
> For in doing so we maintain our silence about so much wrongdoing!
> And he who walks quietly across the street,
> Passes out of the reach of his friends
> Who are in danger?
> ...
> (Brecht, 2008)

The 'darkness refers to the way these horrors appear in public discourse and yet remain hidden' (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 3) through an official 'camouflage' (Arendt, 1968, p. viii) and the invisibility of inconvenient facts (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 4) sweeping them 'under the carpet … under the pretext of upholding old truths' (Arendt, 1968, p. viii). For Arendt, the inability to speak of evil in 'dark times', is not limited to the tragedies of the twentieth century. Greene (1997, p. 1) identifies 'dark times' today with violations and erosions taking place around us: the 'harm being done to children; the eating away of social support systems; the "savage inequalities" in our schools'. 'Dark times' are not necessarily easy to recognise since existing categories of political thought are not useful for understanding what is happening; creating a crisis in meaning and understanding.

Acting 'in concert' with others

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt proposes 'three fundamental human activities: labor, work and action' (Arendt, 1958, p. 7). Action 'goes on between men' and corresponds to the human condition of plurality—'to the fact that men, not man, live on the earth and inhabit the world' (p. 7). Action would be unnecessary if we were all the same, 'endlessly reproducible repetitions of the same model ... as predictable as the nature or essence of any other thing' (Arendt, 1958, p. 8). Plurality is *the* condition of all human life because we are all the same in being human but in 'such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live' (p. 8). Action creates the condition for remembrance, for history and for beginning 'something anew' (p. 9).

Arendt identifies the capacity to 'act in concert' with others (Arendt, 1958, p. 179), recognising the potential for creating something new if we incorporate into action the various ideas and perspectives people have (p. 179). All human beings are capable of 'the ability to start entirely new processes that could not have been predicted from what came before' (Schutz, 2001, p. 98). Arendt points to the

misreading of reality when people forget that starting action, the 'processes of no return', are not 'theoretical' and controlled by reason, they are actually 'uncertain and unpredictable whether they are let loose in the human or the natural realm' (Arendt, 1958, pp. 231-232). With a preoccupation with ends, (a technical rationality), we think there is a limitation to action and that we know what has been done but 'any single deed has multiple consequences and action simply has no end' (Arendt, 1958, p. 233). Our efforts to bring certainty and security to our social world and world of work, deny the reality of the uncontrollable arena of actions and re-actions and tempt us to substitute 'making' and 'fabrication' for the uncertainty of action. This leads to confusion and misunderstandings about ends and means and the misreading of leadership as sovereignty. This aspect is important for an historical understanding of our conception of leadership.

Power to 'act in concert' and 'rulership'

Arendt uses 'power' to talk about collective action generated when people gather together to 'act in concert'. In this context, power refers to the potential for the participants to act collectively without coercion, force or violence. Power is what keeps the public realm in existence and is actualised only when word and deed are together:

> where words are not empty and deeds are not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities. (Arendt, 1958, p. 200)

Power is uncertain since it cannot be possessed but is 'dependent upon the unreliable and only temporary agreement of many wills and intentions', being 'boundless' (p. 200). Arendt argues that because of action's uncertainty, irreversibility and the anonymity of the actual authors of action, there has been a temptation to find 'a substitute for action in the hope [for, and] … escape [from] the haphazardness and moral irresponsibility inherent in plurality of agents' (p. 220). The attempt to replace acting with making manifests in 'an activity where one man … remains master of his doings from beginning to end' (p. 220), in an attempt to do away with plurality. Arendt attributes to Plato, the establishment of a scheme which allows for many 'to "act" like one man without even the possibility of internal dissension … through rule' (p. 224).

Arendt's approach to understanding an idea 'demands tracing them back to their roots in experience' (Stern & Yarbrough, 1978, p. 373), which involves an historical analysis of how ideas arose, the way they changed and why. She did this for the Greek and Latin words meaning 'to act' which presents an interesting perspective on the historical roots of our conceptions of leadership. The separation of 'rule' and 'execution', Arendt argues, came about through the changed meaning over time of the two words meaning 'to act' in Greek: *archein* (to begin, to lead, to rule) and *prattein* (to pass through, to

achieve, to finish) corresponding to the Latin words *agere* (to set in motion, to lead) and *gerere* (to bear) (Arendt, 1958, pp. 177,189). In each case, the word that designated the achievement—*prattein* and *gerere*—became the accepted word for action in general, whereas the words designating the beginning of the action became specialised—*archein* meaning to 'to rule, to lead' and *agere* meaning 'to lead' (p. 189). Plato identified with the person in command, the vision or 'idea' of the image or shape —(*eidos*) of the product-to-be and the means to execute it through the deployment of action by others, interpreted as 'making' and 'fabrication' in work. In doing so 'the many became one' (p. 224) by eliminating internal dissension. For Arendt, the hallmark of the idea of sovereignty is the suspicion of action; not the 'will to power' and the desire to substitute for action, the notion that we live together 'only when some are entitled to command and others forced to obey … [there are] those who rule and those who are ruled. (p. 222)

The separation of 'vision' from execution, so common in modern times, is associated with the view that 'all means, provided they are efficient are permissible and justified to pursue something defined as an end' (p. 229) and the idea that human affairs 'were or could become the planned products of human making' (p. 230). We forget that 'the processes of no return' are not theoretical and controlled by reason but are 'uncertain and unpredictable' (pp. 231-232). Arendt (1958) points out that the elimination of plurality through the separation of knowing and doing (p. 225), is tantamount to 'the abolition of the public realm itself' (p. 220).

Plurality and public space

Arendt's notion of public space is focused on tensions created when unique individuals seek to act together without giving up their distinctiveness, seeking 'an elusive balance between conflicting ways of being and acting with others' (Schutz, 2001, p. 101). Human plurality has a twofold character of 'equality and distinction', which reveals itself in speech and action:

> If men were not equal they could not understand each other and if they were not distinct there would not be any need for speech or action. (Arendt, 1958, p. 175)

Arendt identified that speech accompanies action, and therefore since action has a linguistic structure (Benhabib, 2003, p. 199), her vision of democracy is a dialogic one (Schutz, 2001, p. 98).

Arendt's public space is 'intimately related to her understanding of action in the space of appearances' (Benhabib, 2003, p. 200). The disclosure of 'who' people are in a public space, is connected to the temporary realisation, in action, of identity, as recognised by others, from an unstable multiple self that is fragmented and indistinct, apart from the space (Honig, 1995, pp. 140-141). With the plurality of perspectives, a public space is created where 'only in public can individuals

achieve a coherent *position* by relating their own opinions to those expressed by others in that space' (Schutz, 2001, p. 99). In such a space individuals act 'in concert', making a unique contribution, but because they are neither totally autonomous nor acting as a collective 'mass', creative and unpredictable change is generated (Arendt, 1958, p. 201). The process of acting and speaking produces a 'web of human relationships' (p. 183) with each person inserting themselves into an already existing web with 'innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions' (p. 184). Schutz (2001) identifies three tensions which arise in sustaining action in a public space, which are described below. I add a fourth: emotion in public spaces, which I then briefly explore further.

Issues with sustaining public spaces and plurality

First, public spaces cannot exist without objects of common concern. These allow participants to locate themselves with respect to other participants, but also puts limitations on the distinctiveness that can be expressed (Schutz, 2001, p. 102). The plurality needs to be in the bounds of what is relevant to the common project. The space disintegrates if actions or comments are not seen to address the same shared issue (Arendt, 1958, pp. 57-58). Actors must be willing to disclose their perspectives up to a point, restraining from their full singularity. Not only extreme uniqueness threatens the public space, but so does 'banality, shallowness and attempts to submerge oneself in the crowd are dangerous' (Schutz, 2001, p. 104). It is also a threat if people cannot see where they can contribute or if participants are unwilling to risk exposing their perspectives to others so that the plurality of the space disappears. Participants can attempt to persuade others but their perspectives must be open to being changed by the actions and words of others.

Second, assertions of incontestable truth and certainty which seek to coerce others, also collapse the space, since if someone claims 'the truth' there is no reason to listen to the opinions of others. In this situation, the only goal of speech then, is to coerce others 'through the force of logic or rhetoric to adopt [a] … point of view' (Schutz, 2001, p. 106).

> [T]he desire to find the correct answer … would be seen as a tool for shutting down dialogue and destroying the possibility of "concerted" as opposed to mass action. (Schutz, 2001, p. 107)

Such a 'truth' could be a participant's strong belief which is at odds with others, or could be the result of school leaders seeking to impose the school 'vision' or the principal's views on the particular concern. The impact of such a statement from a position of leadership may be to threaten the willingness of others to share perspectives or communicate an expectation of agreement. The space, dependent on plurality for its existence, collapses. For this reason, Arendt thought that public debate can only deal with things which do not have certainty (Schutz, 2001, p. 106).

Third, the unpredictability of acting 'in concert' leads some to seek out ways to stabilise and control these processes. Attempts to do this potentially destroy the public space. However, complete unpredictability and chaos is also unacceptable, so some predictability and stability is to be sought. Arendt (1958) describes 'islands of security' (p. 237) or 'islands of predictability … in which certain guideposts of reliability are erected' (p. 244) in the 'ocean of uncertainty' (p. 244), in the form of agreements or promises for action. To combat 'the irreversibility and unpredictability of the process started by acting' (p. 234), Arendt (1958) identifies two potentialities of action itself: forgiving, and making and keeping promises.

The force which keeps people engaged in action is forgiveness since without it we would have one deed from which we would never recover. Forgiveness allows us to break the spiral of consequences and begin action anew. The force that keeps the public space in existence is that of mutual promise between participants, which is not 'an identical will … but … an agreed purpose for which alone the promises are valid and binding' (Arendt, 1958, p. 245). The attempts to establish promises need to resist efforts to control and dominate through the misuse of agreements which:

> cover the whole ground of the future and to map out a path secured in all directions, [thereby] … los[ing] their binding power and the whole enterprise becomes self-defeating. (Arendt, 1958, p. 244)

The attempts to secure the path 'in all directions', through the substitution of 'making' for acting results from frustration with actions' unpredictability and irreversibility. Plato's solution is the philosopher-king, who attempts to use rational force (Arendt, 1958, p. 222) to direct the action of others. Arendt argues that no matter how kindly this might be done, it is still tyranny and paves the way for the loss of genuine collective action by the community (Rogers, 2013, p. 167). Denying the plurality of such a space, destroys the space itself and the potential for acting 'in concert' on the basis of a shared diversity of perspectives.

Fourth, when people come together with issues in common, they can be forced to re-evaluate how they frame the concern and their goals and plans, discovering there is no ready-made solution. Emotions are a part of this process, in the struggle for recognition (Heins, 2007, p. 716). An important feature of emotions is the role of other people's expectations on how one should feel and how these influence the emotions (Zembylas, 2003, p. 103). Arendt was alert to the subversion of rationality by emotions, through her investigation of the French Revolution. However, Arendt held a subtler position on the relationship of emotion and democracy which was less understood (Heins, 2007, p. 716). Arendt's less-understood position (p. 716) encompassed far more concern for the absence of emotion, especially after Arendt wrote *The aftermath of Nazi rule: report from Germany* in 1950. A

few years after the end of the war, Arendt expressed shock and bewilderment about the 'general lack of emotion' and the 'apparent heartlessness' of many Germans she met (Arendt, 1950, p. 342):

> [N]owhere is this nightmare of destruction and horror less felt and less talked about than in Germany itself … the general lack of emotion, at any rate, this apparent heartlessness, sometimes covered over with cheap sentimentality, is only the most conspicuous outward symptom of a deep-rooted stubborn, and at times vicious refusal to face and come to terms with what really happened. (Arendt, 1950 p.342)

Arendt acknowledged a place for emotions in public life, and the moral and cognitive value of emotions (Heins, 2007, p. 725) through recognition of the consequences of deeds.

Public spaces as places of recognition

Arendt understood public spaces as places of recognition where we reveal our distinct voice, not as a pre-thought out position, but in relation to others—a self emerges *as part* of a community activity, not *prior*. In the 'space of appearance', acts of recognition are attempts to recognise others as part of a larger struggle for self-definition in a plurality of spectators (Arendt, 1978b). In Arendt's public space, difference is a potential normative reality as a result of a combination of 'need to be known' and attempts to 'recognize something authentic and distinctive in others' (Dillabough, 2002, p. 204). In this way, being and appearing coincide (Arendt, 1978b). Through the recognition of difference we might avoid 'the conflation of all identities within one hegemonic norm' (Dillabough, 2002, p. 205) and be able to share a space through difference rather than unity, that is not only relevant to some but also to those who are different from them.

Teacher public space

The current forms of transformational leadership which permeate education (Gunter, 2005 p.181) do not encourage the diversity of contributions from staff. What is dominant (Gunter, 2001, 2012) is one interpretation and one solution for education reform which is unquestioned (Wiens, 2000 p.285) and therefore does not need alternatives. There is 'no glimpse of an *elsewhere*, of an *otherwise*' (Berger, 2002, p. 214). As Booth (2005, p. 153) argues: 'I cannot see how schools which discourage the participation of staff can have the cultural resources to encourage the participation of children and young people'.

I have called the potential space for dialogue, thinking and judgement, a 'teacher public space', following Arendt's concept of public space (Arendt, 1958). A public space for teacher dialogue about teaching, following Arendt, is a space between people, created by discourse in seeking possible consensus or reciprocal understanding and self-revealing discourse, creating mutual recognition

(Calhoun & McGowan, 1997, p. 9). This is not a community constituted by pre-established similarity among members (p. 10), but identifies political action as acting 'in concert' through recognising and engaging with difference rather than a conflict waged from 'fixed positions' in adversarial debate. Plurality must be nurtured, fostered and protected not for the decisions and agreements but for the 'sense of the real that is at stake' which is 'the precondition of our ability to belong to each other, to care for our lives together, and, finally, to act deliberately together' (Curtis, 1997 p.47).

The pedagogic nature of a teacher public space is revealed in the potential for teachers to engage in deep reflection on practice, which is not possible when working alone, when engaged in social dialogue or in conversations which simply re-count teaching activities (Penlington, 2008). Many of the determinants of what a teacher does are taken for granted (p. 1312) and so are likely to continue unchallenged. Being involved in dialogue means mediating between different perspectives enabling each participant to 'see things differently' and be changed by it (Burbules, 1993, p. xii). The dialogue brings an 'otherness' which is found in Arendt's concept of enlarged mentality and is elaborated in Bakhtin's view of dialogue:

> The alternative perspective that 'otherness' brings ... because without it there would be no way of ... of 'seeing differently' and thereby understanding ourselves, others whom we meet, and the contexts in which we find ourselves. (Penlington, 2008, p. 1309)

Penlington (2008) identifies characteristics of dialogic conversations, consistent with Arendt's views. These include being free to question one another so that different viewpoints are taken into account, within which there is an optimum level of conflict or dissonance. For this to happen, teacher dialogues move beyond *re-counting* teaching activities, to that of discussing *reasonableness* of teaching practices (p. 1314) which considers the effects on students. Combined with trust, dissonance in views prompts reflection and discussion rather than defending positions in a back and forth movement between polar positions. The element of trust means that 'the disagreements [teachers] have with one another are not personal attacks' (p. 1315), but this is only possible through long-term interactions which establish trust and respect.

Educative Leadership in a critical public space

If education is seen as preparation of children 'in advance for the task of renewing a common world' (Arendt, 1961, p. 196), then educational leadership might be linked more to working with teachers to develop 'a humane pedagogy' (Greene, 1997) in a space where the views and contributions of each teacher matter. Taking into account other perspectives means that one listens and acknowledges difference, and that the enlarged understanding of the world and 'the web of relations' developed with others is 'unavailable to any of them from their own perspective alone' (Young, 1997, p. 361).

This is the power of acting 'in concert' in a belief that things can be different—to judge in dark times is to believe that things can be other than they are (Taylor, 2002, p. 164).

Arendt's identification of the 'power' of acting 'in concert', in an educational context, opens up possibilities for things to be other than the 'harm being done to children' (Greene, 1997, p. 1) in our current version of 'dark times'. The relational focus of pedagogy which relies on working with students as active partners in the educational process, implies responsiveness to students as trusted and respected partners, as 'actual human beings' (p. 11). This can only be supported by teachers 'who are themselves trusted and respected partners in the educational process' which is both 'conceived and implemented in dialogue with teachers' (Hart, Dixon, Drummond, & McIntyre, 2004, p. 266). With a different dialogue teachers might think of themselves as among those able to kindle the illumination which Arendt described and acknowledge that:

> [s]ituatedness; vantage point; the construction of meanings: all can and must be held in mind if teachers are to treat their students with regard, if they are to release them to learn how to learn. (Greene, 1997, p. 3).

Dialogue has no 'method' or 'blueprint', but is rather a direction for pedagogical exploration, not a map (Burbules, 1993, p. 143). The process of dialogue might be seen as an 'educational voyage' to be re-visited regularly, rather that a destination or an endpoint (Coulter & Wiens, 1999, p. 4). Consistent with Arendt's views, dialogue in a public space, recognises each teacher's distinctive contribution and creativity as well as the potential for working together, without coercion, to establish promises and 'islands of security' (Arendt, 1958, p. 237) within projects of common concern.

Educational leadership, as a shared responsibility, recognises that human meaning is only achieved in the complex interactions of dialogical situations. (Wiens, 2000, p. 304). Participants are open to change their attitudes, ideas, and/or positions and grow both in the capacity for practical judgment and living together in a context of disagreement (Adams & Balfour, 2009, p. 174) as well as 'caring for the preservation of that diversity' (Bauman, 1995, pp. 284-285). Gunter (2009) highlights the need to 'reverse the way that certainty and risk have been handled through neoliberal educational reform' (p. 99), to rehabilitate what she calls 'dependency' and to be more comfortable with 'strangeness'. For Arendt, the answer to 'totalitarian solutions' was not the cultivation of individual personal 'goodness' or conscience, but mutual *respect*—'a kind of "friendship" without intimacy and without closeness' that is 'a regard for the person from the distance which the space of the world puts between us' (Arendt, 1958, p. 243). Similarly Sellar (2012) suggests that a sense of 'intellectual hospitality' might be forged, where a loss of self-assurance might open the way for creative thinking

and learning with others—friendship as a productive context for intellectual creation spurred by, and sustaining of, the hesitation and dissensus that is crucial to thought (p. 72).

As Schutz (1999) identifies, the existence of Arendt's public space is a question of balancing the tendencies for distinction and commonality, avoiding the splintering of the group as a result of extreme distinctive views and avoiding the total consensus of a 'mass', resulting from people not seeing where they can contribute and 'going along with it'. The teacher public space concerns the nurturing of a vibrant public realm within schools, where staff can collectively 'reflect on and make meaning of their work together', develop shared commitments and 'take shared responsibility for past action and future intentions' (Fielding, 2009, pp. 497-498). Despite the current 'dictatorship of no alternatives' (Wrigley, 2011, p. 97), there is the possibility of a genuine democratic alternative which includes 'a pedagogy of listening', a pattern of continuing dialogue 'in which understandings and meanings are always open to new perspectives and interpretations and where you lose the possibility of controlling the final result (Fielding & Moss, 2011, p. 79). For Arendt political activity is valued because it enables each person to exercise his or her powers of agency, to develop the capacities for judgement and to incorporate into praxis, viewing issues from all sides. It is also the case that seeking out a range of diverse perspectives might help leaders (and their teams) understand the consequences of decisions, how people are affected and the potential harm (H.H. Dalai Lama, 2011, p. 14). It is possible that 'a sensibility towards social justice' which foregrounds ethical concerns and a commitment to action (Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Artz, & Murphy, 1996, p. 111) might require a collection of people prepared to engage in ongoing debate from a variety of perspectives, and live with ambiguity rather than establishing 'blueprints' for action (p. 110).

Reflection on Arendt and educational leadership

The primary lesson of the 'banality of evil' (Arendt, 1963) is that:

> one does not have to be a monster, a sadist, or a vicious person to commit horrendous, evil deeds. Normal people in their everyday lives, 'decent citizens,' even respectable political leaders, who are convinced by the righteousness of their cause, can commit monstrous deeds. (Bernstein, 2010a, p. 303)

The bureaucratic conditions of modernity make these 'monstrous' deeds more likely. In education, Arendt's work implies that the spreading of 'evil' on the surface, 'like a fungus' rather than a 'root' (Kohn, 2001, p. 7), is only possible because of its superficiality, its intent to 'laminate' (Smyth, 2006, p. 301) over deeper *educational* concerns, witnessed by educators, many of whom are complicit in its growth. Understanding the struggle between good and evil as a simple dichotomy between forces of good and forces of evil intent, 'mystifies and obscures the new face of evil in a post-totalitarian

world' (Bernstein, 2010a, p. 303). The 'ease with which human beings are made superfluous, the feebleness of the "voice of conscience," the subtle forms of complicity … are still very much with us' (p.303) which is why 'the ordinariness of tyranny' (Gunter, 2007) compels us, not only to face difficult questions about the meaning of 'evil' in a contemporary world, but also forces us to acknowledge our greater '*degree of responsibility … as we draw further away from the man who uses the fatal instrument'* (Arendt, 1963, pp. 246, Arendt's emphasis).

As Arendt highlights for us, the majority of evil may be a failure to think about and judge the consequences of what we do, 'in a rush to get through whatever [the] business is at hand' (Neiman, 2010, p. 311). This has implications for our roles as educators, in preparing young people 'in advance for the task of renewing a common world' (Arendt, 1961, p. 196), to see (and speak about) what is 'hidden in plain sight' (Berkowitz, 2010, p. 4). Rather than leadership in school contexts being seen as 'the sterile and manipulative business management canons of directing, commanding, controlling and coordinating' (Smyth, 1985, p. 186), in ways which silence thinking and judgement, leadership might be seen as creating the circumstances in which teachers and leaders are 'dialoguing, intellectualising and theorising about their work (p. 186) and the consequences of what they do. Hannah Arendt's legacy 'to the generations coming after her is not so much a teaching to be learned as a challenge to be met' (Kohn, 2001, p. 8).

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