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Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

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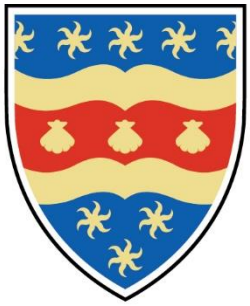

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Investigating 'active citizenship':
a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

by

Kevin Richard Walker

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in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

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Dedication

To Angela, without whom none of this would be possible.

Acknowledgements

Completing this thesis has been a long journey which has depended on the support and encouragement of many along the way. I can only mention a few here.

It is many years since Joanna Haynes bravely accepted my New Year's invitation to become my supervisor. She has shown immense patience and tact in dealing with a rather defensive, self-doubting, and somewhat erratic student. Throughout the long process she has held on to the vision that one day this document would be completed and that it would be worth sharing. She provided wise and gentle guidance which enabled me to find my own way, and to return, in my own time, from the many interesting diversions on route.

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Thanks too for the generosity of the numerous researchers and scholars I met at various conferences, particularly Sharon Clancy for sharing her research journey and to Jon Nixon for generously sharing his work.

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Finally, thanks to Victoria Seymour who professionally proofread this thesis.

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of *Doctor of Education* has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included:

Module 1 – Policy and professional practice

Module 2 – Professional learning

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ABSTRACT

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt. **Kevin R Walker**

The formation of 'active citizens' has become a desirable educational outcome in mainstream secondary and adult education in the UK. However, there is a wide range of interpretations regarding what being 'active' as a citizen actually involves and a lack of consensus on the role of education in this process.

Drawing on Arendt's conception of action as the basis of political activity where "to be free and to act are the same" (Arendt 1968a: 153), I propose an understanding of 'active citizenship' which involves the appearance of an individual citizen in relationship with the shared public world. It is argued that this relationship is where education and politics meet, and that the nature of educational practice can have a significant impact on that.

I propose, following Hannam (2016), that "bringing the child to human togetherness: to action in plurality" (128) is a helpful way to understand an educative process that enables a political dimension to emerge in the public space of a classroom. Examples, from a range of educational settings, are used to explore what this means in practice. It is argued that the cultivation of an 'embedded reflexivity', as a form of reflective practice, enables educators to become more aware of the potential for freedom and political action in their endeavours.

A unique feature of this study is the storying methodology, which draws on Arendt's political hermeneutic phenomenology (Borren 2010, Van Manen 2014). Whereas Arendt used historical and contemporary events to examine and illustrate her concepts, I use narratives from my professional practice as an educator in both secondary and adult sectors. It is asked of each activity to what extent it enhances the "task of renewing a common world" (Arendt 1968b: 196).

This thesis makes a distinctive contribution to the application of some of Arendt's ideas to conceptualise the challenge of education for an engaged, active citizenry. It also provides provocative illustrations across a variety of contexts.

Arendt's exhortation to "think what we are doing" (Arendt 1998: 5) is embodied here through the examination of the practice of one educator, with the intention to reach out to many.

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[Table 1] Summary of *Chapter Structure.* [p 43]

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below are brief notes of those terms that are frequently used and an indication of where a more detailed discussion of their meaning can be found. Where these terms are initially discussed in each chapter, they are in a **bold font** to indicate that a glossary entry exists for them.

Academic often used to imply an abstracted or unworldly dimension. For the author the word has connotations meaning 'of no consequence'. **2.1.2**

Active Citizenship: where capitalised in this way, it refers to the specific use in UK Citizenship Education to refer to the practical element of the subject, for example coursework.

'active citizenship' refers to the more generic usage which is placed in inverted commas to indicate its contested status. Chapters one and three explore various meanings and develop fully the way it is used in the thesis. There is no widely accepted definition, but a distinctive usage is explored and proposed in chapter three.

Action is used exclusively with Arendt's meaning, as an event taking place between people in the public realm where a degree of freedom exists. It "is the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" (Arendt 1998: 7). It is a complex term, and its meaning is central to the interpretation of 'active citizenship' used in this thesis and explored throughout chapter three (see also **Labour** and **Work**).

Antipolitical anything which activity discourages political activity in Arendt's terms, for example totalitarianism. **0.3.3**

Apolitical anything which does not include or encourage political activity in Arendt's terms. **0.3.3**

Appearance as in 'appearance in the world' has an Arendtian meaning which implies the exercise of **freedom** to engage in action in the public realm. It can be contrasted with activity that involves coercion or conformity without thinking.

Citizenship a definition is provided in section **1.2.2** which is then contested and critically examined.

Dominant Culture (after Williams 1958) to refer to the hegemonic narratives, ideas, and practices which are often presented as the true or only option available. Used rather than discourse as its meaning is less contested. **6.1.3**

Embedded implies a situated phenomenon where understanding the context is critical to understanding the meaning of an event or term.

Embodied implies something which is experienced by those involved, in contrast to more abstract meanings. Affective as well as rational responses should be considered as relevant to understanding the context. Used extensively in chapter two.

Freedom follows Arendt's (1968a) usage as an expression of **situated agency** (see below) in which freedom exists as a potentiality to be discovered through action with others. It is not something that can be possessed or given by individuals. It is central to Arendt's interpretation of politics. **0.3.5, 3.2.4**

Identities, in the context of 'professional identities', is used to 'articulate a third person perspective' (Biesta 2013: 142), as a tool to further reflexivity. Rather than use the term role, which implies a passivity, identities emphasise the active, but temporary, process of identification with a set of values and ideas. **0.1.2, 0.1.3.**

Labour in Arendt's (1998) usage refers to that human activity which supports and enables biological processes, eating, sleeping, and other things that are necessary in order to maintain life. The connotation of giving birth is probably deliberate.

Judgement: Arendt used this to refer to the exercise of 'extended thinking' in which others' perspectives are taken into account before reaching a conclusion.

Natality is the term Arendt used to characterise the capacity of **action** to bring about a new beginning in the world. It is linked to the ideas of **plurality** and **appearance** in the **world** and can be regarded as akin to physical birth but with a political dimension. **3.2.3.**

Plurality used throughout in Arendt's sense to indicate both the diversity between individuals, cultures, and institutions but also to signify their essential unity and commonality**. 0.3.3, 3.2.2**

Political generally following the usage of Arendt and Crick in the tradition of civic republicanism to refer to human relationships which include **freedom** and **plurality. 0.3.3**

Positionality has been used to refer to 'where one stands' in relation to one's **appearance** in the world. A central theme in chapter two.

Power for Arendt exists as a potential that humans have in their commonality; however, for much of history it has effectively been given up to those who exercise it on behalf of others. **3.2.4**

Public Realm Arendt's term for that domain of human life in which **freedom** and **politics** can exist. Contrasted with the private realm which she regarded as apolitical. **0.3.4.**

Promise in the *Human Condition* (1998) Arendt used this to explain how action and freedom could be used to provide some continuity and stability in institutions and human relationships. Central to understanding the role of 'responsible' citizenship.

Situated Agency (after Emirbayer & Mische 1998) is used as an alternative to Arendt's notion of **freedom**. Unlike autonomy it implies something which exists outside of the individual. It is best regarded as situated in the relational space between, rather than within, actors. **2.4.1**

Thinking has been used throughout following Arendt's usage, which implies more than cognition. It is a form of reflection involving some degree of reflexivity which has a relational and affective dimension. See chapter four for an extensive discussion which encompasses **reflection and reflexivity.**

World: For Arendt, this was the world created by human activity, including institutions, culture, history, etc. She tended to use 'Earth' to refer exclusively to the natural world.

Work in Arendt's (1998) usage refers to the human activity that fabricates the 'man made', artificial, or constructed world.

INTRODUCTION

[Photo 1] *The School Climate Strikes of 2019 – providing a context for this thesis.*

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from the ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable.
>
> And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.
>
> (Arendt 1968b: 196)

0.0.1 A Contextualisation.

The phenomenon of school climate strikes which appeared across parts of the world in 2019 is a challenge, not just to those perceived to have power to respond to the climate emergency but to all educators whoever and whatever they teach. This challenge is posed in the above, much-quoted, passage from Arendt. The task of preparation for 'renewing a common world' seems more urgent now than when it was written, and educators appear no

more prepared for it now than they did then. As educators, accepting that 'responsibility' involves the difficult task of protecting our students from aspects of the world to enable them to have the freedom to create something new. Recently more scholars have turned to Arendt's work for insight into the nature of this task (e.g., Gordon 2001, Biesta 2010, Veck & Gunter 2018, Nixon 2020). This thesis is one educator's story of his responses to the challenge posed by Arendt.

The climate strikes are revisited in the final chapter in the light of the conclusions drawn from this research. The Climate crisis itself provides a context for all that follows, in much the same way that the events of the Holocaust did for Arendt.

0.1.1 Introducing a 'self-conscious' text.

This work is not an exercise of data collection that can be separated from the data collector. It is not an 'objective' analysis, but it's a creative attempt to make sense of diverse aspects of one person's professional practice across several educational sectors. These are presented through the lens of different professional '**identities**' (terms in **bold** appear in the glossary) which aim to represent different facets of the author's professional life. It is the voice of the author, expressed in the first person, that represents the researcher's perspective.

Here you will find what Woolgar (1988) refers to as a "self-conscious text, aiming to combine conventionally structured, referenced, academic text with a representation of reflection-in-action which sets out to be deliberately reflexive". This approach fits comfortably within the tradition of phenomenological research exemplified by Van Manen

(1995, 2016) which is explained further in chapter two. The use of 'reflection-in-action', as introduced by Schön (1983, 1987) but given a uniquely Arendtian twist here, is central to this thesis and is employed from the outset. This is explored in detail in chapter four, together with Arendt's take on thinking, and a consideration of the nature and implications of reflexivity for educators seeking to further 'active citizenship'. The meaning of this term is the concern of chapter one.

This research is personal and professional, in that my concerns resonate with those of my colleagues working in the field of Citizenship Education (examples include, Leighton 2006, Osler 2000, Jerome 2012, Lawson 2001). This research is political in that it deals with issues that concern education in a democracy and examines, by drawing on the thinking of Hannah Arendt, the fundamental nature of political activity. It is also psychological as it takes a reflexive turn to examine the lived experience of one teacher. It is theoretical because it touches upon the concerns of political philosophy and, yet, it is practical because it will try to ground these concerns in the world of educational practice.

The research question, implicit in the title, will be more formally expressed in section 0.3.0, where it will be broken down into sub-questions as the chapter structure is outlined. Before that I will explain why this research matters educationally and why Hannah Arendt and some of her key concepts play an important part. The narrative method, used to explore these concepts, is also introduced here, as is the significance of 'active citizenship' as a contested term. Firstly, the range and background to the author's experience as a practitioner is outlined.

0.1.2 Introducing the Author's Professional 'Identities'.

The reader is invited to imagine that we are at the first session of a course, a taught professional doctorate for example, where each participant is asked to briefly introduce themselves and say what it is that they aim to get out of this journey.

The Citizenship Teacher.

I am a teacher of Citizenship, recently retired from secondary school, with experience of teaching the subject from years 9 to 13 (ages 13–18) and as coordinator of Active Citizenship activities across the whole school. My reason for being here is that I want to understand why my subject arrived so late in the secondary curriculum of the UK, and why its very nature and aims are contested, and its status today is under threat. I am also interested in exploring what teachers can do to challenge and change this situation.

The Senior Examiner.

I was, until recently, a Principal Examiner for A level Citizenship in the UK, responsible for writing and marking the paper on Global and Active Citizenship. I want a deeper understanding of the context in which it is possible for this qualification to be quietly dropped, from the range of subjects examined at this level in the UK, given what seems to be an unprecedented demand for a politically literate electorate and an engaged citizenry. As a member of the guiding council of the Association for Citizenship Teaching, I am also keen to explore how best to challenge this situation and to embed 'active citizenship' within the curriculum of mainstream secondary education in the UK.

The Adult Educator.

I am a tutor, working for the WEA (Workers Educational Association), an organisation which aims to create a more active citizenry through adult education. I wish to gain some insight into quite how, or if, this can be done and what exactly characterises an active citizen.

My courses involve politics and psychology and aim to further an attitude of critical engagement which empowers the student to participate in their community. I would like to understand, better, the role of the adult educator in the development of 'active citizenship'.

The Teacher of Psychology.

I feel a little out of place here as my subject has more of a focus on individual experience that can become rather introspective. Whilst acknowledging that Psychology, as a discipline, can certainly magnify the importance of the individual, it can also bring into question the assumptions made about the location of personality, and question the origin of our thinking and the integrity of selfhood.

I have something of an obsession with the nature of agency, and I am hoping to gain more insight into how education can further the exercise of this. I am also interested in the role of reflection on our experience as educators and its relationship with reflexivity and agency.

0.1.3 Professional 'Identities' as research participants.

> The life story individualises and personalises; the life history contextualises and politicises. (Goodson & Sikes 2001: 87–88)

An introduction to this thesis is, therefore, also an introduction to the author, a snapshot of a life, which positions the thinker and the thinking. To appreciate what has brought me to this point, it is necessary also to consider my relationship to education itself, and what Goodson (2011) calls 'life politics'. Although an individual account, it illustrates how the wider political context both limits and provides opportunities to create a personal story within the wider political one. The device of using 'professional identities' as 'participants' creates a distance between the researcher and the research which is useful in enabling greater reflexivity.

The simple fiction of introducing the research participants as separate '**identities**' illustrates the point that we are looking at dynamic multiple selves rather than some single fixed essential self. Gergen (1991) described the way in which the challenges of a multiplicity of

shifting roles and relationships create the dilemma of multiple identities. These 'identities' have distinctive perspectives, generated through engagement in different 'Communities of Practice' (Wenger 1998).

The identities are introduced as if they were 'individuals' with distinct subjectivities. From a Social Constructionist perspective (Gergen 2009) such 'individuality' is constructed through language and socialisation. This narrative device aims to move beyond individuality to explore issues which, although encountered through one person's professional experience, are characterised as much by institutional settings and Communities of Practice, as by personal history. By claiming these identities as research participants, I am suggesting that each has something distinctive to contribute to the investigation.

Biesta (2013) suggests 'identity' is about identification with existing externalised categories or objects, which, therefore, "articulates a third person perspective" (142). This is distinct from the notion of individuality "which tends to depict the human subject too much in isolation from other human beings" (18). He further suggests that the educational question is one of subjectivity, which is "how we can become a subject of action and responsibility" (142). This is a pragmatic concern of this investigation, and weaves through the contextualisation of the author's professional life that follows.

0.1.4 Contextualising the Professional 'Identities'.

By 2002, A level Psychology had become the most popular non-national curriculum subject choice, the fourth after Maths, English, and Biology (Walker 2010), and qualified teachers

were in demand. The first assignment of my MEd investigated this phenomenon, leading to an article in the BPS Teaching Review, which argued that:

> The consumerisation of education in the UK from the 1980s onward, coupled with an individualistic culture in which student choice is promoted, contributes to an educational environment which focuses on the personal. (Walker 2010: 45)

In response to this popularity, at one point I had three sixth form Psychology A level groups and was introducing the GCSE for younger students. Despite this, I was concerned that the knowledge on offer, did not match the expectations of the students. Many wanted careers working with people; all wanted to understand themselves and others better. These life skills were not part of the academic subject. To compensate, I started to organise extension activities, initially for sixth form students, to enable them to gain experience working with vulnerable groups; some in the community outside the school, and others bringing community groups into school. Students worked with Age Concern, local primary schools, and youth clubs. In school, students worked with adults with learning difficulties and in the memory café set up by the Community Psychological Service.

It was through these extension activities that 'active citizenship', as it will become apparent, I was using the term uncritically, became a key concern for me as an educator. I took advantage of a range of CPD opportunities available for existing teachers who wished to offer citizenship as an additional subject. At the time (2007) my school provided one hour per week curriculum time for Citizenship Education at Key Stage 3 (years 7–9), and I taught several groups of Y9s (aged 13–14) over 5 years. I also had a responsibility for developing community links and went on to introduce the GCSE and, finally, the A level Citizenship qualifications into the school's provision.

I had worked as a Psychology examiner since 2001, but the introduction of revised Citizenship qualifications led to my appointment in 2010 as one of four Principal Examiners for the new A level qualification, with responsibility for the Active & Global Citizenship paper. This paper included pre-release topics which gave students the opportunity to research, in some depth, a specific controversial area which applied the knowledge and understanding acquired from the other parts of the syllabus. This gave me considerable freedom to select contemporary issues which challenged the students to investigate and position themselves in the debate. Examples included the controversy regarding Fracking, the Occupy Movement, Youth Parliament, Internet Activism, Detention Centres, and membership of the European Union. Unique amongst A levels, the research tasks required students to interview protagonists and take part in debates (Walker 2012, 2016). The questions often posed dilemmas that required a judgement from the student. By 2018 the Citizenship A level was withdrawn, and Politics or Sociology were regarded by the exam board as alternatives. These, however, pose more knowledge-based questions, which although often requiring a structured argument, they rarely touched on the life experience of the student in the same way.

The PGCE I completed in 2000 was in Post Compulsory Education and my first formal teaching experience with Psychology was in the adult education sector. It was to this that I returned on retirement from school teaching in 2013. Locally, only the Workers Educational Association (WEA), an educational charity with links to the trade union movement, continued to offer a wide range of courses. Here I could decide what to offer, subject only to student demand. Initially, I focused on Psychology but then moved across to more explicitly

political material, including courses based on the work of Hannah Arendt, which provided a forum for exploring some of the issues examined in this thesis.

These fictional 'identities' appear finally in the concluding chapter, where an attempt is made at integration.

0.2.1 On Narrative as Data.

Throughout this thesis I draw on my experiences as an educator in different contexts, which are generally introduced using discrete sections of text, with a distinctive font. These passages I have referred to as *narratives of practice* and they are used as a starting point for the discussion that follows. This is a creative process, which I have called 'storying' (after Clough 2002); it draws upon events from and reflections on my professional practice which are crafted into narrative passages. These are then analysed and discussed in ways that enable the key concepts, derived from Hannah Arendt, to be put to work in a way that both deepens our understanding of their significance for education and contributes to developing professional practice.

The short poem below is an example of this process. It was written during a break in an EdD session on data collection delivered by a statistician. It expresses something of the frustration I felt embarking on a research journey at a late stage in my career when my priority was to look again to seek meaningful patterns in the past. I felt my experience counted for little in the collection of numbers and statistical analysis in the presentation.

I don't need more data!

If life is data collection

Then when does the analysis start?
I've got childhood data, student data, parent data, and teacher data
When does it stop?

Each identity packaged full of experiences
Each filed at the time to be unpacked later
When do we unravel the binding, unwrap the layers of confusion?
To discover the secret meaning within

Now a new identity as researcher
And with that the expectation to accumulate more
I need to de-clutter the past before
I can see into the present

It's not that I don't appreciate a good statistic; as a Psychology teacher I had taught both the value and limitations of the statistical analysis of data. However, what I am seeking here, in undertaking a professional doctorate, is to understand more deeply the educational endeavours in which I have been involved, in a way that makes sense to myself, to my colleagues, and others involved in those activities.

I did not become a researcher when I signed up to the EdD, nor even when I embarked on my MEd some 10 years previously. I have always been a researcher, trying to make some sense of my experiences. This is what drew me originally to study Psychology as my first degree, and then into teaching.

The poem, although a product of the author's imagination, is a response to an actual event. One that can be regarded as a 'critical incident' in the sense Tripp (1993) used the term, in which it is the selection, interpretation, and meaning given to the incident, rather than the incident itself, which becomes significant.

> Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way in which we look at a situation; a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event. To

> take something as a critical incident is a value judgement we make, and the basis of that judgement is the significance we attached to the meaning of the incident. (Stenhouse 1975: 8)

For Tripp it was the perspective of Critical Theory, as developed by Habermas (1972) and practised by Freire (1972), that provided a backdrop of values and meaning. I will explain in chapter two how Arendt's thinking can also be regarded as a contribution to this.

The 'data poem' event was critical in my journey into the significance of 'active citizenship' in educational contexts. It signalled an insight into the nature of the journey, and so influenced the direction of travel. This marked a turning away from third party data collection, away from analysis of others' professional practice, to a recognition that, in this context, research meant looking again at the range of my own professional experiences. It presents distinct methodological challenges (discussed in chapter two), as would any research method aiming to understand such a complex topic as the nature of the 'political' in education.

The way in which each section of narrative can be regarded as critical will be made explicit in the analysis which follows in each chapter. This analysis includes what Laurel Richardson (1997) refers to as the "writing-story […] the stories of how texts are constructed" (74). The writing-story for each of the *narratives of practice* will be revealed in the contextualisation that follows each section. These will be touched upon briefly in the chapter structure outline found in section 0.4.0 It is different for each story, reflecting something of the different professional identifications from which it arose.

0.2.2 Research as storytelling.

This investigation is located within the narrative tradition of qualitative research which now has an established place in the literature (e.g., Richardson 2000, Clough 2002, Sparkes 2002, Ellis & Bochner 2003).

As mentioned above, Peter Clough (2002: 6) calls this his "storying methodology". This is a "personal, moral and ethical response to research experiences" (6), one which can then be reflected upon. He also appeals to Phenomenology to justify this approach: "these are my ways of seeing the world I both create and inhabit" (10). Like mine, his texts are "not so much arguments as demonstrations"; like me, he reports on "lived experience in educational settings" (14). His accounts too are fictionalised, both to protect participants and to illustrate particular points.

An important difference, however, is that Clough tends to leave it to the reader to create their own meaning from the accounts presented; the 'truth' is in the interpretation (Badley 2003). I have provided interpretations for the *narratives of practice* in each chapter, which in themselves are subject to further analysis and interpretation. I have used Hannah Arendt's concepts to illuminate these texts, not as representations of truth, but as means of understanding, in order to produce "new ways of seeing" (Clough 2002: 86).

Clough claims a "biographical or narrative truth" (86) for his accounts, but he does acknowledge that as Jerome Bruner comments, "Stories, for all that they require verisimilitude, cannot produce the Truth" (Bruner 1996: 149).

> It remains, however, in the examined world in which we live – where evidence genuinely matters – to offer some justification for the uses of fiction in social science which will help students to scoop with a scholarly confidence – 'without self-importance or self-consciousness' (Inglis 1969: 15) – deep into their personal

> resources for persuasive writing which cannot be dismissed as 'mere fiction'. To do this calls for a methodology which can deal analytic justice at the same time as experiential truth. This is a tall order. (Clough 2002: 88)

In attempting to reach an understanding of the hotly contested term 'active citizenship', this research aspires to that 'tall order'. It too is aiming to provide 'analytic justice' to an application of Arendt's conceptualisation of political action in an educational context. The methodology on which this is based is examined in chapter two.

0.3.0 Introducing the Research Question(s).

The title at the top of this page was not the first one, and the implicit question within it evolved as the research unfolded. The story of this process is revealed in the conclusion as it reviews the research journey and throws light on how the research question is answered.

The initial research focus was on the contested meaning of the term 'active citizenship', and the first research question investigates how this term is used in the UK. Given the diversity of meanings that emerged, the focus was then on determining which one best complimented the understanding of politics developed by Hannah Arendt.

The research question implicit in the title is deceptively simple; it is "**Where is the political heart of education for 'active citizenship'?"** To attempt to answer this will involve an examination of its elements, each of which becomes the focus of a subsidiary question. The meaning of 'active citizenship' itself is the subject of chapter one; below is a brief outline of its significance here. As explained below (0.3.2), political is used here in an Arendtian sense, which influenced Bernard Crick, whose (1999) report heralded the introduction of compulsory Citizenship Education in England. An application of Arendt's understanding of

freedom and the public realm is critical to appreciate the way in which the research question is posed, and the approach taken. These are introduced below:

0.3.1 Why Active Citizenship?

Becoming an 'active citizen' has become a desirable outcome at all levels of education, but given that citizenship itself is a contested term, an active citizen seems to mean whatever one wants it to (Lawson 2001, Johnson & Morris 2010, Leighton 2012). Chapter one illustrates how different political ideologies have quite distinct interpretations of what makes the ideal citizen, and of the role of education in creating such an individual (Faulks 2005, Crick & Lockyer 2010). A recurring theme of this thesis is the implication of regarding the outcome of Citizenship Education in such an individualised form.

It is a pertinent question to ask why I have focused on 'active citizenship', given the problematic nature of its definition. A central concern of this thesis is the way in which education can aid the development and exercise of responsibility, as in the ability to respond, to the world in which our students find themselves. Citizenship Education sits awkwardly within the school curriculum in the UK. It is not only about acquiring knowledge and understanding about the world but also about developing the attitudes and skills to take some responsibility for it.

The frustration I have experienced as a student and teacher with the more unworldly or abstracted aspects of education and assessment drove me, as an examiner, to seek assessments that challenged the student to confront contested aspects of their world and take a position in regard to it. As a Psychology teacher, I became weary of the individualising tendency of the subject and tried to get students more involved with their wider

communities. As an adult education tutor, I was keen to work with an organisation with the mission statement of "Creating a better world – equal, democratic and just; through adult education" (WEA 2020). In each case, the challenge was to enable students to take some responsibility for, and control over, their lives, their communities, and the wider world. This, I will argue, lies at the heart of 'active citizenship' and it is essentially a political process, one that education can enhance or inhibit.

0.3.2 Why Hannah Arendt?

[Photo 2] *Hannah Arendt (1906–1975)*

Jon Nixon (2020) suggests why Arendt should be included in any consideration of the nature of 'active citizenship':

> Implicit in all Arendt's thinking is the belief that education is a public good. Private gains may be derived from it, but public education remains of supreme importance in ensuring the sustainability of a democratic society comprising an educated, engaged and inclusive citizenry. Without such a citizenry, democracy as Arendt understood it becomes hollowed out, and, when it becomes a hollow shell, as she explained in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the risks are huge and the implications wide-ranging. An educated citizenry is a bulwark against populist charmers, charismatic demagogues, and authoritarian charlatans: a bulwark much needed in these troubled times. (34)

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

Hannah Arendt was someone who had personally faced the bleakness of totalitarianism, identified its key features, and whose ideas, I will demonstrate, point to a role for education that could protect the political impulse rather than stifle it. This section explains why I have selected her as a travelling companion on this journey.

Hannah Arendt examined in *The Human Condition* (1998) the paradoxes and dangers constructed by modernity. She concluded that regarding a Citizen as an individual, in the liberal tradition, was meaningless because citizens cannot exist other that in relation to each other. She suggested that this atomising rootlessness created a sense of alienation from the shared world of humanity, and from the inhabited earth. This resonated with my own experience, both as a citizen and educator.

However, she also argued that to deny the expression of each individual's unique experience risked a loss of their very humanity and the threat of total annihilation of all diversity, something she had witnessed in her lifetime and examined in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1958).

Arendt used the term **plurality** to describe

> the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who has ever lived, lives, or will live. (1998: 8)

As will be revealed, much of my professional practice has had an emphasis on raising awareness of these differences in ways that enrich each individual's experience of sameness. The focus of this thesis is not on the creation of individual active citizens, equipped with the knowledge and skills to change the world, but on understanding the

conditions in which forms of citizenship can emerge in an educational setting which transforms relationships with each other and consequently the world in which we co-exist.

Arendt's sense of plurality involved not just the relationship between individuals but also the relationship between different aspects of an individual life, informed by the experiences of others. Complete coherence between different aspects of a life is not expected, nor is it found within Arendt's own thinking (Canovan 1992), nor within the professional life of the author, as the identities outlined above testify.

What these different facets of my professional life have in common is a desire to engage students with the world beyond school, to challenge them to think deeply about the moral and political aspects, and to extend the freedom available within the specified curriculum for them to make their own decisions. It was this that moved me from Psychology toward Politics. I did not fully recognise it at the time, but this was less about empowering my students as individuals, and more about discovering the power which emerged from collective engagement and open dialogue. I recognised this in Hannah Arendt's use of the term **power** to describe a bottom-up discovery of collective potential which was, more often than not, surrendered to others (more on this in chapter three).

Arendt famously referred to *Thinking without a banister* (Arendt 2018) to describe a process which is both critical in relation to the dominant hegemonic modes but also subversive in that it undermines established use of language to reveal a hidden depth of meaning. Reflexivity also emerges as shared concern, both methodologically and as a central theme of the thesis itself. In positioning myself as a commentator on the identities described, reflexivity becomes both a method of research and a professional practice which, it will be

argued, can enhance the potential to exercise those opportunities for agency touched upon above. The nature of this thinking process, however, is complex and is examined throughout this thesis in the light of Hannah Arendt's take on thinking as a political activity.

Nixon (2020: vii) argues that rather than focus on Arendt's (1954b, 1959) rather-limited articles in response to specific educational events: "We need to grasp her thinking as a whole, before we can usefully apply it to our own thinking about education". This is the approach taken here, focusing particularly on applying specific concepts to diverse educational settings.

Nixon (2020) also draws attention to the sharp distinction Arendt made between the education of children and that of adults. For the former, the emphasis was their protection from the world of adults, and all shades of indoctrination. For the latter, it was very much about full engagement with the world, and the challenge that presented. This distinction is challenging for a research process that looks for common themes across sectors: from compulsory secondary education (11–15 age range) to post-compulsory 16–19-year-olds, and on to adult education. In this research, the sharpness of this distinction between different sectors of education is difficult to sustain as the focus here is on those common aspects of education in which a 'political heart' can be found. These issues are discussed in chapter three.

0.3.3 On seeking the political heart.

> The person who wishes not to be troubled by politics and to be left alone finds himself the unwitting ally of those to whom politics is a troublesome obstacle to their well-meant intentions to leave nothing alone […] All over the world there are

> men aspiring to power and there are actual rulers who, however many names they go by, have in common a rejection of politics. (Crick 1962: 12)

Interpreting the term '**political**' in this thesis draws on the civic republican tradition as promoted in Bernard Crick's (1962) classic *In Defence of Politics,* which echoes Hannah Arendt *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1958). Both Crick and Arendt share the same interpretation of politics as something that involves everyone and is continually under threat from those who have assumed power. Crick did say, however, the second edition of his book included a "dawning recognition of Arendt's influence" (Crick 2001: 153). He is also quoted by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (1982: 403) in her biography of Arendt as saying that she was "the most original mind in modern political literature" (Crick 1964: 1).

Arendt claims that too often "the essence of politics is ruler-ship, and that the dominant political passion is the passion to govern" (1963: 280). Whereas her focus, that of Crick, and my own is on the governed: on what they can do to discover and exercise, through political action, the power that is theirs, if only they come to realise it. In Hannah Arendt's thinking about political action and moral philosophy, it is often the apparently small decisions, made at an opportune moment, that become significant expressions of **freedom**.

> The answer to the question of the meaning of politics is so simple and so conclusive that one might think all other answers are utterly beside the point. The answer is: the meaning of politics is freedom. (Arendt 1968a: 108)

In this investigation, various forms of Citizenship Education and activities claimed as examples of 'active citizenship' are judged to be lacking in this political dimension. This is because they do not engage with the **public realm**; that is they are lacking the quality of **action,** in Arendt's terms. I will refer to these as **apolitical** manifestations of citizenship and not apply the label of 'active' at all. In chapter one, the distinction between citizenship as a

legal status and citizenship as a political activity is examined. From an Arendtian perspective, being a citizen is foremost a political activity; without that, citizenship ceases to exist.

Another term I will use, following Arendt (1958), is **anti-political** to refer to those activities and policies which actively discourage or inhibit political activity. The classic example is Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism, which she characterises as the death of politics; without plurality; without freedom, there is no authentic citizenship and therefore no public realm.

It could be argued that all activities have a political dimension, in that there is an impact on the world, including that of not acting. However, this rests on a use of the term which becomes so broad as to lose the distinctive features of political activities, which are central to our enquiry, involving the active engagement of the citizenry and the exercise of freedom. Another, more narrow, popular usage refers to the activities of those 'in power'; Arendt (1970) refers to this as violence, as it is the threat of this, in one form or another, that maintains them in these positions.

> What we call politics now is the social and economic sphere that Arendt views as destructive of the genuinely political. Given the instrumental nature of socioeconomic activity, 'the political' now refers to government processes at best, and self-serving or power-oriented machinations at worst. [… Arendt] conceives of the political as the highest expression of the best that being human offers us. (Paine 2016: 3)

I have used the term 'heart' to highlight political education as a lived experience, one which has impact on not just our understanding but our very being in the world. Throughout the various aspects of my professional practice, I have attempted to bring the world into the classroom to enable my students to feel the personal relevance of the subject matter. This, I have argued, is as much an affective process as it is cognitive. Arendt promoted and

practised what she called a 'love of the world'. The meaning of this is examined in the final chapters, where I argue that this has profound implications for education in all its forms.

0.3.4 Education and the Public Realm.

The 'political heart of education', which the thesis seeks, is to be found in Arendt's public realm. But that rather poses the question as to which of Arendt's realms, public or private, education is located. To address that question, I will need to explore Arendt's use of these terms, but first I need to clarify how I am using the term education. I include the activity that takes place in schools and colleges, but also all forms of adult education and the development of resources and assessments that aim to be educational. These encompass the range of educational practices encountered in this introduction. Non-institutional education, or informal learning, is not included in my analysis but is touched upon in the final chapters.

For Arendt (1998) the public/private distinction would be familiar to members of the Greek city state. The public realm is at the heart of the republic; it is both a physical location (the Polis) and the freedoms and conventions that can be expressed there. The private realm, in contrast, is to be found in the family and home. It is the realm of intimate relationships which, for Arendt, are of great significance in our lives as individuals but are separate from the public realm in which political freedoms can emerge.

One problem with applying Arendt's public/private distinction to modern institutions is that these distinctions are essentially historical ones, which Arendt has

reconstructed to help us identify and potentially reclaim what we have lost. She claimed that because we no longer experience these realms distinctly, their meaning will always be elusive (Arendt 1998: 23). The reason for this is the rise of the social realm of modernity, which obscures and conflates the experience of private and public life. The social realm focuses on the individual experiences rather than collective relationships. It has given rise to a conception of the individualised citizen as an agent of change rather than the looking at agency as something that arises as action in the public space between actors. According to Arendt (1958b) it is allied with the rise of the nation state and industrial consumerism.

Arendt locates some of this loss historically in the contrast between Greek and Roman versions of citizenship. The former, viewing man as a 'political animal'; the latter, as a 'social' one. The emphasis shifts from one of participation to one of protection and rights (Wilson 2005). I will argue that finding the political heart of education will involve seeking out the 'active' citizenship of the Greek tradition, valued by Arendt, as distinct from the 'good' citizenship tradition of the Romans which dominates much of contemporary Citizenship Education. This contrast is contextualised in chapter one.

The social realm is also linked to the focus of governance, moving slowly away from the governed in the modern era, to increasing bureaucratisation and decision making by remote elites. Schools have themselves become part of this process; they too are institutions of modernity, with a clear role in perpetuating its institutions and economic base. The useful question is not, therefore, in which realm are schools

located but more about how to identify those aspects of education in which the public realm can be experienced.

The institution of citizenship, once located entirely in the public realm, now spills over into the social, and the focus becomes that of the citizen, as an individual, with rights and responsibilities defined by the economic and legal structures of the modern nation state. However, at times citizens come together, through collective action, and the public realm is reclaimed, if only to be lost again. Recent examples of this include the Occupy Movement and the Arab Spring. New public realms have been established outside of existing institutions by the School Climate Strikes, Extinction Rebellion, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In the Greek city state, women, slaves, and other family members can only function in one realm: the private. The schooling of children would, therefore, clearly be part of the private realm. Only male adult citizens could educate themselves through their involvement, as citizens, in the public realm. This is complicated by Arendt's own position that "Education can play no part in politics, because in politics we always have to deal with those who are already educated" (1968b: 177) and the rather contentious distinction she makes between the education of children and adults, both of which are explored in chapter three. There I will argue that the public realm can indeed be experienced in an educational institution but will draw on Hannam (2018) to suggest that this is dependent on the existence of freedom, another of Arendt's key concepts to which we turn next.

0.3.5 Education and freedom.

In her essay *What is Freedom?* Arendt (1968a) argues that "The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action" (146). For Arendt, both politics and freedom are qualities that exist in potential only until realised in the public realm. **Action** can emerge in this realm and, according to Arendt, it is what makes us uniquely political animals, and provides the capacity to bring something new into the world. In this thesis I argue that Arendt's concept of action provides a significant political understanding of 'active citizenship' which offers hope for the renewal of democratic institutions and a helpful focus for educators.

Arendt rejects the liberal notions of 'freedom from' and 'freedom to' which imply that, for some, freedom can become a possession or commodity; as something to be given or acquired, a status like citizenship itself. She views it as a potentiality which comes into being when exercised by people in their plurality, which must be exercised in public to exist at all. This is in complete contrast to freedom as an 'inner' experience or state of mind, which she regards as apolitical, and however comforting it may be for those deprived of freedom, because it does not manifest in our shared world, it is of no consequence politically.

> The inward space where the self is sheltered against the world must not be mistaken for the heart or mind, both of which exist and function only in interrelationship with the world. (146)

Arendt's claim that "Freedom as related to politics is not a phenomenon of the will" (64b: 151) is significantly different from that of most political theorists. For her, political freedom is not the same as free will; it is not located within any individual; it

cannot be owned or given. The issue of the location of this Arendtian notion of freedom is examined in section 2.4.1, where it is likened to the social constructionist concept of situated agency.

To seek out the meaning of 'active citizenship' from an Arendtian perspective involves reaching beyond the individualising tendencies of modernity. Any journey toward the political heart of education needs a clear vision that enables the existence of this type of freedom to be spotted in an educational setting. The narrative passages provided from my professional identities are examined for signs of this in each case.

In each of these *narratives of practice*, an analysis is presented in which the extent to which freedom, in this Arendtian sense, can be located. This may be discovered in the way in which teachers and/or students interpret an educational activity as illustrated by the contrast between the litter picking activity and the uniform campaign from chapter one. Or it could be with the adults who found some freedom in the EU funded referendum course examined in chapter three. In chapter four this freedom is located within the structure of project-based qualifications, and in chapter five it is in the very human space that remains when hegemonic medical and psychological models of normality are critically examined collectively. The conclusion extends this analysis to the 2019 school climate strikes to argue that, although educators can play a part in sharing knowledge of scientific findings or historical campaigns, the freedom to take political action cannot be taught or given. The simple idea that freedom is a political activity and that educational endeavours can, even inadvertently, provide

scope for it to emerge has important implications for any educator setting out to discover the political heart of education for 'active citizenship'.

0.4.0 Chapter Structure.

This section outlines the aspect of the research questions that are addressed in each chapter, and the narrative material used there.

Chapter One – What is 'active citizenship'?

This chapter sets out to provide an answer to the question: what is meant by 'active citizenship'? It draws on some of the post-enlightenment political ideologies of the West (liberalism, conservatism, collectivism, and civic republicanism) to explain why the term is currently used to describe such a diverse range of activities. From these, four orientations toward education for citizenship are identified, and a model is presented which positions these orientations in relation to their diverse interpretations of 'active citizenship'.

The *narratives of practice* used to analyse and illustrate these orientations came from my perspective as a Citizenship Teacher. Both examples (the Y7 litter pickers and Y9 uniform campaign) were originally regarded as good examples of 'active citizenship', but as my research unfolded the interpretation put on these accounts changed. I used them in my practice as a trainer on CPD sessions for Citizenship Teachers to examine critically the nature of 'active citizenship'. They were also retold in the professional practice module of the taught doctorate (Walker 2012), which was recrafted into the way the stories are presented in chapter one.

It is argued that a civic republican model offers the best route to examine the political heart of education, not least because it was this vision that motivated Bernard Crick and many of those teachers (myself included) involved in the introduction of the subject into UK schools.

Chapter two – Storytelling with Hannah Arendt: the voice from somewhere.

This explores the methodological issues arising, given the challenge of an interpretation of 'active citizenship' that defies more empirical methods of investigation. Drawing upon the work of Van Manen (1990), a phenomenological approach is proposed with a discussion of what it means to have an ontology, positionality, and epistemology that are embodied in educational practice. It is argued here that the *narratives of practice* provide a means to position the research and embody the methodology.

The narrative sections used here serve to illustrate the storying process that provides the method of enquiry. One is a piece of reflective writing on my own school days and the other is an oft told story rooted in my time as a secondary school teacher.

This material comes from contemporaneous reflective writing responding to events at the time and the subsequent reflections arising from the writing process itself.

Chapter three – Putting the Action into Active Citizenship.

The chapter returns to the civic republican tradition in Citizenship Education (Crick 2001), drawing on Arendt's (1998) ideas regarding the nature of political action. This is explored in some depth to give a distinctly political understanding of what it means to engage in 'active citizenship'.

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

This chapter will introduce Arendt's notions of **action, power,** and **natality,** contextualised by my reflections of teaching a course for adults prior to the EU referendum in 2016. These are based on notes used for the course report, with my reflections added. All details are factual, although the interpretations offered are informed by Arendt's concepts. These are applied to develop an understanding of 'active citizenship', and to consider the endeavour of education for citizenship from an Arendtian perspective. I also attempt to reconcile Arendt's thinking on political action with her views on political education.

Chapter four – To think what we are doing.

This continues the discussion into how the nature of thinking and judgement are considered in relation to Arendt's notions of **action** and **plurality**. This is contextualised within the dominant pedagogy of Citizenship Education, where Active Citizenship is regarded as a form of action learning in the tradition of John Dewey.

The *narrative of practice* here draws on my professional identity as a senior examiner, using reflections on a specific assessment shared with colleagues at the time. The educator's role is examined further by exploring the nature of reflective practice, and its relationship to Arendt's ideas on thinking and judgement.

Chapter five – On becoming a question to one's self.

The discussion here wades into a controversy amongst Arendt scholars as to the significance of Arendt's 1933 thesis on the notion of neighbourly love in the writing of St Augustine (Scott and Stark 1996). My method of applying Arendt's concepts to professional practice

adds a dimension to this discussion that both deepens an understanding of her ideas and illuminates their implications for educational practice. This is contextualised using my experience of teaching Psychology, both in secondary school and more recently with adults.

The *narrative of practice* here is taken from my reflections on a specific course for adults with a mental health theme. It was reproduced in the newsletter of the organisation hosting the event (Bridge Collective 2021). A draft of the entire chapter was sent to the community for comments, and these were taken on board in the final version.

The **Conclusion** revisits the research questions and reviews the main contributions arising. The school strikes in relation to Climate Change are explicitly revisited, where they are used to illustrate and apply the conclusions reached. The conclusion also reviews the broad contributions of this research, which are outlined below.

- To provide a conceptual model which locates the divergent understandings of the term 'active citizenship' within different political traditions and across educational sectors.
- Apply Arendt's concepts of 'public' and 'action' to propose a 'political' understanding of 'active citizenship' to examples from my own range of professional experience.
- Demonstrate a narrative method that illustrates how Arendt's concepts can be applied across different aspects of educational practice.
- Explore some of the educational implications of Arendt's thinking in a range of educational settings.

Finally, the different identities introduced above are revisited and their concerns re-examined.

A table signposting the content of each chapter is provided overleaf.

0.4.1 Table 1 – Summary of Chapter Structure.

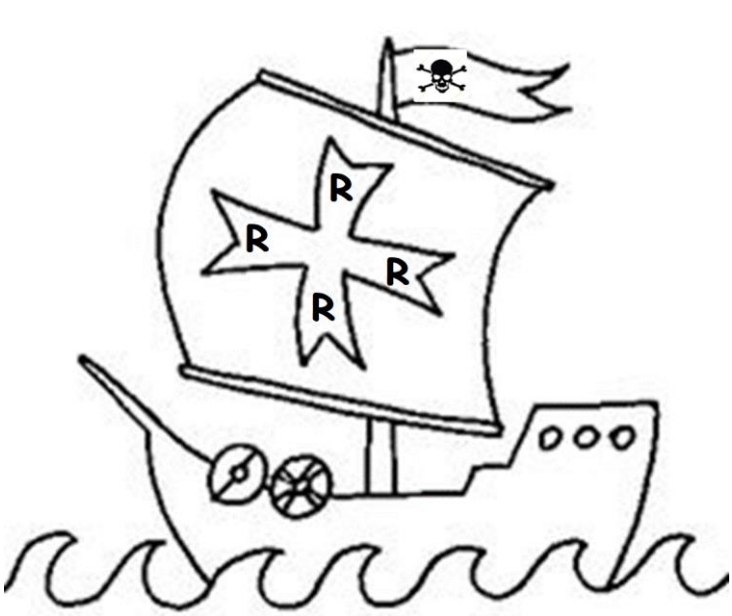
Chapter Title	**Aspects of Research Question Examined**	**Areas of my Professional Practice explored.**	***Narratives of practice*/Examples analysed.**	**Arendtian Concepts Outlined.**
Introduction		All – introduced as distinct '*professional identities'.*	*Meeting of practitioners.* *Data Poem.*	Political Public Realm Freedom
One – What is 'active citizenship'?	What is meant by 'active citizenship' within the civic republican tradition?	Citizenship Teacher (Secondary School)	*Y7 Litter Picking* *Y9 Uniform Campaigns*	Plurality
Two – Storytelling with Hannah Arendt: a voice from somewhere.	How can one best examine this conceptualisation of 'active citizenship'?	The author as Researcher.	*Author's Schooldays* *Story of Jim.*	Storytelling as an Arendtian methodology.
Three – Putting the Action into Active Citizenship	What distinguishes this understanding of 'active citizenship'?	Adult Educator (WEA)	*WEA Adult courses on EU membership.*	Action Natality Power
Four – To think what we are doing.	What is the role of reflection and reflexivity in education for 'active citizenship'?	Examiner for A level Citizenship and Extended Projects.	*The Choir – an EPQ project.* Aliens in Armagh.	Thinking Judgement
Five – On becoming a question to one's self.	What does Arendt's concept of '*Amor Mundi*' mean in educational practice?	Psychology Teacher (including mental health themed courses for adults)	*Bridget* WEA Mental health courses for adults.	*Amor Mundi* Love of the World
Conclusion – For Love of the World		All – reviewed	Climate Strikes.	

Chapter One

What is 'active citizenship'?

1.0.1 Introducing the 'Citizen-Ship'.

This example from my professional practice as a Citizenship Teacher is used to illustrate the diffent emphasis placed on different aspects of Citizenship Education. These are mapped across political ideologies and diverse interpretations of 'active citizenship'.



[Fig 1] – *Representation of the image used to introduce the Citizen-Ship. It varied somewhat according to age group, generally with some matchstick citizens on board, some of them would be jumping or pushed into the sea.*

*For my first class with Year 9 (age 13/14) Citizenship Students, I would usually draw a crude outline of a ship with a cross on the sail, on each axis the letter '**R**'. I then asked what key Citizenship concepts each '**R**' represented. Nearly all students could label two of these, Rights & Responsibilities, familiar from previous years; some got Rules, which was familiar when linked with the 'Rule of Law' which was one of the British Values promoted by the UK government from 2010.*

*The last '**R**' was respect; fewer guessed that, but once introduced, these students were quick to adopt it. They discussed the need for respect between teachers and students, plus the need to respect others' views and differences.*

Inviting students to comment on the ship metaphor generally led to the idea that it is a safe place for some, but not for those lost overboard or unable to swim. This often evoked the plight of migrants making sea crossings to flee conflicts, or of rising sea levels due to climate change.

1.0.2 Introduction to Chapter.

> The fact that there does not exist one, universally held, definition of citizenship has meant that beliefs about what active citizenship entails differ greatly. Active citizenship has therefore received support from people of very diverse backgrounds, each group having a different understanding of the idea based on different criteria. (Lawson 2001: 166)

This chapter aims to understand the diversity of meanings of 'active citizenship' and to contextualise these in terms of political ideologies, and my professional experience as a Citizenship Educator. As the diversity of meanings becomes more apparent, the focus is on which of these meanings best provide material to explore the nature of 'active' within 'active citizenship'. That exploration is then continued in chapter three using Arendt's concept of Action.

This investigation is a reflexive journey through the educational practice of one educator. It is a story with a moral, told by one narrator drawing on a range of professional perspectives and personal experiences. The metaphor for this chapter is very much about preparing to set sail and determining the direction of travel. Having reviewed a range of political interpretations of 'active citizenship', the civic republican vision of Bernard Crick (1996, 2000b, 2001) will be called upon, whilst acknowledging the influence of Hannah Arendt's (1998, 1965, 1972) thinking regarding the nature of political activity, and her conceptualisation of the public realm.

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

This chapter explains how an emphasis on one or other 'R' from the Citizen-Ship illustration above characterises distinct pedagogic orientations toward different understanding of 'active citizenship'. Each of these will be found to have a historical basis in post-enlightenment political ideologies that reflect different assumptions about the nature of being a citizen. These divergent perspectives on citizenship enable us to understand why radically different uses of the same term can co-exist within the field of Citizenship Education.

The description of and reflections on practice, such as the 'Citizen-Ship' above and those in italics below, are analysed to locate these specific examples within the wider Community of Practice and its political context. The emerging conceptualisation will then be used to explore the levels of meaning within the *narratives of practice* provided. This provides the basis for a phenomenological investigation into education for 'active citizenship'. The methodological concerns arising from this are discussed in chapter two.

Initially, I examine two *narratives of practice* from the perspective of my professional identity as Citizenship Teacher, both of which, at the time, I defined and presented as examples of 'active citizenship'.

1.1.1 The Litter Pickers from Year Seven.

[Photo 3] *Are these year sevens Active Citizens?*

It's a cold day in November, and except for a handful of students in the library who did not bring the parent's permission slip, all Year Seven are taking part in a collapsed time-table recycling day. I had a hand in organising this as a consequence of my responsibility for coordinating Active Citizenship across the school, an 11–19 rural comprehensive in SW England. It was my idea originally, arising from a conversation with the newly appointed youth officer for the district council who had a remit to involve young people in community action.

The council provided tabards, litter picking sticks (popular with Y7s), and recycling expertise; the school provided the staff to supervise and specialist subject teachers to run themed workshops. In addition, members of a local group of litter picking volunteers accompanied each tutor group as they set off scouring the town for litter and any discarded materials suitable for recycling. As groups returned to the playing field, they sorted their bounty into recyclable and non-recyclable items, under the strict supervision of council experts. There was intense competition between groups to have the highest ratio of recyclable to non-recyclables. This may have encouraged the collection of some questionable items, including supermarket trolleys, old tyres, and mattresses. I did have to restrain my group from entering back gardens to collect what they claimed were discarded items. I was as enthusiastic as them to make sure we won, which we did mainly due to my decision to make a short detour through the industrial estate.

Meanwhile in the classrooms, technology and art specialists ran workshops to see what could be made with some of the items collected whilst science teachers conducted class experiments to examine their material properties and geographers

ran sessions on carbon footprints. The day was very successful in educational terms and memorable for all those involved. Even those Y7s I encountered later as Y11s could recall some aspects enthusiastically when prompted. The event won the school a national Active Citizenship award and was repeated every year from 2009, until the curriculum reforms under Michael Gove brought it to an end in 2015.

1.1.2 Year Nine Active Citizenship 'uniform' projects.

> *I would like to talk to you about the posters I have found which are campaigning against the uniform changes which have been proposed. I feel that you may be giving students false hopes – the things you are campaigning about are not really negotiable – I also hear about a campaign to let year 9s go into town at lunchtimes.*
>
> Extract of e-mail from senior manager to Citizenship Teacher (2011)

I had invited my Year 9 Citizenship Students to work in groups to identify those things they least liked about school, then on the basis of their research into who decided what, to select one thing their group could have a go at changing. Various issues emerged, from smelly toilets (some success) to the quantity of homework (little impact), but the most popular cause was school uniform. Some groups wanted to abandon it altogether; others to substitute it with something smarter or more fashionable, some just wanted the policy to be enforced consistently and fairly. Campaigning involved putting up posters in strategic locations, distributing questionnaires to students, and collecting signatures in support from peers.

This was a hot topic as the governors were consulting on a new uniform policy that included a vote on three options for students, staff, and parents. The students struggled to understand why staff and parents had a vote at all, given that they did not have to wear the uniform, and most assumed that because the majority of their year group were in favour of abolition that would be the end of the matter. The Head of Year offered to listen to their views and even to represent these to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

On my suggestion, some students e-mailed school governors and the chair came along to address the whole class and explain the background to their decision making. He was quite candid, explaining that if the students wanted a new sports hall, better toilets, and good quality facilities then the main source of additional money was by encouraging parents outside the immediate catchment area to choose this school rather than those in neighbouring towns. Given that the most highly regarded of these had a smarter uniform (i.e., traditional blazers), it was considered that our students should emulate them. My Y9s were not happy with the decision but did appreciate being given a fuller picture of the thinking behind the decision and were impressed that the chair was prepared to address their questions.

These activities came to the attention of the senior member of staff responsible for managing the uniform policy; he was not amused, hence the e-mail featured above. Other members of SMT suggested that the students should campaign on those

issues where their views could actually make a difference, such as which charity the year group adopted. One member of SMT suggested that I was being subversive by attempting to sabotage their efforts.

One outcome was that the students were given permission to use designated wall space in their tutor room for their own posters and notices. I repeated this with Y9 groups over several years and produced a scheme of work which some, but not all, colleagues used with their Y9 groups. In this I was careful to provide guidance on how not to get on the wrong side of senior management and stressed the need to be able to take full responsibility for the students' actions. I submitted this and similar lesson plans together with student work sheets to a teacher's network, where an edited version is still available and used by teachers throughout the UK (Walker 2014).

1.1.3 Commentary on the above.

The litter picking activity demonstrates the dominant model of Citizenship Education in the UK (Jerome 2012b); the comments here are with the benefit of hindsight and the research undertaken. At the time, all the teachers involved, me included, regarded this as 'active citizenship' and were happy to receive a national award. This is uncontested citizenship; it is **apolitical** in that there is no conflict of interests, no divergence of views, and no debate or discussion.

The litter pickers in the photograph are conscripted, uniformed, and equipped to wage war on litter, the adult in the dark tabard ensuring compliance. These not-as-yet-citizens have no part to play in the decision making that affects them. The photograph itself is structured and regimented; the Y7 cohort instructed to charge, sticks waving, toward the photographer, who was conscious of the image desired. The photographer is also author of this text but now more aware of the hegemonic tradition of citizenship within which he was operating.

With the Y9s I was conscious of attempting to present the classroom as a Polis (see 1.2.1 below), to enable some democratic process, some empowerment within the institutional constraints. This contrasted to the Senior Management's strategy on the uniform issue on

which votes were needed to help legitimise a decision which had already been made, and in which they played no part.

Both examples are used below to illustrate aspects of different pedagogic orientations toward Citizenship Education. Because different pedagogic orientations toward Citizenship Education are situated within key theoretical debates regarding the nature of citizenship, these will be explored next before focusing on different interpretations of the notion of 'active' in 'active citizenship'.

1.2.1 Classical Citizenship.

Many accounts of citizenship start in Athens and are linked with stories of Greek democracy (e.g., Crick 1962, 2002) with the Polis as the location of politics. Crick mentions that the citizen's role is very much an active one: as a property owner your responsibility is to participate in the exchange of views, reach judgements regarding the good of the city state and all its inhabitants, including the majority who are not citizens. Hannah Arendt, whilst enthusiastic about Athenian democracy (Arendt 1998, Euben 2006), does recognise that this as the practice in the public realm. Whereas in the private domain the rule is autocratic and patriarchal, with women and children having no rights as citizens. She reminds us that those citizens had freedom to act because of the labour of slaves who provided the economic foundation of the city state (Arendt 1998: 82–88). Citizenship status also provided a means to discriminate between Athenians and those 'uncivilised' barbarians from outside the city walls, or not on the 'Citizen-Ship' pictured above.

Ancient Rome provides a different model of citizenship, where the participatory arrangements for the city state are no longer workable. Citizenship here is a status open to all prepared to subscribe to the values of Roman civilisation. It is less about political participation and more about protection, status, and the opening of opportunities to prosper within the empire. Faulks (2000: 19) called it 'a tool of social control and pacification'. Here, again, citizenship is discriminatory, distinguishing the worthy from the uncivilised barbarians such as the Celts and Franks. Faulks (2000) characterises the Greek model as 'thick' citizenship, requiring a level of political engagement, responsibilities, and obligations to participate. The Roman model he called 'thin' citizenship, with a focus on legal status, rights, and protection. This distinction is widely used by theorists of Citizenship Education to distinguish contemporary approaches to citizenship (e.g., minimal/maximal, Marshall 1950).

From revolutionaries wanting equality and the overthrow of despotic rulers to empire builders seeking to colonise and conquer, these classical models provided inspiration. Post-colonial theorists such as Tully (2008) have argued that it is no surprise that these Western models of citizenship were resisted by many, particularly when they supported a system of global domination by imperial powers.

From these classical models of citizenship arises one of the central themes of this investigation: that of the role of freedom and the place of what Arendt and Crick identified as politics. This contrast between the Athenian emphasis on the protection of freedom, for some at least, and the Roman emphasis on control and stability continues to define the different approaches to education for citizenship explored here. The form of citizenship promoted by Bernard Crick (1962) is essentially the Athenian model, which he identified as

civic republicanism. Educationally this is reflected in an emphasis on the practice of citizenship involving learnt skills with relatively less importance placed upon knowledge of law and politics. Tully (2014) marks this distinction as between citizenship as craft and citizenship as status. The latter, a more legalistic concept; the former, more political. It is with the former that this thesis is concerned.

1.2.2 Citizenship as a contested concept.

Having summarised classical models of citizenship, I now examine contemporary practices in schools. According to the Citizenship Foundation

> Citizenship denotes the formal relationship between a political community (e.g., a nation or city) and its members. This relationship is formal and public. (Citizenship Foundation 2010, Unit1b:1)

This training material and much of the literature on Citizenship Education presents this contract between individual citizen and the state as a given, almost as a gift or privilege, for those who comply with the contractual requirements. In school textbooks (e.g., Campbell & Patrick 2009, Watts 2009), citizenship rights are often presented as the fruits of meeting citizenship responsibilities. There is a clear sense of belonging to a privileged group, to which those who do not belong would aspire. The UK citizenship tests have been a prime example. There is little acknowledgement that this status is itself the result of a historical process, a struggle which continues today, arguably not just in some other corners of the world but also in the self-styled 'mature' democracies.

I had accepted this uncritically at the time, largely unaware of the contested status of the term. Likewise, I assumed that active global citizenship was a worthwhile educational

outcome without critically examining what 'active' involved and 'global' implied. As a Citizenship Educator in schools, I rarely had time to stop to ask what set of values I had unwittingly signed up to in accepting hegemonic interpretations of concepts, which political theorists would regard as open to debate and dissent.

The textbook definitions distort the current global situation by implying that what we have is an ideal present without a historical past. James Tully (2016), among others (Apple 2005, Addi & Carr 2013), argues that this view of the relationship between individual and state is one from a privileged Euro-centric Western tradition, which tends to become the standard from which to judge the rest of the world and a lens on history which sees the present as the culmination of past acts.

This study does not dispute that Citizenship Education is a normative endeavour. What is challenged here is the assumption that one model of citizenship is universally superior to others and applicable in all circumstances. I would argue now that Citizenship Educators have a responsibility to consider and encompass in their teaching a wider range of perspectives on the nature of citizenship than just the dominant model. However, I do appreciate that this demands a reflexive stance on the part of practitioners: to look beyond the narrow lens of hegemonic interpretations of an uncritically received vision of reality. I can confirm from my own experience that this is an unsettling process.

1.2.3 On Active Citizenship & 'active citizenship' – a note on Capitalisation.

When most secondary school students and teachers use the term Citizenship, they are referring to it as a school subject. To avoid confusion, I follow the convention introduced by

Leighton (2012) of referring to the school subject as a proper noun (uppercase C) and the legal status in lower case (unless of course it starts a sentence).

Within the Community of Practice (Wenger 1998) of Citizenship Educators in the UK, Active Citizenship has a specific meaning referring to the more practical aspects of the Citizenship Course itself. Within the current (2021) GCSE specification, for example, 15% of the marks are awarded for Active Citizenship. The implicit assumption is that Active Citizenship is the applied or practical aspect of the subject. This educational use rests heavily on Deweyan interpretations of experiential learning (Dewey 1910) and Kolb's (1998) learning cycle (explored further in chapter four).

In this thesis I extend Leighton's convention to use the capitalised term Active Citizenship for this specific educational usage and the lower-case version for more generic applications. Although the former could be regarded as preparation for the latter, the relationship between these two is far from simple as this investigation demonstrates. One effect of this approach is to enable a discussion of citizenship learning devoid of a political dimension. This conflation of meaning has had a detrimental effect on any debate regarding the political nature of Citizenship Education, often resulting in an argument about the allocation of marks for Active Citizenship without any consensus on what 'active citizenship' itself involves. To recognise the contested status of the generic term, it is presented in inverted commas throughout this thesis.

Those educational activities given the Active Citizenship label vary hugely, including forms of volunteering such as participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This is illustrated

by the following extract from the UK Government's response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement.

> Schools can also build on their citizenship provision through extra-curricular activity, including participating in programmes such as the **Cadet Expansion Programme** which enables young people to develop key skills such as responsibility, teamwork, self-reliance and a sense of service to others. […] This is a good example of **active citizenship** taking place. (House of Lords, June 2018: 12)

A simple hierarchy was widely accepted among Citizenship Educations in the UK (Mitchel 2005): that of an *informed citizen* (finding out about political parties for example) becoming a *participating citizen* (e.g., voting for or even joining a party) to becoming an *active citizen* (e.g., standing for election). What I had not fully appreciated, as one of those educators, was that this was only one perspective: that of the dominant model of liberal democracy where citizens as individuals became progressively more active as they exercised their rights.

For some practitioners, not to mention government ministers, even this interpretation was a little too political; they took 'active citizenship' to mean being a good citizen, on their terms. By the time the 'new' GCSE qualification had emerged from the curriculum reforms of 2016, 'active citizenship' had become re-defined as volunteering in the new edition of the GCSE textbook (Mitchel 2016).

1.2.4 Active Citizenship in the UK curriculum.

> We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves. (Crick 1998: 3)

Investigating 'active citizenship': a journey toward the political heart of education in the company of Hannah Arendt.

The oft quoted 'culture change' passage from the Crick report (1998) expresses something of the radical potential of the reform of the National Curriculum in England. This was introduced by Tony Blair's Secretary of Education, David Blunkett, in 2001, following on from the Crick (1999) report. Many critics including Leighton (2012) and Johnson & Morris (2010) claim that Crick underestimated the radical challenge implied by this passage. It certainly seemed lost on those civil servants within the Department of Education tasked with introducing the legislation which brought compulsory Citizenship Education into being in England.

Ball & Bowe (1992) presented a classic analysis of the relationship between policy and practice, which is very instructive in the case of the implementation of the 2001 Act following from the Crick report. They show how, as policy trickles down toward the classroom, interpretation at various levels conspires to make it fit existing practices and modes of thought. Many (including Osler 2000, Menter & Walker 2000, Pykett 2007) have commented on the way in which this reform was watered down and used to justify what schools did, or wanted to do, anyway. In most cases, it was a more non-contentious interpretation that was adopted. In this way, the political implications of Crick's vision were largely lost in the process of implementation. In retrospect, it seems naive to believe that the radical potential of Crick's vision could be imposed by top-down policy changes; however, this was certainly my view at the time as a Citizenship Coordinator in school.

My own journey was one of increasing disillusionment with Citizenship Education. Any signs of a political culture change seemed far from the practice encountered. I joined others (Lawson 2001, Faulks 2005, Leighton 2006) in agreeing that the vision which heralded the inclusion of Citizenship as a subject in the National Curriculum in England was flawed.

Mainly because subsequent governments, and school leaders, were able to undermine the transformative potential of this reform, due, at least in part, to a lack of conceptual clarity around the meaning of the term 'active citizenship'.

Crick (2000) himself originally used the term *political literacy* to describe "a compound of knowledge, skills and attitudes" including a basic "practical understanding of concepts drawn from everyday life and language" (61). In his later writing, he also uses the term 'active citizenship' and active citizens to describe the cultural and individual outcomes of such literacy (Crick & Lockyer 2010).

Jessica Pykett (2007) applies a Foucauldian analysis to the work of Crick's committee to regard it as a governmental technology which makes citizens "governable, but it does not make them unproblematically governed in ways that they do not realise" (313). She presents that as part of the shift from government to governance identified by Ball (2013), which "leaves central government less accountable but more in control" (Pykett 2007: 307). Her account shows how the outcome of the report was controlled by Crick with a clear agenda agreed with the Minister responsible, David Blunkett. Most members did not wish to rock the boat, or as one member put it, "if they hadn't operated within the political realities, then it might not have got anywhere" (314).

Within this account, however, she also draws on Derrida's (1992) concept of the "conditions of possibility" (41), which exist within such policies of governance. She also cites Hannah Arendt to suggest that political freedom exists not in the ability to make individual choices but in relation to others to bring something new into a world held in common (Pykett 2007:

302). This theme of renewal is a central concern of this thesis. Arendt's term was '**natality**', which is explored more fully in chapter three.

The problem here is that most Citizenship Education functions as a mode of social control, producing citizens which serve the reproduction rather than renewal of social structures. Pykett's (2007) argument points to the paradox that this is not the complete control of a totalitarian state, it comes at the expense of creating more awareness of governance and of potentially creating scope for agency which was previously latent. For Arendt (1968b), formal education can pose a threat to the precious freedom inherent in childhood, whilst for others, myself included, the priority is to encourage and create conditions in which this element of freedom can become more apparent. This discussion will be picked up in chapter three.

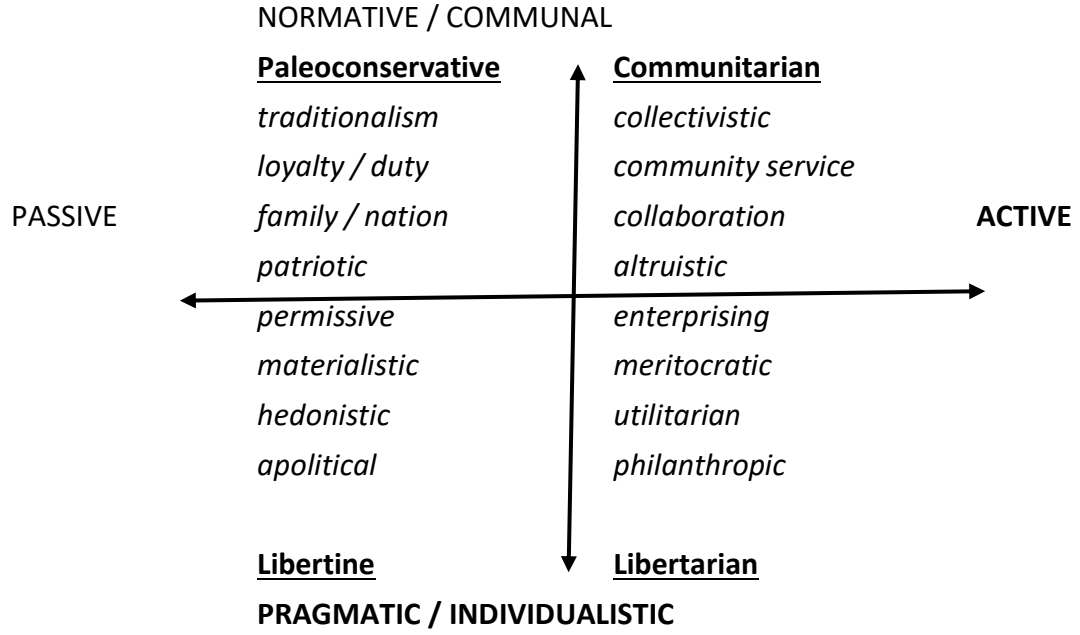
1.3.0 Political Ideologies and educational orientations toward Citizenship Education.

Accounts of the Greek and Roman versions of citizenship were available to the classically educated elites of the Western world. These ideas reappear in the writings, art, and architecture of the enlightenment. The differences of emphasis from diverse enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, Hobbes, and J S Mill came to colour the range of political philosophies that inform the modern world, each with differing models of citizenship. These are ideal types, maps to guide and interpret a messy reality.

The term 'orientation' is used here to signify the approach of educators and the wider educational culture in which they operate. Citizenship orientations, therefore, implies more than a model of different types of citizenship; it describes educators' positionalities. This

relates to wider political ideologies and to the language used within each. It also reflects the emphasis placed on the different '**R**'s in the Citizen-Ship which started this chapter. The term political ideology is used here to mean "frameworks of thinking and calculation about the world—the 'ideas' that people use to figure out how the social world works, what their place is in it, and what they ought to do" (Hall 1986: 97).

Arthur and Davison (2000) argued that versions of citizenship can be characterised along two linear continuums. Firstly, the communal/individualistic axis, which represents the extent to which the focus is on what citizens can do for the groups to which they identify, or on what citizenship can do for the individual citizen. This broadly corresponds to the Rights – Responsibilities axis on the sail of the Citizen-Ship. Secondly, an active/passive dimension relates to the maximal/minimal (Maxwell 1950) and thick/thin (Faulks 2000) concepts mentioned in 1.2.1 above.



[Fig 2] *adapted from Arthur & Davison's (2000: 15) Versions of Citizenship.*

This conceptual dichotomy has been influential in the literature of Citizenship Education (Jerome 2012). I have argued elsewhere (Walker 2014) that it lacks a dimension of criticality; it also lacks a historical perspective. Another limitation is that for each type of citizenship, citizens can be active or passive depending on the extent of their participation, so that each one could use the term active citizen to mean quite different things. The characteristics of the ideal citizen would be different for each type of citizenship, and different versions of citizenship would place different demands on an educational system. Below I have adapted that to reflect historical political ideologies more closely.

1.3.1 The Liberal orientation toward Education for Citizenship.

Arguably, the most influential political ideology regarding modern ideas on citizenship is that of liberalism. Here the rights (the first '**R**' from the Citizen-Ship) associated with citizenship are central, and the relationship with the state is one that needs legal institutions to protect the citizen. The notion of the individual and their freedom from coercion and liberty to act independently is central to this system of thinking. Liberal democracy presents a relationship between individual and state in which the liberty of the individual is paramount; the state's role being the protection of that individual freedom (Jerome 2012). It is closely linked with the progress of capitalism as a system of free trade between individuals in which the right to trade freely needs to be fiercely protected by law supported by the power of the state and, if necessary, forcibly imposed on others by processes of colonialisation and later globalisation (Tully 2014).

Philosophically, this is reflected in the notion of the transcendent self, possessor of rationality, able to identify with the experience of self-hood as indivisible and the source of individuality. Politically, this gives a central role to the individual citizen and a central role for education in the creation of individuals capable of such participation. Education for participation as a citizen of a liberal democracy is a broad-based liberal education, the cultivation of a set of values regarding reason, rationality, plurality, and diversity. Specific Citizenship Education is not essential, as education itself is tasked with creating well rounded citizens.

Active citizens, in this tradition, are these educated individuals able to converse rationally with others, to appreciate and tolerate divergent views, provided that they do not threaten the freedom of others to hold opposing views. The liberal orientation creates active citizens with an awareness of human rights, their own and others. 'Active citizenship' here involves activities which exercise these rights or campaigns for the rights of others. Examples could include Amnesty International groups within schools, or campaigns regarding gender equality and sexual orientation.

Callan (1997) acknowledges the tensions between the demands of modern global capitalism and the emergence or maintenance of liberal democracies. He comments that:

> The seeming disconnection between the two in many cases should make us worry that a real democratic education might do no more than prepare children for a citizenship that will not be theirs to practise when they become adults. (222)

The liberal tradition is integral to the Western world view, to the extent that the term democracy itself is often used to mean liberal or representative democracy, so contributing to a hegemony which makes alternative representations more difficult to articulate. This is

illustrated in the way in which the Year 9 uniform debate was managed by senior management. It was claimed as a democratic process in that all those involved had a right to vote, even though the options available and extent of the franchise was carefully managed. In contrast, the Year 7 litter pickers had limited rights only in that their parents could choose for them to opt out of the activity. Not much of a choice as the alternative was to spend the day in the library supervised by a Teaching Assistant!

1.3.2 The Conservative orientation in relation to Education for Citizenship.

The conservative political tradition has been viewed as a very English response to the French Revolution and later to cold war communism (Heywood 2012). Arthur and Davidson (2002) characterised this as paleo-conservative to distinguish from the neo-cons of the new right which have embraced many of the values of classical liberalism in the form of economic neo-liberalism.

As Heywood (2012) points out, despite claims of pragmatism and being non-ideological, this conservatism has a clear set of core beliefs which are implicitly ideological. One is a sense of rightful inheritance of the right to rule and, arguably, a rather patronising approach to the ruled. Crick (2002) suggests this tradition still prefers to think of citizens as subjects whose main duty is to serve; he comments (1967) that subjects obey laws, but citizens help make them. In this tradition, citizenship was initially resisted as a foreign invention and is still regarded as something for foreigners who wish to settle over here (Crick 2002).

There is a long history of civic service and philanthropy linked with this tradition, of which the Big Society (Cameron 2010) and the NCS (National Citizen Service) are recent examples.

Service is a central theme, where social rather than political forms of 'active citizenship' prevail. Active citizens here are good citizens (Crick 2002) who help maintain the status quo, uncritically accepting their responsibilities, which reflect the priorities of those with power. What distinguishes manifestations of this form of 'active citizenship' is an ethic of duty, (rather than one of justice) requiring those more privileged to provide support for those less fortunate than themselves, without directly challenging the inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

The most pertinent '**R**' here is the 'Rule of Law', which is one of the 'British Values' introduced into the National Curriculum in England by the Conservative-led coalition government (2010–15) of David Cameron. Rules here are constructed by others, but through education the wisdom or at least the necessity of these rules would come to be appreciated.

The litter picking activity can be located within this tradition, although it would be regarded as an extracurricular activity. As the educational reforms introduced by this government promoted academy schools with a more academic focus, the activity ceased to take up curriculum time and became something students could (but more often didn't) do after school.

1.3.3 The Communitarian orientation toward Citizenship Education.

Communitarian models express a relationship where the state is regarded as having the potential to enhance the life of ordinary citizens rather than as the necessary evil found in both the previous orientations. This is integral to the social democratic political ideology in

which the freedoms of the market need to be moderated to enable its benefits to be more widely shared. The 'R' here is for responsibilities, which attempts to balance the liberal emphasis on individual rights and liberties with a commitment to community cohesion (Peterson 2011).

There is a clear role for the state in promoting this vision of participation, so some form of explicit Citizenship Education is a necessity in a healthy democracy, particularly a multicultural one. It is no accident that it was a Labour government that introduced Citizenship as a compulsory subject in England and Wales in 2001.

The fact that the litter picking activity took place within school time but was linked with the local council's commitment to community involvement is a recognition of the influence of the communitarian model at the time. 'Active citizenship' for this orientation involves community action and promotes community cohesion. As such, it can co-exist with the volunteerism of the National Citizen Service (NCS) as both conservative and communitarian orientations can find common ground in activities which bring communities together under the banner of community cohesion and assimilation.

Lee Jerome (2012) concluded from his ethnographic research, which listened to the voices of teachers and students across three diverse schools in England, that there is an

> apparent receptiveness of teachers and young people to a broadly communitarian model, which emphasises good behaviour, moral responsibility and helping others. (229)

I would concur with this from my own experience of teaching the subject and of visiting schools to undertake CPD work with teachers. This is closer to a non-contentious, apolitical model of a conventionally good citizen than to Crick's original vision of a critical, active one.

1.3.4 The radical potential of Civic Republicanism.

Each of these three models of Citizenship above sees it as something given, by birth, right, or contract, by the powerful to the relatively powerless. Each sees 'active citizenship' as something done to fully inhabit a role gifted by others; a means to meet the responsibilities endowed on the citizen as a condition of membership. It is a privilege which comes packaged with the duties that membership entails. A more critical perspective (e.g., Adbi & Carr 2013) suggests that these dominant models of citizenship rather twist history on its head. They remind us that the citizens of Athens had first to banish the despots who ruled the city before them. Likewise, King John did not sign the Magna Carta because of his enlightened attitude to civil liberties but because the barons had him over a barrel. It was revolutions in North America and France that created those citizens of the republic, not the beneficence of colonial rule or the first or second estates. This view suggests that citizens create themselves through their actions rather than wait for the status to be granted.

With its classical roots, the enlightenment revival, as well as more modern interpretations, civic republicanism is something of a broad church (Peterson 2011). In characterising this orientation as radical, here I am focusing on its more critical interpretation, one which challenges the dominant educational culture and seeks to bring about fundamental change.

The more conservative, nationalist, US version of civic republicanism described by Abowitz and Harnish (2006) was itself once radical at the time of the American Revolution.

Leighton (2012) draws on this radical tradition by taking the Postman and Weingartner (1969) classic 'Teaching as a subversive activity' and adapting its principles to teaching Citizenship. This is the approach that first appealed to me, and Leighton's (2006) article on Citizenship Teaching as a subversive activity was instrumental in my shift of subject emphasis from Psychology. In the context of Citizenship Education in the UK, I am using the term 'radical' to describe the specific political traditional of civic republicanism most clearly identified with Bernard Crick in the UK, and Hannah Arendt in the US. This is reflected in the more radical pedagogy promoted by Leighton and others mentioned above. To illustrate this, I return to the Citizen-Ship and the fourth '**R'**, for respect.

Respect did not take much explaining to my teenage Citizenship Students; they recognised that, unlike the rules which were imposed from outside, respect was something within their remit. Respect had to be earned by teachers; it was something teachers did not have to treat them with, but some did and that was respected. Respect then is active; compliance, passive. Respect involves the exercise of agency. It is not a right, nor a responsibility; it is a freedom that these proto-citizens have. The imbalance of power relations is significant but under-remarked in the other models of citizenship. A more radical approach recognises it more explicitly. A key aspect of this thesis will involve applying Arendt's (1954a) thinking on the nature of freedom and power to the context of education for 'active citizenship'.

I am suggesting that whereas the other orientations refer to 'active citizenship' as a degree of participation, the use of the term 'active citizenship' within a radical civic republican

approach implies a qualitatively different type of political activity. Like the notion of respect as understood by my students, it is bottom up, arising from the relatively powerless, rather than top down, imposed by those with more power. This resonates with James Tully's (2008) notion of civic citizenship, which in turn draws on Arendt's (1958) concept of Action, which is explained fully in chapter three.

Putting all the above together creates a synthesis of concepts which is used as a guide in the chapters that follow. Like all maps it can help to avoid unnecessary detours, but in its oversimplification and selectivity, it may also obscure important features that a more phenomenological approach would reveal.

Orientations toward citizenship	**Citizen-Ship 'R's**	**Arthur & Davidson**	**Examples of Active Citizenship**
Liberal/ humanist	**R**IGHTS	Libertarianism	Identity politics
Conservative	**R**ULES	Paleo – conservatism	Philanthropic Volunteerism
Communitarian	**R**ESPONSIBILITIES	Communitarian	Community Action
Radical/civic republicanism	**R**ESPECT	(Libertine)	Deliberative Democracy

[Fig 3] *A synthesis of orientations to 'active citizenship'.*

1.4.0 Conclusion and implications for this research.

From the previous section it is clear that the term 'active citizenship' can be used by liberals, communitarians, radicals, and even conservatives, all with quite diverse meanings. All can

agree that it's a worthwhile activity without having to acknowledge the underlying different ideologies and pedagogic implications.

Below I identify those features of 'active citizenship' within the civic republican tradition that distinguish it from other interpretations. I am not claiming this as the only legitimate meaning of the term, but I am arguing, with Peterson (2011), that this orientation is the one with the most to gain, and consequently the most to lose, from its association with education. Below I summarise the main features that distinguish it from other usage of the term and illustrate these with examples.

- **The potential for renewal.** It is more than informed action; it is creative and aims to bring into being something new, something which did not exist before. This potential Hannah Arendt called Natality, the pedagogic implications of which are explored in chapter three.
- **It has implicit criticality.** The first three orientations each provide different visions of the ideal citizen, but what they hold in common is that an active citizen is also a good citizen. Here 'good' is open to debate; the dominant system of values is open to critical examination.

For the litter pickers the norms were very explicit, good citizens pick up litter, and are already imposed upon the situation by those in authority. There was no scope for critical thinking about power and responsibilities here. However, for the Y9s there was more scope; although the no-uniform option was not negotiable for the Senior Management Team, it was open for debate by the students. In the views of some on the SMT, these active citizens were not being good citizens of the school community, nor was their teacher.

- **It is relational rather than individualising.** The educational outcome of the first three orientations is a good citizen, equipped to participate in society, even if those requirements differ according to the dominant culture. In the republican tradition, the outcome is not an individual citizen but rather a quality of the citizenry, something which can only be recognised in relationship to others.

For example, the fact that the chair of Governors was prepared to address the Y9s changed the nature of this relationship; it also influenced the nature of their relationship with the Head of Year.

- **The political element is central.** This goes to the heart of Crick's vision in that it puts the political back into citizenship. It recognises a plurality of views and the potential for conflict that this entails. Both Crick (2001) and Arendt (1970) share this classical conception of politics as arising from the need to find a sustainable way to manage conflict in complex societies, in which more than one version of the good life can co-exist.

The litter-pickers were not knowingly engaged in an activity with any political dimension. However worthwhile, in Crick's terms, it was not education for democratic citizenship. In contrast, the Y9s soon found that their activities had a political dimension when they attracted the attention of senior management.

- **It involves active deliberation not just compliance.** In the first three orientations, 'action' is essentially behavioural**,** that is, it involves doing something. For the republican tradition, that activity is citizenship itself, it is what it means to be a citizen. The 'action' may involve critical thinking; an internal debate, or strong belief,

which may result in a refusal to act just as much as a decision to do so. Citizenship here involves the active engagement of a self-conscious actor.

The Y9s were involved in deliberation. Together they had to decide on a topic, and having done so, to consider what action to take. Many groups used their break or lunch 'free' time to campaign on their issue. Y7s picked up the litter as required, and although some did so with more enthusiasm than others, this was probably because of competition between tutor groups rather than any long-term change in their beliefs regarding the desirability of keeping their town clean.

- **A position needs to be taken.** The deliberation leads to a decision been taken by those involved. In Arendt's terms (developed in chapter four), thinking leads to judgement.

The litter picking activity presents citizenship as of the adult world, something for the future for which one needs to be trained. It is an example of developing good citizens, of socialisation. In Crick's terms, because there is no political literacy involved, it's not citizenship at all let alone 'active citizenship'. At no point were these Y7s treated as citizens; they were clearly subjects, subject to the control of the staff who took responsibility for them. With Y9 I was still the responsible adult, but they were treated as if they were citizens, or proto-citizens at least, in that they were required to take some decisions. They made choices about the action they took and took, at least some, responsibility for the outcomes. They found themselves taking a position on an issue on which they previously may not have recognised any degree of agency existed, and in so doing became more aware

of the potential for freedom which Arendt regarded as the central theme of politics. This is a first step toward the political heart of education.

Chapter Two:

Storytelling with Hannah Arendt: a voice from somewhere.

[Photo 4] *My Dad – circa 1933*

> My assumption is that thought itself arises out of incidents of living experience and must remain bound to them as the only guideposts by which to take its bearings. (Arendt 1968c: 14)
>
> I could no longer write in science's omniscient 'voice from nowhere' I was mute, but I knew I was 'somewhere'. (Richardson 1997: 3)

2.0.1 Introduction.

> By not including ourselves in the reflection, we pursue only a partial reflection, and our question becomes disembodied; it attempts to express, in the words of Thomas Nagel, 'a view from nowhere'. (Varela et al 1991: 27)

This chapter examines further my interpretation of the storying methodology, introduced in section 0.2.2, which Clough (2002: 6) described as a "personal, moral and ethical response

to research experiences" constructed from his "lived experience in educational settings" (14). The chapter begins by contrasting a 'raw' narrative passage of personal reflective writing with a 'story' which has been crafted to provoke questions about the functions of education. The different elements of this method are examined, and some of the implications discussed, with reference to Arendt's own storying methodology. Finally, the ontological assumptions, epistemological basis, and other methodological issues are examined, informed by the structure outlined by Crotty (1998).

Chapter one examined different interpretations of 'active citizenship' and the role for education that arose from them. The perspective of civic republicanism, as promoted by Crick (1962, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001), and Arendt (1954, 1958, 1965, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1998, 2005, 2018), was identified as most useful for examining the challenge to educators posed by our current predicament. To discover the 'political heart' of any educational practice, from this perspective, requires exemplification from practitioners' experience. These examples are from the analysis of the *narratives of practice* which arise from the author's 'professional identities' outlined in the introduction. These provide an insight into the life history that set me on this inquiry. In this chapter, I show how this positions me within the research and influences the methodology.

This research aims to explore the 'incidents of living experience', mentioned by Arendt above, by using a narrative process of creative reconstruction to draw attention to aspects of my experience as an educator which may not otherwise be apparent. As explained here and in the introduction, this will require a phenomenological methodology. As Max Van Manen (1990) comments, phenomenological research is

> always a project of someone: a real person, who in the context of particular individual, social, and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence. (31)

The real person involved here is me and I am setting out to make sense of my lived experience as an educator. However, as the 'professional identities' who made an appearance in the introduction testify, that 'real person' sees the world from a range of different perspectives, which are positioned by the 'social and historical life circumstances' mentioned by Van Manen above.

As the research journey progressed, my sense of self became more difficult to discern. Through my enquiry, the positions from where I stood to view events seemed to shift beneath me. As storyteller, I adopted the position of researcher to help identify the emergent meaning and moral purpose of each story. Where I come from positions my thinking and structures the experiences on which I can reflect. However unique the journey, my experience in a variety of educational settings and my research in the field suggest that these concerns about education and citizenship are widely shared. My aim is to offer writing which resonates, in the terms of Laurel Richardson's criteria (Richardson & St Pierre 2005), with the experiences of others and encourage them to recognise the 'political heart' of their own practice.

As Seyla Benhabib (1990) comments in relation to Arendt's practice of story-telling:

> Actions, unlike things and natural objects, only live in the narratives of those who perform them and the narratives of those who under-stand, interpret, and recall them. This narrative structure of action also determines the identity of the self. The human self, as opposed to things and objects, cannot be identified in terms of what it is, but only by who one is. The self is the protagonist of a story we tell, but not necessarily its author or producer. (Benhabib 1990: 187)

Hannah Arendt (1960: 11) dismissively referred to her "old fashioned storytelling", but as the next sections set out to show, it was at the heart of her methodology. Arendt's storytelling resonated with my own approach. I adopted and adapted her methods because they addressed my concerns.

2.0.2 Arendt as a storyteller.

> Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it. (Arendt 1979: xx)

It is relevant to consider where my travelling companion on this journey of investigation comes from. In 1933 Hannah Arendt was arrested by the Gestapo, rightly suspected of collecting evidence of anti-Semitism for a Zionist group. She escaped to Paris and later New York. It was a combination of luck and her own clarity of thought that saved her from the fate of so many of her Jewish and Communist friends and colleagues. It was this experience of world events that set her on a journey of inquiry into how such events were possible, and how they could be prevented, which dominated her life and thinking. The stink of the gas chambers is ever present in her work; it positions her thinking and gives it a 'worldly' dimension.

Arendt (1964) referred to herself as a thinker who wanted "to look at politics […] with eyes unclouded by philosophy" (5). She claimed that since Plato "there is a vital tension between philosophy and politics. That is between man as a thinking being and man as an acting being" (4). Arendt's world was never the same after the rise of National Socialism and her teacher, mentor, and lover Martin Heidegger's support for it. Arendt's response was a philosophical re-interpretation of the public, political world which involved a re-storying of

events. Benhabib (1990) called these 'redemptive narratives' as they attempted to reclaim memories that, when crafted as stories, had the power to reinvigorate the present.

In *'The Origins of Totalitarianism'* (1958), Arendt told a series of stories to draw out the lessons of the holocaust, not as a historical account or causal analysis but as a moral tale, "redeeming the defeated and the vanquished by more their failed hopes, their untrodden paths and unfulfilled dreams" (Benhabib 1990: 196). In telling the story of Adolf Eichmann, Arendt (1963) used the notoriety of an individual life to provoke thought and sow seeds of doubt in many minds about complicity in evil. Her writing provoked claims that she distorted the 'true events' and even led to death threats being made against her.

The Human Condition (1954b) tells a complex story of what it means to be human in the modern world. *Men in Dark Times* (1993) is not a collection of biographies, but rather it tells the story of different lived experiences to redeem and revive that which Arendt feared would be lost. In each case, the aim is to provoke the reader to see different aspects of the world and to extend their thinking. This involved unsettling existing modes of thought to make room for novel interpretations. This Arendt referred to as 'thinking without a banister' (Arendt 2018).

However challenging Arendt's stories appear, they are never far away from the real events which impacted upon her heart and mind, from the trial of Adolf Eichmann (she was nearly one of his victims) to the threat of nuclear war. Although Arendt appealed to history and long dead thinkers, the need was always urgent and arose from her refusal to take what Thomas Nagel (1986) called "the view from nowhere". In this way, her thinking is embedded

in the world and embodied in her experience of it. My research aims to do the same for 'active citizenship'.

Arendt's reference to her "old fashioned storytelling" (1960: 11) is, as Lisa Ditch (1993) comments, unhelpful for the modern reader looking for methodological insight. However, it does hint at the way in which stories have been used to convey and construct meaning in the world for millennia, as well as to the use of collective memory and past experience to inform and illuminate the present. Just as Arendt's stories arose in response to the times in which she lived, my concerns also reflect the need to develop an educational system that can respond to the challenges of our times, which arguably provide an existential crisis as great as that encountered in Arendt's lifetime.

2.1.1 Schooldays 1.

The photograph of my father at the beginning of this chapter offers an insight into my epistemological concerns. For him, knowledge needed application for it to have legitimacy, its value determined by pragmatism. He was the middle son in an aspirational working-class family. His own father was a skilled worker in a sawmill, whose oldest son became a teacher; the youngest, a bank manager. The violin is as a signifier of cultural aspiration, not an interest my father maintained. His night school education in draughtsmanship contrasted with my mother's more academic grammar school education, where knowledge counted as currency in aspirational terms. My dual careers in business and teaching reflect this divide and colour my attitudes toward education and academia as illustrated in the extracts below.

My mum went to grammar school; my dad did not.

My mum encouraged my reading; my dad tried to show me how to put up shelves.

Without my mum's influence, you would not be reading this. I still can't get the shelves straight.

I did not go to a grammar school. At my school you could study home electronics and car mechanics, but I had to do Chemistry and Physics because I did well in some test. I can change a fuse but can't fix my car.

My dad came from a family of carpenters, but I preferred growing things. I liked horticulture and the damp warmth of a greenhouse on a cold day. Geography was all slides and dictation. We did the Great Lakes. I know they are in Canada; so what, who cares?

Spelling was a mystery; you could not work out the answer like Maths. They did not put me in for the written English exam, but I passed the oral. Dyslexia had not been invented then.

Mr Thomas laughed when my mum said she thought I could go to university, not to her face but later, in the corridor. He said no-one from this school went to university. I thought, 'you bastard, I will show you'. I still am.

This narrative passage has not yet become crafted as a story; it is a piece of deliberately reflective writing, which appeared in the Reflective Journal of my PGCE, in response to an instruction to write about our experiences of education. This evokes my ongoing conflicted relationship with education and academia. As I struggle to write this thesis, I find myself faced with the challenge of negotiating that divide between thought and action, which was a central concern of Arendt. This narrative personalises the debate about the functions of formal education, and hints at my conflicted position. It touches on issues of social mobility and motivation but also evokes difficult memories and relationships in a way that others might relate to. Mr Thomas was a Maths teacher; his name still has a bitter taste. As an adult education tutor, I have come across many similar accounts; as a secondary school teacher, I have encountered many like Mr Thomas.

This is an account of identity formation. It tries to make sense of who I was at the time and offer an explanation to myself as to why I was writing it. Looking back on it now (30 years

on), it reflects an unresolved conflict that still rages. I selected it to appear here not only because it personalises the epistemological divide introduced above. It also illustrates how 'reflection' as a solitary thinking process, from a personal perspective, tends to consolidate a particular form of identification. A greater degree of reflexivity, using multiple perspectives from different 'identities', can problematise the process, and it is a feature of the storying method used here. This is intended to unsettle identifications and raise fundamental questions, by taking reflections on experience and crafting them into 'stories', that can be shared with others. The following is an example of this process.

2.1.2 Schooldays 2.

Jim was a student who sticks in my memory. He was not disruptive but rarely completed a written task unless someone (a teacher or TA) was actually standing over him. When that someone was me, he delighted in talking about his weekend, about how his father had let him use his tools or operate a particular piece of machinery. This was when he was at his most animated; school seemed just an interruption of the weekend.

I met Jim's father once, on a work experience visit. He ran a successful contracting business. He did seem to have a way of inspiring some of those 'difficult to engage' students. I noted that when it came to the paperwork, he just provided a signature and passed the forms on to his secretary to complete. He could have been functionally illiterate, perhaps he was just too busy, but then he liked to chat.

Jim won a regional and then national competition for his metalwork creations, on the back of which he was offered funding to train as a blacksmith. The school claimed this as a success story. I wondered to what extent it was Jim's capacity to ignore the sense of failure that went with his 'special needs' status. He identified himself, like many students, as 'not academic'; in the language of the staffroom this translated as not 'bright'. For me he was a beacon of light, standing out from an educational culture which valued the manipulation of words and numbers over the capacity to engage creatively with the world outside the classroom.

That school is now an academy and by implication no place for those non-academics, an alien place for those who shine at woodwork or making spaghetti bolognese. Just as I found academia, the world of university, and journal articles to be a place of alienation from part of myself. A place where thinking has become disembodied from experience, where research seems to take one away from, rather than toward, a common shared reality.

The theme, in the account above, of privileging one form of learning and epistemology over another remains the same, but in contrast to the first passage, this is a crafted story that attempts to communicate. It is based on my recollections of more than one student, none of whom were called Jim. In this sense it is a fabrication, but one woven together into a narrative to create a 'fabric' recognisable to other educators. A device used by Clough (2002) among others.

The story takes a position: the narrator is on Jim's side; the anger is discernible, the frustration barely hidden. I have told it as part of my CPD work with other teachers, where many have revealed similar examples. Sometimes it provoked more defensive reactions, often picking up on the importance of basic literacy for all career paths. In most cases, it provoked debates about the function of education, often with implicit political themes. I have adapted the story for parents, students, even my own grandchildren. The version here has been edited to reflect my ambiguous relationship with my role as a researcher looking at my experience as an educator. Including this as a storied reflection brings it into a public space where it can be shared and examined.

This story contextualises a perceived dichotomy between vocational and academic pedagogies that continues to polarise views, but it also seeks to subvert a discriminatory positioning of abstracted knowledge over practical skills, which can be regarded as having its roots in the English class system (Williams 1958).

2.1.3 Storying as a research practice – a clarification of terms.

> I have claimed these stories to be my own, yet a story of myself, of my identity, necessarily involves and depends upon a story of the Other too. So, these stories belong to them as well. (Tsang 2000: 47)

These pieces of autoethnographic narrative writing are more than the 'raw data' of this research process. It is my intention that the events described, and the stories created, will resonate with the experience of other practitioners, and provide a perspective which can challenge and extend their own thinking and practice.

The introduction outlined how Arendt's (1998) phenomenological understanding of politics was the starting point for this enquiry. For her, politics was located in the public realm, where the plurality of the human condition can be manifest. My key research question concerns the status of 'political' in education, arising from a critical examination of the term 'active citizenship'. I have argued in chapter one that this is something which comes into being directly through participation. It is also something fragile, the existence of which can be eliminated in a totalitarian state and threatened in an overly structured and controlled educational environment. To investigate it, therefore, requires a method which captures and conveys something of this fragile experience in a way others can appreciate. Storytelling represents a particularly human method of sharing and creating meaning from experience. Following Arendt's use of stories, I have developed her method to tell and create stories from my professional experience.

Like all history, this is a telling of partially remembered events, subject to selection and interpretation. The meaning is not to be found in the past; it is in the selection and interpretation of events, which is crafted in the moment of storying. It is both an act of

recollection and one of creation in which events are recalled and merged with different recollections to create new stories. The British psychologist Sir Frederick Bartlett in *Remembering* (1933) talked about the way in which our memory reconstructs events. Rather than 'dis-membering' the body of events, we 're-member' by putting our shreds of experience back together in a way which makes sense to us now. This is what Arendt did by selecting historical events and extracting from them meaning which enables us to understand better our present predicament. In this thesis, I do the same with events from my experiences as an educator.

It would help here to clarify the way in which I am using some common terms with closely related and interchangeable meanings. I am not claiming the following as definitions, only to draw out distinctions that are methodologically significant in this research.

Memories – refer to those fragments that remain from the rich tapestry of lived experience. They are the 'guideposts by which to take its bearings' referred to by Arendt in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Bartlett (1933) was one of many to draw parallels between the acts of remembering and that of storytelling. Both have a focus on making sense of lived experience and both are creative processes. These memories could be regarded as the 'raw data' of this investigation; however, the use of that term generally implies some claim to 'objectivity' which would not be appropriate here. The 'data poem' in section 0.2.1 provokes a discussion on the approach taken here using Tripp's (1993) 'critical incident' concept.

Reflections – describes the processes of revisiting these memories after the event, from the perspective of the actor's subjectivity. This is limited by the position of the observer, for example the 'professional identities' outlined in the introduction. Gillie Bolton (2010: xix)

characterises reflection as an "in depth consideration of events or situations: the people involved, what they experienced, and how they felt about it". The affective element is important for this thesis as, although reflection could be regarded as a form of 'data analysis', any attempt to appreciate the 'political heart' of education will need to encompass that.

Reflexivity – adds different dimensions to reflection as it includes the view from different positions and includes the researcher as an active participant in this process. Etherington (2004: 19) suggests that "To be reflexive we need to be aware of our personal responses and to be able to make choices about how to use them". This too includes affectivity, and as explained in chapter four, it can also characterise 'active citizenship'. Etherington (ibid) also argues that as researchers we "need to be aware of the personal, social and cultural contexts in which we live and work", which is part of the storying method used here. Arendt (2018) likened this process to 'thinking without a banister', which is explored in chapter four.

A story**,** here, is a narrative with an audience in mind. **Storying** is in the process of crafting the story. Storying is a collective process, even if the 'others' involved are memories, or long dead thinkers. In this research the 'others' are generally aspects of the author's professional identities, and the principal thinker is Hannah Arendt. The storyteller is the researcher, who is an integral part of the stories told. Telling these stories as a method of research has crafted too the way in which the researcher perceives the world. In this way, the storying

process has influenced the researchers practice as educator and so influenced the way in which subsequent stories have been constructed.

Narrative is used here to refer to acts of representation, or description, of lived experience, textual or otherwise. My use of the term '*narratives of practice'* refers to a specific stage in the storying process. They are more than memories of and reflections on my own lived experience as an educator. They have been crafted into a story to explore and illuminate the Arendt inspired thinking, to communicate something about the concepts introduced. The storying process continues beyond those narratives of practice, however, to include the contextualisation and discussion that follows.

The story of Jim above both introduces epistemological concerns of relevance to the methodology but also personalises these into a story that says something about the storyteller and positions the research. The two stories developed in chapter one act as vehicles to tell another story about the nature of 'active citizenship' from a civic republican perspective and to contextualise the Arendtian concept of action.

By examining these stories from other perspectives, including that of Arendt, I am extending the scope of reflexivity, and illuminating meaning where it was not apparent. So, providing an interpretation of the significance of the event, which others may not share, but they can include in their own reflection on similar events from their own lived experience as educators. Well-crafted stories provide room for extended reflexivity, leading potentially to a different view, one providing scope for action of a different kind, which could bring something new into the world. For Arendt, those stories which enter the public realm will

structure the expression of freedom and the nature of the action deemed possible. To the extent that this research brings different stories to the attention of interested educators, it can be regarded as a form of action, an act of 'active citizenship' in a community of practitioners.

The sections that follow place Arendt's work and my own within existing philosophical and methodological conventions.

2.2.1 A phenomenology of practice – an embodied ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

The critical features of 'active citizenship' identified as relevant in chapter one, such as freedom; deliberation; positionality; and criticality, cannot be known empirically because they are, in Kant's terms, *phenomena* of perception rather than *noumena* or objects existing independently of mind. Ontologically, the object of this enquiry exists neither in the objective world of empirically observable events nor in the subjectivity of an individual mind but in the world experienced as these realms interact and become part of the lived experience of those involved. Epistemologically speaking, this reality is knowable through the shared experience of a socially constructed reality, where meaning is communicable, mediated by language, but grounded in stories that also belong to others beyond the storyteller. To investigate this requires a re-creation of the experience and an examination of that creative process. Such things are knowable to the extent that we are mindful of them.

This investigation draws on the work of Max Van Manen, who explains that a

> phenomenology of practice is meant to refer to the practice of phenomenological research and writing that reflects *on* and *in* practice […] it serves to foster and strengthen an embodied ontology, epistemology, and axiology of thoughtful and tactful action. (2014: 15)

The practice I am concerned with here is phenomenological research into education for 'active citizenship'. I can reflect *on* this practice as I recall and reconstruct stories from my lived experience as a practitioner. Reflection *in* practice, it will be argued, drawing on Bleakley's (1999) notion of 'holistic reflexivity', demands a greater degree of reflexivity and the acceptance that this is an embodied affective process as much as a cognitive one. The meaning of this and its implications for 'active citizenship' are developed in chapter four.

Van Manen (1995) uses the example of a classroom teacher to illustrate "thoughtful and tactful" (15) action. The classroom space exists as a field of interaction between teacher and students, known and interpreted differently by those involved. The nature of this space is shaped by external 'realities' but these are managed by an experienced teacher, so the shared focus is, to a large extent, on the classroom activities. The teacher has a body of knowledge which they bring to this situation, but this alone is inadequate to deal with the complexities of the competing agendas and individualities present. Reflection in practice here provides a means of understanding the requirements of the situation within the existing boundaries to enable a freedom of action in the moment. Van Manen (1975) suggests that

> What all these epistemologies of practice have in common is that they locate practical knowledge not primarily in the intellect or the head but rather in the existential situation in which the person finds himself or herself. (11)

An **embodied epistemology**, therefore, does not separate knowing from doing, recognising that both involve the manipulation of signs and symbols, of things and objects. Nor does it separate knowing from the knower; both are situated within the world constructed out of the meaning attributed to these culturally embedded, language mediated practices. Moving with the shapes and feelings constructed by the interaction between cultural and natural worlds, an **embodied axiology** can emerge, one which is both thoughtful in the sense of being mindful of others and tactful in its responsiveness to different perspectives. This becomes a more practical form of knowing, useful if you aim to change the world in which you find yourself.

In the context of this research, this means that the claims to authority for its contribution to knowledge are embodied in the practice of educators. As language mediated practices, the meaning attributed by educationalists to the term 'active citizenship' will be critical to understanding what they do and its impact on any change to the culture in which this is embedded. It is a tacit understanding in which ethical positions are implicit. The values educators have and the aims and hopes of their actions are part of the understanding.

An **embodied ontology** means being a body in the world, with a beginning and an end to being human. As such, it invites a description from within that birth to death experience, such as an autoethnographic narrative. In the context of this research, an embodied ontology means locating the research in the 'world' constructed by human stories and storytelling, of which education is an integral part. In the previous chapter it was argued that education for 'active citizenship' is not just the transmission of collective wisdom but also the capacity to create anew.

Van Manen (1990) argues for the value of the storytelling in phenomenological research. He writes about the role of phenomenology in the human sciences as "the process of humanising human life and humanising human institutions to help human beings to become increasingly thoughtful and thus better prepared to act tactfully in situations" (1990: 21). He goes on to say:

> Human science operates on the principle of the recognition of the existence of *freedom* in human life. And self-consciously free human beings who have acquired a deepened understanding of the meaning of certain human experiences or phenomena may in fact be less susceptible to the effective management or control of others. (1990: 21)

This has resonance with Hannah Arendt's ideas regarding the nature of political action, developed in chapter three. Within the civic republican orientation, as outlined in the previous chapter, the bringing into being of 'self-consciously free human beings' can be regarded as a central aim of Citizenship Education. What a phenomenological methodology can offer is a means of examining the experience of freedom as an auto-ethnographic narrative, which resonates with the lived experience of others. The focus of subsequent chapters is on what makes 'active citizenship' a deliberative human action as opposed to a passively learnt behaviour. This distinction is most usefully examined phenomenologically, as the action is embedded in the experience of the actors involved.

Van Manen (1997) uses short stories throughout his work to illuminate levels of meaning rooted in the lived experience of practitioners. He calls these stories 'anecdotes' because they derive from individuals' lived experience. These anecdotes, like the stories used here, have been crafted to illustrate and communicate meaning that applies beyond the specific context. Anecdotes can be regarded as unreliable research tools due to their limited

generalisability. However, Van Manen argues that the anecdote is valuable in a different way, as a "poetic narrative that refers to a truth still difficult to articulate, perhaps symbolic and metaphoric, rather than literal in character" (119). He claims that:

> The paradoxical thing about anecdotal narrative is that it tells something particular while really addressing the general […] and vice versa, at the hand of anecdote fundamental insights or truths are tested for their value in the contingent world of everyday experience. (1997: 120)

He suggests that the value of such storying lies in its capacity to draw attention to significant events which provoke reflection on contested and alternative meanings in terms of our own shared experiences. By challenging and potentially changing the way we see the world, such stories can pave the way to changing it.

Arendt too set out to reveal what she saw as the overarching themes that connected stories of the past to the present. In applying these concepts to specific events, she provided an opportunity for others to assess their usefulness. This process I have adopted to examine the meaning of 'active citizenship' in educational practice through the lens of her concepts, so providing a means to pose questions and provoke discussions that may not otherwise occur.

The methodological positions taken in this research are, therefore, informed by those found in Arendt's phenomenology, which will be examined next.

2.3.1 The Phenomenological ontology of Hannah Arendt.

Dana Villa (1996) argues that many interpreters of Arendt fail to appreciate the radical implications of her reconceptualisation of political action because they overlook the way in

which Arendt's ontology develops from that of Heidegger and Nietzsche. The critical difference is best expressed by the title of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's biography of Arendt, *For the Love of the World*. Arendt (1958b) wrote, "What is most difficult is to love the world as it is, with all the evil and suffering in it." She contrasted *vita activa,* the political life of action, with *vita contemplativa,* the life of pure thought or contemplation preferred by mystics and philosophers. It is this engagement with lived experience that represents an embodied ontology, as outlined by Van Manen above. The implications for this investigation are developed further in chapter five.

Arendt's version of phenomenology was influenced deeply by that of her teacher and mentor Martin Heidegger. I suggest, following Villa (1996), that 'being in the world' for Heidegger differed significantly from that of Arendt. They were indeed 'worlds apart' in ways that matter to the central theme of this thesis; that of a citizen's orientation to the world in which they find themselves and the way in which this can be influenced through education.

Both Arendt and Heidegger were concerned with 'being in the world', Heidegger's consisting of the "primordial contents of consciousness" (ibid: 97), as much as possible, free of interpretation.

> The achieving of phenomenological access to the entities which we encounter, consists rather in thrusting aside our interpretative tendencies, which keep thrusting themselves upon us and running along with us, and which conceal not only the phenomenon of such 'concern', but even more those entities themselves as encountered of their own accord in our concern with them. (Heidegger 1962)

Villa (1996) and Nixon (2009) compare the thoughtlessness of Eichmann with the pure thought of Heidegger, claiming both as forms of alienation from the world and a failure to

engage in what Arendt called 'judgement'. Arendt's (1978) critique of Heidegger's philosophy is, in effect, an indictment of the unworldly tendency in Western philosophy from Plato onwards.

An embodied axiology**,** as mentioned above, implies a close connect with the intuitive knowing of embodied being, one in which the pain of others is appreciated more directly. A more intuitive knowing may help explain why millions of relatively 'uneducated' people were able to appreciate the 'evil' of Nazism in a way that a professional philosopher was not.

Borren (2010) suggests that Arendt's methodology rests on an ontological orientation toward the world as experienced by those who act within in.

> Arendt's aim is to do justice to the original, non-derived character of political life, the *vita activa*, and to save it from metaphysical prejudices and fallacies and the imposition of the rules of the *vita contemplativa*. (Borren 2010: 299)

Arendt's project was not to create a new theoretical edifice that would rival that of Marx nor provide a predictive model such as those aspired to in the social sciences. She contributes nothing to constructing "scientific laws of human nature or political behaviour. These risks lapsing into scientistic and metaphysical constructions. As such, they are ideological constructions, posing political problems" (ibid). What she has provided is a method of telling stories that help to provide guidance for worldly action.

2.3.2 Arendt's hermeneutic phenomenology.

Van Manen characterises Arendt's approach as **political phenomenology** (2014: 148) and he commends her use of metaphor in making "the invisible visible and graspable" (150). Arendt's storying method involved taking a familiar meaning and twisting it, or of making distinctions unseen by others, often by a process of re-embedding language using historical examples crafted as stories such as the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

Borren (2010) claims that:

> Arendt's is a hermeneutic phenomenology of the political, since she is mainly interested in understanding political phenomena, events and experiences, that is, more concretely, in that which happens in public space. (299)

It is this public space that is Arendt's ontological concern. My interest here is how such a public space can be enticed into being, or at least not banished from existence, by those educational endeavours which claim to enhance 'active citizenship'. For Arendt, it is in this public space that political activity can be known, and it is the part played by education in enabling this experience of the political to be recognised and told as stories that I have referred to as finding the political heart of 'active citizenship'.

Arendt's own doctoral thesis, on the concept of love in the writings of Saint Augustine, was a similar quest that became a theme throughout her life. For Arendt, world events had brutally intervened in her journey and set her thinking about "a world gone mad in which love seemed a perverse orientation" (Arendt 1964a). It led her to renounce the profession of philosopher, calling herself instead a political thinker and teller of stories. In a footnote to the thesis, originally published in 1929, Arendt claims that for Heidegger the world is the

impersonal background to being, that he has neglected "the world conceived as the lovers of the world view it" (Scott & Stark 1996).

Disembodied modes of thought, which Arendt associated with *vita contemplativa,* do not simply render thought an abstraction; they enable the 'unthinkable' to become a terrifying reality. My concern is that disembodied ways of knowing politics become impotent in the face of 'world events' in the same way as my students risk becoming disempowered through the acquisition of knowledge without the means to be able to use it.

Borren (2010) refers to Arendt's method as a politicisation of hermeneutic phenomenology. She writes:

> What renders Arendt's work unique and highly original is the relationship she establishes between a historical-political and a philosophical sensibility, through a consistent hermeneutic-phenomenological approach of the political. […] The totalitarian loss of world taught her to appreciate what is at stake, experientially and politically, in the world and to consider human beings as worldly beings in the first place. (298)

Borren suggests that Arendt's method is a hermeneutic phenomenology because her focus is on understanding the contemporary meaning of historical events, through a process of storying. The focus is on the significance of these phenomena for the present and future rather than an attempt to understand them in their historical context. This, she suggests, is a critical analysis which examines the way in which the "history of political experiences and phenomena is condensed and sedimented in our language, that is, either revealed or concealed in traditional political concepts" (2010: 299). With Arendt, this exercise also reveals meaning not apparent in conventional accounts. Borren calls them "experimental

exercises in storytelling which herald a process of reorientation and reorientation toward the future" (2010: 299).

In developing my *narratives of practice* as stories, which on telling and retelling reveal deeper levels of meaning, I aim to use Arendt's method to illustrate her concepts and to provide an understanding which can be meaningful for other educational practitioners.

In the previous chapter, two stories from my practice as a Citizenship Teacher were described, selected because, at the time, both were claimed as examples of 'active citizenship'. As I engaged with some of Arendt's concepts, the stories were reinterpreted and revised, and I suggested that only one deserves the title of 'active citizenship'.

In chapter three, the story of an adult education course in preparation for the 2016 referendum on UK membership of the EU is re-told with a different emphasis. The original pedagogic aims were the transmission of knowledge and development of critical thinking, skills that would enable these adults to participate in a political activity. I argue that the **action** (applying Arendt's concept) was effectively on the collective activity of research and discussion which enabled a public space to exist in which freedom could be exercised.

In chapter four, the story illustrates how freedom can be located within structured educational practices which can potentially create a political dimension for student led research projects. The scope is extended in chapter five to include mental health courses for adults in which the storying process seeks to enable a degree of collective political freedom to emerge by shifting the stories told away from both 'health' and 'mental'.

I am not asking the reader to accept the interpretations provided but simply to consider their own practice in this light. I aim to demonstrate what many have claimed (e.g., Gordon

2001, Veck & Gunter (2009), Biesta 2013, Nixon 2020) that Arendt's concepts have much to offer educationalists struggling to keep a political dimension alive in their practice.

2.4.1 Freedom and situated agency.

A separate but related ontological issue is the location of **freedom**. To what extent can it be regarded as located within the individual citizen, which is consistent with liberal democracy; or in the socio-cultural milieu, in groups of people, which is more consistent with communitarian approach? In section 0.3.5, Arendt's take on freedom was outlined, which both rejected the liberal notion of freedom as the expression of a sovereign individual and the idea of it purely as a communal possession. For her, freedom arose in communication between thinking beings, in the plurality of the space between them.

The notion of situated agency as developed by Emirbayer & Mische (1998) in their tricordal model locates it clearly within that interpersonal space; it is not a property or achievement of an individual or societies as a whole.

> Theoretically, our central contribution is to begin to reconceptualise human agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment). (963)

Their model recognises three themes which distinctly impact on the shape of that space that opens up between diverse beings. These themes encompass a history, both personal and cultural, which constructs some opportunities for and limitations to agentic action. This may involve cognitive and affective modes, but also an attentiveness to the here and now, to be able to act and 'seize' the moment. This is helpful social constructionist theorising but needs some phenomenological flesh and bones to construct a functioning citizen and to be clothed

in metaphor and narrative to enable it to resonate with lived experience. Arendt's (1954) essay on freedom provides a phenomenological interpretation which parallels this approach. This is applied in chapter three where Arendt's take on freedom is explored and put in an educational context.

2.5.1 Theoretical perspectives: Arendt as a critical thinker.

> My theoretical perspective is informed by that of Hannah Arendt, but her own thinking is notoriously difficult to position (Canonvan 1992).

Seyla Benhabib (1998) squarely places Arendt within the broadly critical tradition, because her work involves developing a critique of modernity. For example, she used the term 'world alienation' throughout her work to refer to the condition of modernity in which humans are individualised (or atomised) and hence unable to exercise the power latent in their commonality. In this, she can be regarded as a critical theorist, but one who struggles to fit into the somewhat narrower tradition of the Frankfurt school, despite being a close friend of Walter Benjamin (Young-Bruehl 1982) and strongly influencing Jurgen Habermas (Wolin 2001) who both originated from that background.

Although she draws on Marx, Arendt profoundly differs in her interpretation of history and rejects any grand narrative of human development. Whilst accepting much of his analysis of capitalism, she also critiques the determinism of dialectical materialism and is scathing about his utopianism (Arendt 1958, 1998). She was also deeply suspicious of Freud and Psychoanalysis, generally regarding it as an introspective, anti-political withdrawal from the public realm (Young-Bruehl 1982).

As indicated above, Arendt's storytelling had a critical edge; it intended to unsettle accepted modes of thought and provide scope for novel action. In taking aspects of Arendt's storying method and in applying aspects of her thinking on political action and thoughtfulness to education for global citizenship, I have adopted her broadly critical approach.

2.5.2 Autoethnographic Writing as a method of enquiry.

> Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. (Ellis and Bochner 2003: 209)

The memories and reflections on the author's experience of different but related professional identities from 2005 to 2020 is presented in the form of autoethnographic sections of text crafted into stories. These *narratives of practice* are in a distinctive font to help separate them from the more analytic sections. They are edited from accounts of reflective practice, some written shortly after the events described; others more retrospectively. This is not an attempt to investigate the events themselves but to explore the meaning implicit within their interpretation. The emphasis is on the analysis of the meanings attributed to 'active citizenship' in diverse educational settings and the significance of this from the perspective of Arendt's thinking on political activity. The details of and an illustration of this method have been provided above.

I do this using an autoethnographic style of writing inspired by that of Laurel Richardson (1997), which responds to aspects of my experience in various professional contexts. This

includes not just selected detail of the events themselves but my own interpretation at the time and subsequent storying. The style is also influenced by Woolgar's (1988) notion of a "self-conscious text, aiming to combine conventionally structured, referenced, academic text with a representation of reflection-in-action which sets out to be deliberately reflexive". This autoethnographic storying method offers a distinctive response to issues of integrity and trustworthiness in research, of particular value for practitioner enquiry.

Owen et al (2009) in their article 'Truth Troubles' explore the issue of truth in narrative research. They draw on Jerome Bruner as follows:

> Bruner (1993) argues that a life text does not record or signify a 'life as lived' but rather serves as one way of construing experience—and of reconstruing and reconstruing it until our breath or our pen fails us […] The 'rightness' of any autobiographical version is relative to the intentions and conventions that govern its construction or its interpretation. (38–40)

Arendt (1968) famously described Walter Benjamin's historiography as 'pearl diving', picking out aspects of history and culture which tell stories that enable us to see the present in a different light. Others (Canovan 1992) have characterised Arendt as doing the same in her highly selective use of history and her tendency to craft the events selected to fit the story told. Similarly, this thesis dives into the reflective practice of the author's professional identities to construct stories which illustrate a different way of seeing.

The integrity of this methodology depends upon its capacity to touch others' experience; in the words of Bochner and Ellis (1996: 24): "If culture circulates through all of us, how can autoethnography be free of connection to a world beyond the self?"

As mentioned above, this method is located within the approach now well established by Laurel Richardson (2000, 2005) in which writing is "a method of inquiry, a means of finding out about yourself and your topic" (2000: 923). She goes on to say,

> Writing is also a way of 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable. (2000: 923)

This is an entangled process; it is also a creative process arising from ongoing reflection on my own practice in the light of Arendt's concepts over many years. It is not a linear process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Although the stories in the previous chapter are based on upon events that took place before writing this thesis, the process of reflection and storying is developed to illustrate the concepts discussed. In subsequent chapters, my practice developed alongside my growing familiarity with Arendt's work. Living with Arendt's ideas has influenced my practice itself as well as the way in which I reflect and write about it.

2.5.3 Telling tales/More Truth Than Fact.

> I have called this Arendt's method of 'fragmentary historiography', and it is why, I think, she called herself a 'story teller' – not a teller of fiction but rather a teller of tales of human dignity and misery, tragedy and triumph. (Benhabib 2020)

My stories are based on my memories of and reflections on events which took place, but others who took part in these events would no doubt tell their stories differently. My interpretations aim to illustrate Arendt's concepts, and essentially most of the creative storying is not in the narrative passages themselves but in the unfolding interpretations that follow and develop with each subsequent chapter.

In '*More Truth Than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt',* Lisa Disch (1993) argues that

> A well-crafted story shares with the most elegant theories the ability to bring a version of the world to light that so transforms the way people see that it seems never to have been otherwise. Under certain conditions, a story can be a more powerful critical force than a theoretical analysis. In a society where the abstraction of social theory and social science sometimes masks real conflicts, a skilful narrative can bring to light the assumptions buried in apparently neutral arguments and challenge them. Storytelling invites critical engagement between a reader and a text and, more important, among the various readers of a work in a way that the impersonal, authoritative social science "voice from nowhere" cannot. (665)

Arendt's storytelling was more than presenting a particular interpretation of historical events. In her account of totalitarianism (1958), she draws attention to the significance of those elements which crystallised together in the specifics of Nazism, but which also illuminate her understanding of the essential character of totalitarianism itself. It is not a conventional historical analysis of the causes but an attempt to provoke critical thinking about how those elements remain a feature of our culture and a wake-up call regarding the potential of their re-emergence. As such, she takes a clear moral position in that she is extracting the critical lessons from our shared history rather than trying to establish the 'truth' of specific events. This too is my aim, to extract the critical lessons from my professional experience of relevance to other educators trying to respond to the challenge of our times. My concerns are less the detail of the actual *narratives of practice* provided and more their construction, interpretation, and applicability as route to propose a different perspective, one informed by my take on some of Arendt's ideas.

In her account of the Eichmann Trial (Arendt 1963), she tells a story of our time as a warning to others of the consequences of an unthinking acceptance of ideas and practices that, from

the perspective of human history, not just that of the victims, would seem unthinkable. The accuracy of her account of Eichmann's life and views has been disputed, but the story she told of "an average, 'normal' person, neither feeble-minded nor indoctrinated nor cynical, could be perfectly incapable of telling right from wrong" (ibid: 115) has resonated around the world and informed debates about moral education.

My own research aims to be a provocation to other practitioners to examine their own practice from a different perspective. I am not claiming this to be the only way of interpreting or understanding those events. I am, however, suggesting that it is a viewpoint from which the political heart at the centre of educational endeavours can be more clearly appreciated and valued. It is in this sense that "Storytelling is 'more truth' than fact because it communicates one's own critical understanding in a way that invites discussion from rival perspectives" (Disch 1993: 689). Soyini Madison (2020) talks about "acts of activism" in her accounts of Critical Ethnography. I would claim both my own and Arendt's methods of storying to be similar forms of action.

2.6.1 Ethical considerations arising.

Storying in this way can be regarded as an ethical practice; as suggested above it takes a moral position regarding an educator's responsibility toward the world in which they find themselves. This is one of the qualities of 'active citizenship' which is under investigation. In this way, the methodology adopted is not simply a means of investigating aspects of a shared world but is also a means of interacting with that world. Thus, the methodological embeds an orientation toward the subject of our investigation. This is deeply ethical

because it involves caring, both in terms of an empathetic, embodied connection with life but also in terms of taking responsibility for looking after that life.

Autoethnographic methods have particular ethical issues because, as examined above, the researcher and the research subject are inseparable. Not only are there considerations regarding the protection of the researcher's confidentiality but those who are part of the researcher's professional networks are also who are drawn into the analysis as relationships are examined. The process of reflexive self-analysis itself is also a dangerous one and once deconstructed some help may be needed to put the pieces back together.

Jim, in the narrative passage above, does not exist as such; he is a composite of many students I have known. The story is a vignette of several drawn from my experience selected to resonate with the experience of other educators. There is no one person from whom consent could be requested. By such devices, I have ensured that those who have enriched my experience over the years would not be able to recognise themselves as individuals should they come across these accounts. The stories and fragments of reflective writing scattered throughout the thesis represent memories collected through experience lived and re-created through the process of storying.

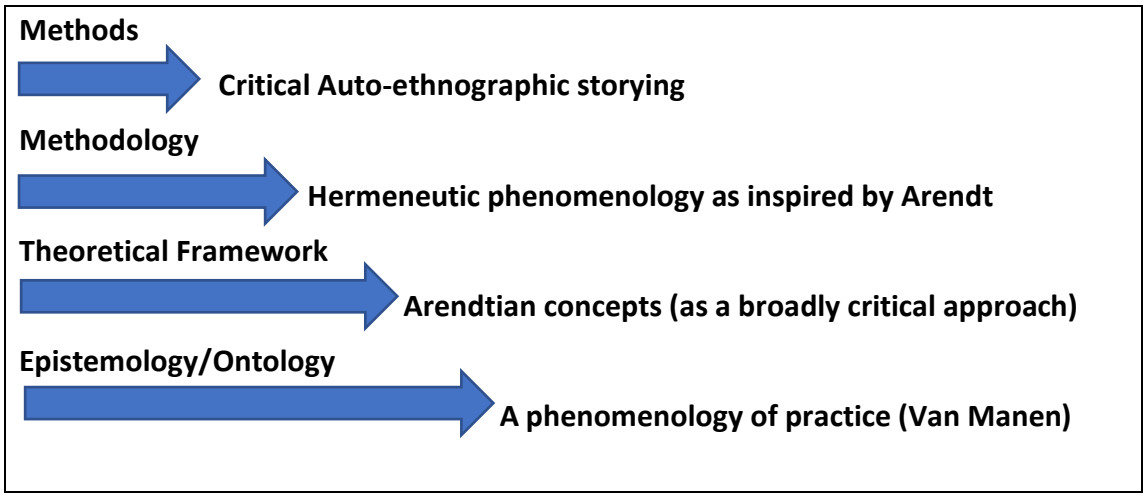
Photos are mine or from public sources which do not require permission to reproduce. The quote from a member of the senior team used in chapter one is also a composite, not traceable to him/her. Any accounts in which individuals could be identified have had details changed to make recognition impossible.

A research method which puts personal experience at its heart invites criticism because it challenges some interpretations of objectivity and brings with it charges of self-indulgence,

introspection, and navel gazing (Sparkes 2002). The application of criticality to one's personal history and actions is a difficult, often unsettling process but an essential element of an ethical reflexivity in research.

2.7.1 Concluding the Methodology Chapter.

Below is a diagram which represents a conclusion for this chapter based on the research elements suggested by Crotty (1998). They are summarised below.



[Fig 4] *The 4 research elements (After Crotty 1998)*

Ontology & Epistemology – A phenomenology of practice

I am following Crotty (1998) in contending that Epistemology implies Ontology and vice-versa. In chapter one, it was argued that 'active citizenship', in the republican tradition at least, is a phenomenon that comes into being in the public sphere, which arises between

citizens acting together. The reality of this can be known by participation or by the reports of those who had participated; it cannot be meaningfully objectified. It is not the practice of education itself, which is the subject of this investigation, but the meaning and value attributed to it.

'Active citizenship' exists as a contested concept, this thesis is underpinned by the assumption that the way in which it is understood by educational practitioners has a potential impact on the nature of political life and on the practice of democracy. Investigating the process of thinking about educational practice (rather than the practice itself) from a practitioner's perspective requires a phenomenology that can understand this practice from a practitioner's perspective and recognise its existence as a legitimate entity to study.

Theoretical Perspective – Arendtian concepts (as a critical theory)

Following Benhabib (1998), I have located Arendt within the broad tradition of critical theory because she can be regarded as a critic of modernity and a deconstructive thinker. Because I am using Arendt's concepts to examine my reflections on my practice, this also characterises the theoretical perspective employed in this investigation. It is also consistent with the positioned focus of the narrative pieces and approach taken to analyse them. The theoretic perspective is a critical one because it challenges the dominant perspective of liberalism and the individualising pedagogic approaches arising where knowledge is reified and learning commodified.

Methodology – hermeneutic phenomenology as inspired by Arendt

Each chapter will explore examples from my diverse professional practice, using Arendt's concepts to examine the meaning of 'active citizenship'. These concepts are employed to mine different levels of meaning. The term hermeneutic phenomenology was used by Van Manen (1990) to describe Arendt's methodology because:

> The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence – in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful: a notion by which a reader is powerfully animated in his or her own lived experience. (1990: 36)

In this thesis, my practice as educator is used to inform my practice as researcher, illuminated by Arendtian concepts and inspired by her methods.

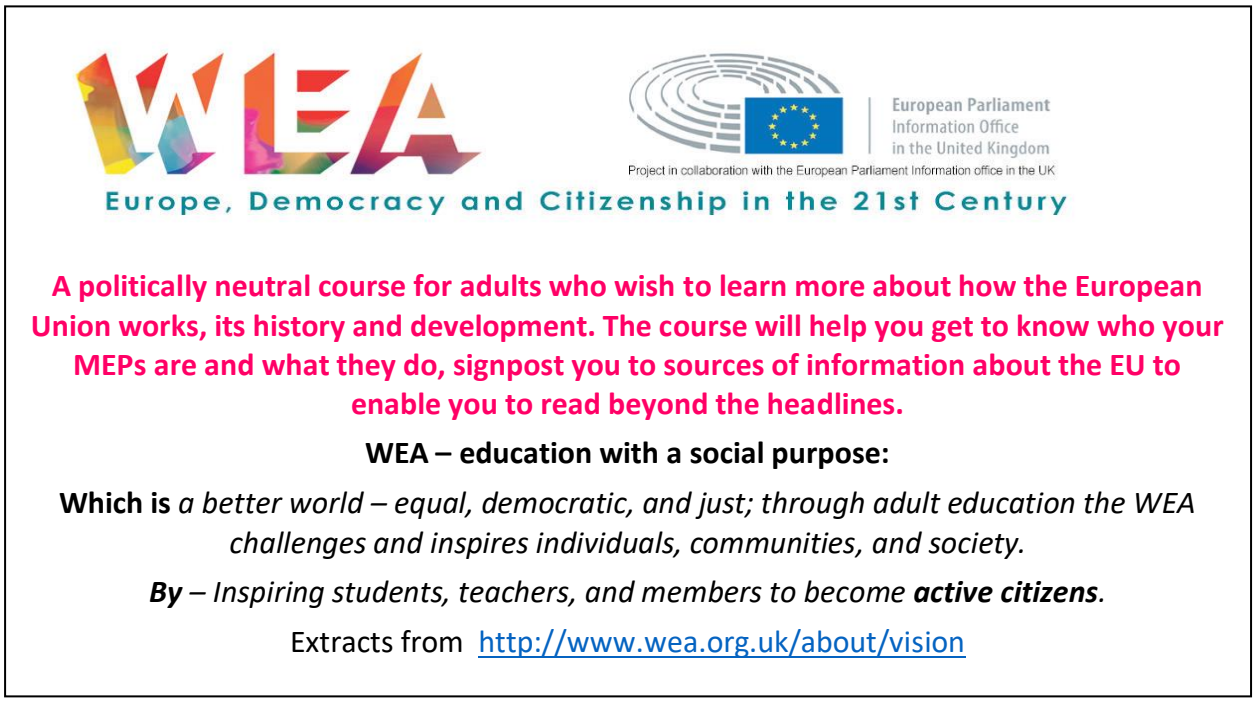
Methods – autoethnographic storytelling (critical)

This technique was used to throw light on Arendtian concepts, which are themselves used to illuminate the educative practices examined. This becomes a layered process of deepening and extending meaning which has the potential to resonate with other educational practitioners. The extent to which this is realised can be regarded as a measure of the success of this undertaking.

This investigation explores the contextual meaning of some of Arendt's concepts, it is not an attempt to verify a theory as such, where a case study or ethnographic account could be more appropriate.

Chapter Three:

Putting the Action in Active Citizenship.



[Fig 5] *Extract from course promotional material.*

> Whoever wants to educate adults really wants to act as their guardian and prevent them from political activity. (Arendt 1972: 92)
>
> 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 1968b: 192–3)

3.1.0 Introduction.

Chapter one introduced four orientations toward Citizenship Education and used these as tools to analyse the contested position of Citizenship as a secondary school subject in England. In this chapter the storying methodology outlined in the previous chapter is extended to include the adult education sector, by reflecting on my professional identity as

a WEA tutor. By revisiting the examples from chapter one, the analysis can reach across sectors to develop further Arendt's concepts.

In this chapter I examine Arendt's concept of **action** and claim that this provides a useful way to appreciate the meaning of 'active' in 'active citizenship' from the perspective of civic republicanism. The significance of this for Citizenship Education is explored, along with Arendt's use of the terms, **freedom, power, plurality,** and **natality**, all of which pose particular challenges for educators. One such challenge comes from Arendt herself because she argued that children should be protected from the vicissitudes of the adult world until they were old enough to participate as free and equal citizens. This position will be challenged by applying some of Arendt's own concepts, drawing on the work of Gert Biesta (2013) and others. This leads on to a discussion of what Arendt meant by "education must be conservative" in the passage above.

Finally, I consider the work of Pat Hannam (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019), which applies some of Arendt's thinking to the field of Religious Education. This challenges my research focus to move beyond the specialism of Citizenship Education. By applying Arendt's concept of action to education "as bringing the child to human togetherness: to action in plurality" (Hannam 1916: 128), a parallel is established with what could constitute 'active citizenship' in an education setting.

Below I introduce a specific adult course run in the lead up to the 2016 EU membership referendum in the UK to provide comparative material, and to broaden the exploration of my practice and Arendt's notion of action. Given that Arendt herself regarded most political education for adults as a form of indoctrination, I explain why this course could have been

regarded in this way; and some of the steps, inspired by my unfolding understanding of Arendt's ideas, that enabled it to be otherwise. The following is an extract from my contemporaneous reflective writing originally written as part of the course evaluation.

3.1.1 Europe, Democracy, and Citizenship in the 21st Century.

So why are they here, these mature students, hungry for more detail on treaties and trade deals? Are they active citizens eager to do their democratic duty? Do they embody Kant's vision of the rational citizen, in a liberal democracy, each individually making a reasoned decision? Or are they seeking information to confirm their prejudices, to consolidate their divergent worldviews? There is a real enthusiasm for learning here that would delight any teacher of 14- to 18-year-olds; the most frequent claim is that they are enjoying the course. There are no compulsory assessments, no qualifications to earn. There are no means to enhanced earnings or pathways to employability.

There is no lack of civic duty here. There is a desperation to discover the 'facts' beyond claim and counter claim and widespread disappointment when the facts turn out to be disputed too as they discover that the 'experts' disagree as much as the politicians. There is a real delight in discussing conflicting views, in finding out about each other's research and contesting the interpretations offered. My colleague, more used to training teachers, is taken aback by these students' questioning, their willingness to evaluate the same evidence and reach different conclusions.

It's not the EU referendum itself that is the democratic action here; this is no preparation; this is the event. There may be no dramatic changing of minds, but there is a recognition of alternative views, of being able to see through different perspectives, of appreciating others' subjectivities. This is not teaching about but doing democracy; this is a public space in which politics can take place. [May 2016]

3.1.2 Commentary on the EU course.

This course was delivered through the Workers' Education Association (WEA) with funding from European Union Parliament's Information Office in United Kingdom. The enrolment form data showed thirty students, recruited mainly through community groups such as the University of the Third Age (U3A; a student run group for older people focused on interests); local political parties; and the Women's Institute (WI). The age range was 50–90, gender

balanced, but only one student identified as of 'non-white' ethnicity on the limited range of options available on the enrolment form. Almost 50% of the group were educated to degree level or above; 25% had no formal post-secondary education. The main reason given for attendance was a perceived need to be better informed before casting a vote in the 2016 referendum on EU membership. However, all but one indicated that they had already made up their mind. This was reflected in a student research task; a survey of 120 U3A members showed that whereas 87% felt under informed, 95% had already decided how to vote! Further questions confirmed a lack of knowledge regarding EU institutions and jurisdictions.

Despite the claim in the promotional material, the course was far from 'politically neutral'. It is a good example of the activity that Arendt and Crick referred to as 'politics' which was outlined in the introduction. It is political in nature not just because it focused on a clearly political issue but because it was one where a plurality of views were represented within the room itself. This was a group of adult citizens coming together without duress; the course was free, but most needed to travel and find the time to attend. The tutors worked to create a public space, where freedom of expression and a diversity of views were encouraged. Although the course was funded by the EU parliament, which rather questions its 'political neutrality', the tutors explicitly acknowledged the potential bias and did their best to ensure that all views were represented.

This collection of mainly retired people, with limited influence – economic or political, talking about things they could make little or no difference to, is hardly the stuff of revolution. But for Crick and Arendt this harks back to the Greek polis and the origins of politics itself; these were free citizens, with a plurality of views, discussing and considering

an issue with the aim of making a judgement. This, Arendt claimed, was an end in itself, something that most revolutions aimed for but rarely maintained. The founding fathers of the American Revolution regarded it as part of 'the public happiness' (Arendt 1963). Although this was just people talking and listening, for Arendt this is what revolutions are made of, the coming together to exercise power and freedom. For Arendt, these are both qualities which only come into being when exercised. The use of these terms will be examined below.

In a different situation, with different tutors, the same students may not have had this experience. For one session, we organised a debate, modelled on the BBC's Question Time, with representatives from each campaign answering students' questions. Here views were polarised, speeches sounded like sound bites, party lines were drawn and not crossed. The structure of the event was such that those involved were unable to exercise the power latent in their commonality to exercise the freedom which could have changed the experience. Student feedback at the end of the course showed this was the least popular session; open group discussion was consistently rated as the most valued activity.

This course represented something novel for the students, a new experience for many, something which only freedom and what Arendt called action can bring into the world. The next sections introduce these key Arendtian terms and try to apply them to the context of education for Citizenship.

3.2.1 Action for Arendt.

> 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 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. (Arendt 1998)

Action, for Arendt, is intimately related to the notion of appearance in the world of human creation; it is what happens when individuals with diverse experiences and views of the world are able to share these freely with others without censorship or repression. Arendt's use of the term 'identities' above both recognises the transient quality of that which is shared and the situatedness of individual uniqueness.

Arendt's take on **action** involves thinking, reflective persons acting freely in an encounter with others, which has the potential to change the nature of the relationship with all those involved. Dana Villia (1996) and Margaret Canovan (1992) have argued that what makes Arendt unique is that for her this is a political activity, which fundamentally alters the way in which politics is conceived and potentially enacted. This makes it relevant to an understanding of citizenship and why it is also central to any discussion of the way in which education prepares potential citizens for participation in the world.

It is in *The Human Condition* that Arendt (1998) introduces her unique take on action, where she contrasts it with **labour** (activity necessary for survival) and **work** (the construction of the fabric of the human world). Labour could be repetitive and meaningful to the extent that it maintained life; she related it to the private realm of the family. Work she refers to as fabrication (as in making); it includes not only the crafting of objects to create artefacts but also the collaborative work to create culture and social institutions. She argued (1958) that one of the crystallising features of totalitarianism was the fabrication of humans, treating them as objects to be crafted into an ideal social order. This she regarded as something

which did not necessarily need the apparatus of a totalitarian state to become manifest and was an aim of most ideologically driven political movements.

In claiming that the WEA students (and tutors) were involved in what Arendt would regard as action, I am suggesting that they were not there because they needed to qualify to do something else (to work); nor was it something they needed to do to survive (to labour). Their enjoyment of the course could be claimed as an expression of the 'public happiness' mentioned above. One student called it an experience of thinking out loud in the company of others.

3.2.2 Action and plurality.

> **Action**, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of **plurality**, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. While all aspects of the human condition are somehow related to politics, this plurality is specifically the condition […] of all political life. (Arendt 1998: 7)

As mentioned in the introduction, Arendt and Crick shared a vision of **politics** as arising out of the diversity of interests and identities that characterise the human world. A diversity which is magnified in the late modern age (Giddens 1991) but challenged by all those attempts to define one true version of human nature, of man in the singular. For Arendt, "plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (Arendt 1998: 8).

The adult students who attended the pre-referendum course each brought their own history, attitudes, and expectations. The tutors influenced these expectations and modelled

relationships which were authentic in that personal views and experiences were shared and there was a clearly stated intention to provide a public forum open to all views. As tutor, I had taken trouble to ensure that representatives of diverse views were invited to participate and worked to create a forum in which all voices could be heard. It helped also to have two tutors who could generally be relied upon to disagree with each other, indeed they voted differently in the referendum itself.

A feature of the discussions, as opposed to the formal organised debate, was the respect shown to the different views of others. One student remarked that her strongest impression was of the desire, held in common, to find the best way forward for all, despite the disagreements on which route to take. There was a genuine curiosity about divergent views and the experiences that led to them; this was particularly evident in the interest shown in the presentations of each other's research. This capacity not just to listen but to hold on to alternate perspectives when forming a judgement Arendt regarded as one outcome of action and a characteristic of what she called thinking. This aspect is examined in more detail in chapter four.

As Young-Bruehl (2006: 87) comments that:

> Action is open to all people, in all their diversity or plurality; it requires no special talents (although in many situations it requires the virtue of courage). Acting persons reveal their self in relation to others.

The litter pickers from chapter one lacked both plurality in that they were not encouraged to display diverse views and positions, even if they held them. As was noted, they also lacked any real freedom. In Arendt's terms, action did not take place. Some did, however, manage to express their individuality and, if not subvert then at least, test the limits of their

freedom by creative interpretation of their remit by bringing back shopping trolleys, old tyres, and a few even proactively asking householders en route if they had any rubbish to recycle.

The Year 9 'uniform' students had rather more freedom, both in terms of selecting their own topics for research and deciding what actions to take. However, they would all be aware of the constraints of the classroom situation and that certain actions were unlikely to be acceptable. They were also quick to exploit those opportunities for freedom that did exist and enjoyed the opportunity to work with peers of their choosing on matters of common concern, which in most cases focused on the extent that they could exercise some freedom of choice in the clothes they wore to school.

In this case the completion of the workbook by the individual students could be identified as work, but the small group decision making and the activity arising could be regarded as action in Arendt's sense. These workbooks were subject to assessment but because I was responsible for this, I was able to include learning outcomes that touched upon the extent to which they worked effectively together, and the collective action taken. In other subjects the students laboured to gain qualifications that would enable them to survive and prosper in the adult world, but in this activity, they could learn that they could act in concert to question and change this world and to, if rather fleetingly, believe that some agency could be exercised if not directly over what they wore but at least in the decision-making process involved.

3.2.3 Action and Natality.

> Labour and work, as well as action, are also rooted in natality in so far as they have the task to provide and preserve the world for, to foresee and reckon with, the constant influx of newcomers who are born into the world as strangers. However, of the three, action has the closest connection with the human condition of natality; the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities. (Arendt 1998: 9)

For Arendt, action not only involves acting freely, without coercion, in the company of others but it also involves bringing something new into the human world, something which did not exist before but exists now due to the actions of humans. Arendt saw this in the early stages of all revolutions before the revolutionary leaders tried to assert their authority and style of governance. Action can result in the bringing into being in the world something completely new, a condition of natality.

Good citizenship, as outlined in chapter one, for those orientations other than civic republican, serves to support and reinforce social cohesion. It also maintains and replicates social inequalities, and any activities toward change are likely to be less contentious and employ existing solutions. Including the Arendtian notion of action in any understanding of 'active citizenship' has the potential to bring about a more radical change. It is natality which Arendt chooses to focus on as the element of the human condition which offers hope for the future through political action. I contend that it is central to finding the 'political heart' of 'active citizenship' which is the focus of this thesis.

This reading of Arendt is consistent with Villia (1996) and Canovan (1992) in that it takes natality literally and makes possible the birth of the new amid the ruins of the old rather than repeating the errors of the past. In so doing, I may well be one of those "who are

themselves inclined toward civic republican ideals [*and*] may enlist Arendt's claims in support of their commitments" (Berger 2009: 158). Berger suggests that some commentators take an overly literal interpretation of Arendt's claims for the centrality of action and freedom in political life, whilst others take a more figurative reading. From my perspective, the latter loses much of the radical originality of Arendt's thought, and it is a criticism I am happy to own.

For Arendt, natality is an ongoing process and new beginnings need to be continually reborn. Action may or may not contribute to change in the world, it may not significantly change those who take part, but in the process of action the potential for natality exists. These new beginnings of natality may not enhance the prospect of further action; they may reduce the scope for freedom and may even introduce new forms of totalitarianism. As Arendt emphasises, the intentions of those involved in action in no way guarantee the outcomes. Natality may give birth to new, unimagined horrors unpredicted by the ideologies of activists and the theories of political philosophers.

The Y9 activities were instrumental in bringing about some change in the school community in that the head of Y9 introduced the provision of a dedicated notice board space in tutor rooms for use by that tutor group. This was a new institution that enabled future students to express their views in a 'public' space, even if it only lasted for a few years. I repeated the exercise with each year nine group I had over several years and produced lesson materials for colleagues to use (Walker 2014). Some did use it and there may have been other consequences of which I am unaware. However, the impact of Gove's 2011 reforms, as mentioned in the introduction, removed the one hour per week curriculum time for Y9

Citizenship and a new Principal decided to use this for extra Religious Education as this was regarded as good preparation for the GCSE.

The activities of the Y7 litter-pickers from chapter one could be regarded as the introduction of something new into the curriculum. The original idea arose from a conversation with a youth worker who had a remit to involve young people more in the activities of the local council. I floated it with colleagues, a meeting was arranged, and it was taken up by those with more organisational flair than I to run as a cross-curriculum collapsed timetable day. It became an annual event and I continued to volunteer to help until my retirement in 2013. Something new had entered the world of Y7 and even when the first cohort entered my tutor group in Y12, many still remembered it fondly as a day let out of school. It did not survive the drive toward academicisation but every so often I come across other councils and other schools running similar events.

As a sixth form tutor, I had the experience of meeting some of these Y7 and Y9 students later in their school life. Some recalled these activities; the litter picking as a fun day outside of the usual routine; the Y9 activity as something which made the relationship with their head of year more 'grown up'. As Arendt points out:

> Action, in so far as it engages in founding and preserving political bodies, creates the condition for remembrance, that is, for history. (1998b: 8–9)

After the referendum, funding from the EU information office, rather predictably, dried up. A few of the students asked the WEA to run a 'What Brexit Means?' course with them paying the full fee. This limited participation to those who could afford it and there were fewer students and a greater focus on understanding the complexities of the Brexit process

than on reaching a judgement and influencing others. This course was more strictly political education than Arendtian action. The moment to exercise power, however limited, was past. Whatever Brexit meant, it was certainly now beyond the influence of this group. It had become a more familiar educational exercise of acquiring knowledge as individuals, most of it provided by a tutor.

The tutors involved in this UK-wide project kept in touch, forming a loose online network with the aim of keeping political education high on the WEA agenda. This led to the creation of a Practical Politics Pathway, which provided an overarching link for politically themed courses (Alexander 2017) and the proposal for a distinct Community of Practice within the WEA. This illustrates how the exercise of professional agency can bring something new into being.

3.2.4 Power and Freedom.

Biesta states his understanding of the Arendt's notion of action thus:

> The basic idea of Arendt's understanding of action is therefore very simple: *we cannot act in isolation.* If I were to begin something but no one would respond, nothing would follow from my initiative and, as a result, my beginnings would not come into the world. *I* would not appear in the world. But if I begin something and others do take up my beginnings, I *do* come into the world, and in precisely this moment I *am* free. (2013: 106)

In the section on willing in *Life of the Mind* (1977), Arendt argues that, phenomenologically speaking, the exercise of freedom is not an act of will, not a private experience of individual sovereignty, but rather it is the opportunity "to call something into being which did not exist before" (ibid: 151), and further, that "The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom and its field of

experience is action" (ibid: 149). For Arendt (1968a), freedom arises out of relationship and contrasts this with a more individualised notion of individual autonomy. Arendt suggests that this liberal view

> leads either to a denial of human freedom – namely, if it is realized that whatever men may be, they are never sovereign – or to the insight that the freedom of one man, or a group, or a body politic can be purchased only at the price of the freedom, i.e., the sovereignty, of all others'. (Arendt 1968a: 163)

For Arendt, action is one of the defining features of humanity, but it is a potentiality more than an actuality for much of human history. Action takes place when people can come together, freely, in the public realm. It follows that being politically active is aided by, but is not conditional on, having the formal rights of a citizen, but that such rights exist only as a consequence of the institutionalisation of action taken by others at some point. For Arendt the potential for action is an outcome of human relationships and a critical element of what it means to be a free citizen. It does not depend solely on the qualities the individual actors bring to a situation, nor solely on the characteristics of the situation in which they find themselves. As we have seen, Arendt stated that most political thinking concerned itself with government and rule; this she saw as a side show, an after-effect of action.

This rather turns the tables on 'active citizenship'; rather than the action being regarded as dependent upon the status of citizenship, action itself becomes a precondition for becoming a citizen, it brings citizenship into being. This is a central theme of this thesis and goes some way toward locating the political heart of Citizenship Education.

Action is primary; legal status secondary. The latter, a consequence of the exercise of power. The status of citizenship itself is historically the outcome of public actions, generally

of a revolutionary nature. In *On Revolution*, Arendt (1963) provides a historical account of this in the American and French Revolutions. She also shows the tendency for those fleeting moments, when power is recognised as belonging to the citizens, to become lost in the collective desire for governance and the willingness of those so nominated to assume leadership and consolidate it. As Arendt comments, "The most radical revolutionary becomes a conservative the day after the revolution" (Arendt 1970b).

The liberal/humanist approach locates the quality of action as belonging to the actor; it is situated within the individual and as such can, therefore, be developed through an educative process. Arendt's characterisation of action subverts the individualising tendency within liberal democracy, action is taken in plurality; it belongs neither to the actor nor the situation. It is by taking action in *this* political, intentional, relational way that people become citizens, that is, they inhabit the freedom implicit within that status. For Arendt, action is an end in itself: something particularly human, liberating, and even exciting. 'Active citizenship' itself is not about building a better future, whatever the declared intentions of the citizens involved; rather, when involved in 'active citizenship', the citizens are experiencing the human condition of freedom. Arendt suggests this, in itself, is an empowering experience, one distinct element of the human condition.

An element of **freedom** was also a feature of these sessions, not just negative freedoms as in an absence of coercion and surveillance but also, in Arendt's (1954a) sense, of freedom as coming into existence when exercised. In this sense freedom arises from the recognition of plurality and authenticity within a group. As a collection of mainly retired or un(der)employed people, there was no need to try to appeal to the requirements of an

employer or seek the approval of others. Here people could be true to themselves, express their own view of the world, without the expectation of assessment by a higher authority. It was not just that most of these students were past caring about what others thought about them but it was also that they actively encouraged and enjoyed the expression of others' views. This pleasure in the presence of others, and the opportunity to talk about controversial issues on which disagreement was expected, added to the tangible experience of freedom within this situation.

For Arendt, **power** is experienced in communion with others, in a situation of freedom in which action is possible. The adult WEA students tasted something of that power. A diverse group of individuals, more often in disagreement than not, took control of a situation in which others (notably the funders) had expected outcomes. The session which received the most positive feedback from students was the presentations of their own research, during which both tutors sat passively through the proceedings. The notion of 'taking back control' which featured so strongly in the leave campaign was being implemented by the students in this context.

One feature of action touched on above is that its consequences are unpredictable, and certainly not controlled or determined by the intentions or ideology of those involved. This is a feature shared with education itself; however SMART the lesson outcomes and rigorous the inspection regime, the actual learning itself is beyond direct control of the teacher. Once free of the classroom, the use students make of their education is now up to them. Biesta (2013) referred to this as 'the beautiful risk of education' and contrasted with the culture in

which every learning outcome is predetermined. This may be training, he concluded, but not education.

3.3.1 On Politics and Education.

> We must decisively divorce the realm of education from the others, most of all from the realm of public, political life, in order to apply to it alone a concept of authority and an attitude toward the past which are appropriate to it but have no general validity and must not claim a general validity in the world of grown-ups. (Arendt 1972: 13)

From the perspective of those professional identities revealed in the introduction, Arendt's view that education can play no part in politics is difficult to accept. However, they are not some aberration in an otherwise radical agenda; these views are consistent with other aspects of Arendt's political thought. Here I argue that, paradoxically, this 'conservative' approach to political education could have more potential for enabling radical change than more explicit attempts to teach politics; however, this will also involve challenging Arendt's conclusions as expressed above.

The first point is that **politics,** for Arendt, is action in the public realm, not an academic subject that can be taught at any level. To pick up where we left the civic republican tradition in chapter one, politics as a practice and citizenship as craft share the same radical orientation to shift attention from governance to the governed. Arendt regarded the public realm as the domain of grown-ups; she was acutely aware from her own experience that totalitarianism destroys both public and private realms (including childhood).

Arendt tends to use the term 'education' to refer to the formal structured curriculum as taught in schools, in which the authority derived from a collective history is crucial. She uses the term 'learning' to refer to the unstructured process which takes place informally between equals (Gordon 2001). This distinction is reflected in her rather artificial distinction between education for children and learning for adults, which is critically examined later in this chapter. Central to this is Arendt's usage of freedom (1954a) to mean something communal rather than individual; it is a prerequisite for action, and it is through action that our shared world can be renewed. It is here that the human condition of natality can find space for its expression.

However, Arendt's focus is on the action that takes place between adults in public, a process of learning from experience. She regards this as a threat to the private freedoms of childhood, a need to be conserved through education. Arendt describes her position thus:

> Conservatism in the sense of conservation, is of the essence of the educational activity, whose task is always to cherish and protect something – the child against the world, the world against the child, the new against the old, the old against the new. Even the comprehensive responsibility for the world that is thereby assumed implies, of course, a conservative attitude. (1972: 192)

Commentators such as Gordon (2001) emphasise the radical implications of Arendt's conservatism. He argues that Arendt's existential approach values tradition not as something to be revered, in itself, but as a means of reinventing the present in ways that do not mindlessly retrace routes that have already been shown to lead to disaster. He suggests that her classical reading of 'authority' had much in common with the idea of foundations. The crisis of authority many, including Arendt, perceived in Western education reflected the

shaking of those foundations and a reluctance of educators to accept the authority and responsibility implicit in their role.

Gordon (2001: 54) argues that in Arendt's view "education is aimed at preparing the young for taking responsibility for the world" not "returning to a golden past". It means preparing students for "intervening in the world and creating a more humane society" (ibid). He reminds us of Arendt's, not uncritical, support for the student movements of the 60s and 70s.

So, it seems that Arendt educators have a responsibility both to conserve the enduring institutions and traditions of humanity by passing them on to a new generation and also to conserve the capacity of that new generation to create something new in the world. She expresses this most clearly in the conclusion to her only article specifically dedicated to education which introduces this thesis and is repeated below.

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from the ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt 1968b: 196)

3.3.2 Conservation in practice.

The litter pickers from chapter one can be used to illustrate conservation in practice. The adults were taking full responsibility for this activity, no group of Y7s was left without the supervision of an appropriately qualified adult. Responsibility was also being assumed by the adults for the world as it was, in all its messiness. They were also presenting something

of this world to the children, by inviting in the recycling team and representatives of a community group who regularly volunteered to pick up litter. In this way, it could be regarded as preparing them for the task of renewing a common world and not just leaving them to their own devices.

It did not, however, offer an opportunity for the children to exercise their own responsibility; they were not challenged to find their own solutions arising from this shared experience, nor create new beginnings by taking action themselves. The adults took the ability to respond away from the children, arguably for sound pedagogic reasons, but at the cost of an explicit political dimension, and as explained in chapter one. For Crick at least this would not be 'active citizenship', and for Arendt it is not action in the public realm.

The Y9 'uniform' students, however, were presented with such a challenge; having identified something they wished to change in their, but not the adults', common world, they welcomed the opportunity to try to do something about it. They had been informed of the traditions of protest and reform, of the suffragettes and the civil rights movement. They were also reminded of the constraints to their action imposed by the rules of the institution and their responsibilities to the community they shared. Their teacher was taking very seriously his responsibility not to get them expelled from the world, well the school at least, not just for the sake of their education but for his own continued employment. As that teacher, I stuck my neck out to protect my students from the world, in this case some members of the senior management team. This was an attempt to conserve a space, however limited, for political activity.

There was an explicit political element in the pedagogy for the Y9s, the research tasks that examined who exercised control in school, and the students who were exercising their own power (in Arendt's sense). There was some scope to create something new, something unforeseen. In their own time and unknown to the teacher, one group of students came up with their own preferred uniform design, one which involved a lot of window shopping in the more fashionable city shops.

In contrast, the adult WEA students relied less on their tutors to take responsibility to protect them from the world. It was not disputed that there was a hidden agenda from the funders, but even without the encouragement of the tutors, most of these students were determined to express their views and treated with healthy scepticism any attempt to influence them by experts and other authorities. In one session a representative of the EU Information Office visited with a 39 slide PowerPoint presentation. She did not get past slide 19 as the students were determined to ask questions. They appreciated her honesty when she responded 'off script' and she claimed to have enjoyed the challenge. For some weeks following, she sent messages to me as tutor with information requested by different students (by this stage they had embarked on their research projects).

What was noticeable was how these students followed the lead of those with experience of democratic education. Those with experience of WEA classes did not wait to be invited to ask questions, and U3A members took control of seating arrangements and refreshments. The novelty for many was the opportunity to come together in a public space to discuss political questions rather that debate prepared answers. This was something that the tutors and the course structure facilitated.

As we can see in these examples, the boundary between adult and child learners is not clear cut; in both cases the educator has a role in protecting the freedom of a public space to enable action to be possible. Likewise, the educator has a responsibility to present the accumulated wisdom of those who have been there before, to enable their students to have the possibility of a new beginning which does not replicate old errors. This is, arguably, less due to the maturity of different learners and more to do with the nature of their experience of education and the expectations arising. Arendt does not seem to regard the classroom as a suitable place for the experience of action because of the need to protect natality. As a practitioner, I have experienced a sense of shared freedom and equality in learning with children and adults. In contrast, as a teacher I have often also exercised an authority to attempt to direct the learning experience with students aged 14 to 94. To me it seems that both have a place and that it is previous exposure to education and an openness to learning that are more critical than an over emphasis on chronological age.

Anya Topolski (2008) argues that the failure to engage politically as adults in the public realm contributes to the attempt to impose a form of Citizenship Education on our children to compensate for this democratic deficit. She suggests that "What Arendt makes crystal clear is that education should not be conceived of as a political tool. Children are ends in themselves, not the means to 'save the world' from itself" (275). She concludes that an education which provides access to "the past, to tradition, to our roots" will hopefully "inspire us to judge and act when we are welcomed, as adults and equals, into the *polis*" (280).

The problem with this more traditionally conservative interpretation of Arendt is its uncritical idealism regarding the nature of education for most children. The idea that tradition can be transmitted intact without imposing an interpretation is naive. To offer up a range of interpretations is to introduce a plurality of views without developing the critical skills needed to form a judgement regarding their value. This is not protecting the capacity for natality to emerge. In contrast, Stacey Smith (2001) argues that Arendt's claim that "education can play no part in politics" (Arendt 1972: 177) does not mean that "preparation for politics – in the spirit of preparing children for the task of renewing a common world – can play no part" (Smith 2001: 79).

Gert Biesta (2013: 101–118) argues against Arendt's separation of politics and education using her own notions of freedom in action. He accuses Arendt of constructing an artificial distinction between adult and child as of a form of developmentalism which imagines the process of transition as some form of Piagetian staged emergence of becoming. He claims that Arendt is falling into the trap of looking at education as a psychological process of development occurring within the child. "The mistake" he asserts "is to assume that childhood and adulthood are natural categories and not social or political ones, and that freedom only has to do with the latter and not with the former" (ibid: 104). However, he goes on to claim that Arendt's notion of "being-together-in-plurality" is a freedom in relationship that "cannot be produced educationally but only be achieved politically." This, he argues, "provides us with a way of understanding democratic education that is non-psychological and non-moral but nonetheless thoroughly political" (ibid: 104).

Arendt's notion of a relational freedom through plurality offers a less deterministic and more hopeful vision from a practitioner's perspective. It does demand, however, a willingness to examine the ways in which collectively we conspire to limit our freedom; to acknowledge the inequalities of power relations. It also demands a certain courage in attempting to conserve natality, to be able to create a space in which action can occur regardless of age, ethnicity, ability, etc. Accepting this responsibility for the conservation of natality in the world seems like a daunting task for any educator given the requirements of accountability and performativity.

Duarte (2010) argues that to recognise the revolutionary potential of Arendt's notion of conservation in education requires an appreciation of her understanding of thinking. This we turn to in the next chapter.

3.4.0 Education and 'bringing to action'.

Arendt is not an educationalist; more has been written about her views on education that she herself wrote directly on the topic. For those of us more directly involved in educational endeavours who take up her ideas, the implications for educational practice could be radically different depending on our interpretation of Arendtian concepts, and in the selection of those concepts that we use. I have taken Arendt's notions of Action and Natality to argue that these both deepen and politicise the meaning of 'active citizenship'. The challenge for the educator is that these qualities need both to be protected and promoted in an often-inhospitable educative setting.

That task is not helped when Arendt locates politics and action as belonging to the public realm and claims that children's education belongs in the private realm so best protecting natality. Pat Hannam (2016), in her examination of the role of Religious Education in state funded schools, argues that education belongs in the public realm in that it represents the child "coming into the world"; its first step outside of the family. She argues:

> That education, and therefore an educative school should be a place of human togetherness; a place where people exist together in plurality and that it can therefore be a place of appearance. I agree with Arendt that education should be a place of natality, however I challenge her view that education belongs in the private sphere by putting to her that surely, she would not want to suggest that education cannot be a place where freedom can appear. (129)

Hannam suggests that a key role of education is in bringing the child into the human world, a process she calls "bringing the child to human togetherness: to action in plurality" (128). She concludes that education

> Must be conceptualised as a place of appearance, understood in terms of action, and concerned with human togetherness; education therefore must be considered as part of the public sphere. What education should do therefore in bringing children to action is to bring children to choice regarding human togetherness, which is distinct from simply bringing people together, in order for them to make their appearance in the world. (130)

I have offered an answer to the question "What do we mean by 'active citizenship'?" by proposing a distinctly Arendtian interpretation. Hannam's idea of "bringing the child to action in plurality" extends this by providing a role of education in regard to 'active citizenship', which is basically aiming to create a situation in which action is possible. The Y9 'uniform' students from chapter one illustrates this process; in self-selected groups they choose to 'appear together' in public with their posters and petitions. In contrast, the Y7 litter pickers, although publicly visible in town, made no such appearance; there was no

attention paid to a plurality of views or choice of activity. The referendum adults did more to bring themselves to action, by encouraging plurality and appearance in a public realm.

The route taken by Hannam, from the different starting point of Religious Education, does seem to overlap with this journey which started with the more explicitly political subject of Citizenship. As researcher, I slowly came to recognise that investigating 'active citizenship' in an educational context has meaning only when it addresses education as a whole and not some collection of knowledge claimed by subject specialists. When education is treated as an induction into the public sphere, the issues of plurality and freedom, which Arendt claims enables politics to emerge, become concerns which present themselves to educators too. We must ask to what extent does education endorse or limit plurality? To what extent does it promote or inhibit the realisation of the freedom implicit in the public realm? This is a radical reading of Arendt which challenges our thinking on education. It also takes us closer to the political heart of education.

Pat Hannam took a step forward in identifying the part education can play in bringing action into a space in which natality can be conserved, plurality embraced, freedom recognised, and to an extent, power realised. This is not something specific to a Citizenship Teachers' classroom, nor to Religious Education, although it can be argued as central to both, but it could be found in any classroom, including, as I have argued here, an adult one. Arguably, it has more to do with the relationship between educator and educated than with the subject content, or skills developed. The curriculum and/or educator may inhibit or enable its appearance.

The idea that Citizenship Education can be left to non-specialists, which is already too often the case in many schools, or that dedicated teaching time is not a basic requirement, is not what I am arguing here, nor is it an implication I could support. Citizenship, as a discrete subject, promoted in the UK by the Crick (1999) report, is an area where the issues of freedom and of plurality are difficult to avoid. However, it is a subject that will always be subjected to control by those who view education as principally transmission of culture. This way of conceptualising Arendt's ideas does not give one subject an exclusivity in these concerns, nor does it remove from others the responsibility to address them.

From an Arendtian perspective, 'active citizenship' is, therefore, a type of citizenship in which action exists. Citizens are exercising their citizenship when they are engaged in action. It follows from this that the role of education in bringing 'active citizenship' into being is that of 'bringing to action'. This not something that can be taught; it is not something possessed of individual students; it exists when they are attending to their plurality, in a condition of freedom.

Chapter Four:

To think what we are doing.

> What I propose in the following is a reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears. This, obviously, is a matter of thought, and thoughtlessness […] What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than **to think** what we are doing. (Arendt 1998: 5)

4.1.0 Introduction.

In chapter one, I argued that the multitude of interpretations of the term 'active citizenship' had neutered its political potency. In the previous chapter I suggested that it regained something of its radical potential when the active quality is identified with Arendt's characterisation of action. Without action in Arendt's sense, citizenship becomes a passive institution, a tool of control rather than an expression of freedom. For Arendt, action and the exercise of citizenship are one, and both require an element of freedom. This presents challenges for Citizenship Education. Action, as we have seen, is not something that can be taught; freedom is not another's gift; and both need to be recognised to be brought into

being. This process of recognition involves a form of thinking described and practised by Arendt, which requires a withdrawal from the world, whilst transcending individual selfhood and engaging with others' perspectives. It is both a critical and reflexive practice with affective and collaborative dimensions. This chapter will examine the process and its implications for both citizenship and education.

This involves examining the dominant pedagogic interpretation of Active Citizenship which is based upon concepts of active learning rooted in the work of John Dewey. Reflection on activity is central to this approach but, I argue, the differences between this and Arendt's more moral, politically engaged thinking need to be teased out using examples from practice. The relationship between knowledge and power is also touched upon in the context of Citizenship Education using Arendt's notion of power to deepen the analysis.

In the previous chapter the idea of bringing to action through plurality was extended from Hannam's (2016) original application to include adult education. It describes the part educators can play in facilitating a situation in which plurality can be manifest and **politics**, in Arendt's use of the term, can emerge, giving room for the birth of the new which Arendt called the condition of **natality**. This 'newness' is not simply a novel form of relationship or human institution but also an experience of appearance in the world. It is argued (with Hannam 2016, 2019) that this is an educational experience, although one that pedagogic approaches with an emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge rather than the creation of meaning tend to ignore (Biesta 2010). This puts a responsibility on the educator to represent the best of existent traditions that enable freedom to survive whilst striving to protect the freedom of each new generation to recreate their shared world anew.

Finally, this chapter briefly examines Arendt's take on judgement and its relationship to thinking and action. This touches on the extent to which 'coming to judgement' can be regarded as an educative practice too.

This reflexive thinking process is central to the methodological approach taken here and at the heart of the interpretation of 'active citizenship' promoted in this thesis. It is also integral to the practice, if not the theory, of politics. The relationship between this and Reflective Practice in education will also be examined. Initially, I ground this discussion in a story crafted from reflections on practice to illustrate the concepts involved. This also serves as a metaphor to examine the complex relationship between the individual's experience of thought and the collectivised experience of the world we hold in common.

4.1.1 The Choir – A reflection on Practice.

This example is from the practice of my professional identity as an examiner. I had already encountered Arendt's thinking about thinking at this stage in the research and this influenced the way in which I conceived and presented the students' work and the *narrative of practice* below. The Extended Project (EPQ) is a stand-alone A level equivalent qualification in which students choose to develop and extend topics from within and beyond their taught subjects. Students are required to complete a formal record of the process (the production log), a written report, and a live presentation to a non-specialist audience. Projects can involve a 5,000-word dissertation with an academic focus or the creation of an artefact (a product, performance, etc) with an accompanying, shorter, report. The section

below was a piece of autoethnographic writing on an artefact style project completed shortly after the event mentioned below took place.

The situation is a meeting of moderators to prepare them for the coming series of Extended Projects about which they will have the task of deciding the extent to which the centre (school or college) marking is in line with the standard set by the exam board. The senior moderators (of which I am one) each pick a pre-marked project to demonstrate the principles of moderation.

My chosen project is about the creation of a community choir by a sixth form student who has a passion for singing as part of a choir, so much so that he had run one for the teachers in his school. Flushed with this success, he next plans to create one for elderly people in the local community. He contacts the local branch of the charity Age Concern, and they help promote the idea and provide a venue. His project report starts with a review of research literature which suggests that participation in community choirs has clear psychological and physical health benefits. He then explains the process of recruiting the choir and running the sessions. His project submission includes a variety of evidence, including posters, a journal with his reflections on each session, a before and after questionnaire, and a comment book for the participants to use.

In my short presentation, I claim this as an example of a 'Social Action' project, where the choir is the artefact, and the outcome being the hoped-for beneficial impact on participants. This impact was assessed using data from the questionnaires, the comments book, and the student's reflective journal. I argued that this could be regarded as a form of 'active citizenship', even though the student and school did not characterise it as such.

I used this as an opportunity to promote the guidance I had written for project supervisors and Citizenship Teachers on how to use project qualifications to accredit Active Citizenship. This guidance had been produced with the support of colleagues from the exam board and from ACT (Association for Citizenship Teaching) and promoted by both organisations. Its aim was to enable supervisors to encourage and support their students in developing projects with 'real world' impact and to recognise this as an expression of 'active citizenship'. This is something which could also be supported by specialist Citizenship Teachers and the extensive resources available through ACT and other organisations promoting Citizenship Education.

4.1.2 Commentary on the Choir.

In the language of Citizenship Education, the student was taking 'responsible action' to 'attempt to bring about positive change'. The rather contentious issue of who defines 'responsible' and from whose perspective change is 'positive' is rarely addressed within this

community of practice. An element of freedom is integral to the Extended Project Qualification as teachers are required to act as research supervisors not as subject experts, offering guidance but not taking control of the process. The student is, hopefully, able to become the expert, to take control of their own project and to demonstrate an independence of judgement and problem solving.

All choir members volunteered to take part, without the coercion of an institutional hierarchy: the choir 'master' some 40–50 years their junior. The questionnaire data revealed that, for most, the motivation was an opportunity to meet different people, an expression of plurality, and to take part in a communal activity. The project was called 'finding your voice'. From this meeting of voices, something new, for the participants at least, was created. This I claim as evidence of natality.

Community choirs have a long history, one often linked with solidarity, community cohesion, and the experience of an identification beyond the individual. In the UK there has been something of a resurgence of community choirs. This, it could be argued from the perspective of Critical Theory, reflects the individualised loneliness of modernity, perpetuated by neoliberal consumer-capitalism. Not that these issues are considered by the student; the formal Political (in its non-Arendtian meaning) dimension of this activity was left unexamined. Further questioning by the supervisor may have led the student to ask why loneliness had become such an issue for the elderly in our culture. However, there was no requirement to do so. Creating a space for Social Action to be examined and discussed, reflected upon, and talked about in the context of secondary education seemed to be a challenge in itself worth pursuing, even if it lacked the critical thinking I would expect to find

as an A level Citizenship Examiner. The guidance I produced for supervisors aimed to legitimise this as equivalent to the more academic dissertations preferred by some sixth forms. It also suggested the type of questioning from a supervisor which could lead the student to examine the social and political context in which the proposed 'positive' change was to be attempted.

Community choirs could be said to operate in a public space, generally open to all comers, and although the voices may not be expressing diverse beliefs or discussing political issues, I will claim that the activity touches on Arendt's sense of action. A harmony of voices has a power, which resonates with Arendt's use of the term, expressed though people acting together. Such choirs can enhance plurality to the extent that they overcome barriers of class, ethnicity, gender, and age.

For Arendt, "power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert"; it "is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together" (1970: 44). I claim that community choirs have the potential to demonstrate many of the key features of Arendt's concept of action, to the extent that they are rooted in a plurality of voices and, in that they generate a sense of becoming, can give rise to natality. I am not claiming this project as political, even in Arendt's broad terms, but as at least proto-political because it involves action in the public sphere; potentially bringing something new into the world. I accept that this is rather extending the limits of Arendt's meanings, but it does illustrate how activities with a political dimension may arise in a community context which more explicit political education may

lack. In the latter, awareness of the political context may be present without the means to bring about change, effectively knowledge without power.

What is lacking in the Community Choir project is reflection on the wider context and aims of the project and some analysis of the social impact on the wider community beyond individual choir members. Some mention is made of the intention by choir members to continue meeting, and the charities use the project as a successful case study, but reflection on this is limited. In terms of Arendt's injunction "to think what we are doing", there is a degree of thoughtlessness concerning the wider consequences of the action in the public sphere, thinking critically about what one is doing was underdeveloped in this case, although it still deserved its A* grade, according to the qualification criteria.

4.2.1 Powerful knowledge in Citizenship Education.

My characterisation of the choir as an 'active citizenship' project in the extract above would be contested by Bernard Crick (and many others, including many Citizenship Teachers) as it contains no explicit political literacy. This is partly because there is no attempt to research citizenship concepts (the research is more psychological) and there is little application of distinct citizenship skills. In this section, the 'power' of such knowledge is examined.

Lee Jerome (2018) has argued that a principal aim of Citizenship Education is to transmit powerful knowledge. He refers to the work of Young (2013) who defines knowledge as powerful when "it provides the best understanding of the natural and social worlds that we have and helps us go beyond our individual experiences" (196) and that it is "based on concepts, not facts alone" (Young 2011: 276). Jerome (2018) adds that "it is powerful

because it opens up new ways of thinking and new avenues for action". Young contrasts this with the "knowledge of the powerful", which effectively maintains the status quo and tends to dominate much that passes for Citizenship Education. Active Citizenship projects presented for the GCSE qualification in Citizenship require some analysis of concepts and an application of knowledge to attempt to bring about change; however, in the current (2020) version of the qualification, such practical understanding only accounts directly for 15% of the marks awarded. Jerome shows how much of the current GCSE contains knowledge presented in such a way that it obscures the potential for change. For example, the role of Black Rod in the UK Parliament is identified in the specification as an item that can be examined, but there is little guidance on the historical context that would enable this to be regarded as an exercise of power by the Parliamentarians in the House of Commons in defiance of the Monarch's authority.

The role of education, from this perspective, is to reveal the powerful nature of knowledge, to sieve for relevance and shine a light on significance. Jerome suggests that teachers create a hierarchy of concepts, which enables a distinction between overarching themes and the more specific examples listed in the syllabus. In constructing questions for the A level qualification, much attention was given to introducing scenarios which would challenge students to reflect on and apply their conceptual understanding to novel situations. At GCSE there is more testing of knowledge items and less scope for application of these in ways which could bring about change.

To return to the example of the choir, here is a project lacking in an application of powerful Citizenship knowledge, which is why it would not make a good Active Citizenship project

given the assessment criteria. However, it does have the Arendtian quality of action in the public sphere; there is attention to plurality and a serious, and well researched, attempt to make a difference to people's lives by realising something of the power of authentic voices in unison.

What makes knowledge a route to power in Arendt's use of the term is rooted in its capacity to lead to action, which is powerful because it is shared with others and belongs in the public sphere. I suggest that it is this positioning of action that gives it an affective dimension which resonates in the space between as well as within individuals.

In the choir project, action and power exist without the necessity of specific powerful knowledge. In the Citizenship Curriculum, powerful knowledge can exist without recognition of its potential for power. This poses a question: how can education enable the realisation of potentially powerful knowledge? Certainly, a teacher can have a role in drawing their students' attention to this potential, but that is only part of the answer. What if the teacher is unaware of the power, or unable to recognise this themselves, given that the subject content gives little clue? This is not helped due to factors outlined in chapter one and the fact that appropriately trained specialist Citizenship Teachers can be a scarce resource.

In chapter one, I mentioned Crick's critique of voluntarism (also called Service Learning), where one can certainly have action in the public realm without developing political literacy. Jerome (2012) suggests that the weakness of this form of learning through service is due to a lack of explicit, informed, critical reflection on the experience, in other words developing powerful knowledge. Arendt's vision of action suggests that this form of critical thinking needs to be more embedded in the experience of human plurality.

Hannam (2016) makes a distinction in relation to the role of the teacher in Religious Education (RE) between 'bringing to reason' (after Peters 2010) and 'bringing to attention' (after Weil 2003). She concludes that "Reason has a role here, but reasoning is not what religious education should aim to achieve as an end in itself […] because reason always has another end outside itself" (Hannam 2019: 120). This emphasis on powerful knowledge in Citizenship Education can effectively lead on to a bringing to reason but not necessarily a bringing to action.

In Citizenship Education, it seems that these two domains of meaning (pedagogic and political) can be conflated to the detriment of democratic participation. I suggest below that countering this trend involves reflection which includes an affective and moral reflexivity where thinking appears in the presence of others. These contested terms are examined next.

4.2.2 Reflection and Reflexivity.

Dewey (1910: 55) defined reflective thought as

> Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads. […] it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality.

Note here the emphasis on evidence-based judgement and an appeal to rationality. In contrast, Gillie Bolton (2010: xix) provides a more experiential definition of reflection as an "in depth consideration of events or situations: the people involved, what they experienced, and how they felt about it." This retains Dewey's use of 'considered' but adds a more

situated emphasis with the inclusion of explicit affective and ethical dimensions. She goes on to add: "This involves reviewing or reliving the experience to bring it into focus and replaying from diverse points of view" (ibid), which is introducing a degree of reflexivity. This has moved somewhat from Dewey's effort to find a rational empirical basis for belief toward a more nuanced acceptance of a diversity of beliefs and positionalities.

This notion of reflection has some parallels with Arendt's use of '**thinking**' to mean a positioned reflection on our shared experiences, which is both ethically engaged and recognises a plurality of views and experiences. For Dewey, reflective thinking is "more or less troublesome" (1910: 13) because it "involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value" which involves a painful process of suspended judgement, including "mental unrest and disturbance". Contrast this with Arendt's assertion at the head of this chapter that thinking is dangerous. I suggest that the difference is an appreciation of the political dimension of thinking when embedded in the world. This also involves a recognition of the affective dimension of thought when embodied in the experience of those engaged with this reality. This can be contrasted with an understanding of thinking as a more abstracted, individualised process consistent with liberal democracy. Dewey's experience of relative freedom and his familiarity with the early aspirations of American democracy may have made him more comfortable with enlightenment ideals of rationality and the liberty of the individual thinker. Arendt's experience of the eclipse of such ideals and the rise of totalitarianism may have contributed to her interpretation. For her, there is no "more or less" temporary discomfort; thinking deeply and critically is, in itself, downright dangerous and in an era of post-truth and Twitter diplomacy, the consequences of action without thinking are becoming arguably even more dangerous.

Given Dewey's seminal influence on democratic education, it would be misleading to claim that Dewey's formulation of Action Learning is apolitical. Indeed, it could be argued, that his emphasis on this form of praxis provides a means for political concerns to enter an otherwise abstract educational environment removed from worldly concerns. What I am suggesting is that, within the practice of Citizenship Education, although Active Learning holds out the potential for political engagement, it also provides an arena where the political can be squeezed out as much as also potentially squeezed in. The coursework for GCSE Citizenship and the Social Action projects from the National Citizenship Service provide examples where the political element is not explored, such as the many reports of voluntary work undertaken; or lacking altogether, as in most of the activities involving fund raising for charities.

In the EPQ process, the student is expected to exercise independence in identifying a topic for research. The recurring advice to new students, from those who have completed a project, is to choose something they are passionate about. Most successful projects do seem to share a relevance to what matters to the student, which provides the motivation to persevere. I suggest that this type of activity has more in common with Arendt's style of thinking than Dewey's rational reflection. The next sections will explore further this affective dimension.

4.2.3 Thinking without a banister.

> You said, 'groundless thinking'. I have a metaphor which is not quite that cruel, and which I have never published but kept for myself. I call it thinking without a banister. In German, *Denken ohne Geländer*. That is, as you go up and down the stairs you can always hold onto the banister so that you don't fall down. But we have lost this

> banister. That is the way I tell it to myself. And this indeed what I try to do. (Arendt 2018: vi)

Arendt referred to her method of inquiry as 'thinking without a banister' to imply the lack of grand narrative and the condition of plurality (Arendt 2018, Urabayen 2014). In her reflection on judgement, she emphasises the need to take on other perspectives, to see through others' eyes and feel the implications of so doing before reaching a conclusion. I suggest this involves a measure of reflexivity, at least in the sense of the professional practice outlined by Kim Etherington in her 2004 book *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher*:

> Reflexivity is a skill that we develop as counsellors; an ability to notice our responses to the world around us, other people, and events, and to use that knowledge to inform our actions, communications and understanding. To be reflexive we need to be aware of our personal responses and to be able to make choices about how to use them. We also need to be aware of the personal, social, and cultural contexts in which we live and work and to understand how these impact on the ways we interpret our world. (19)

It is now generally accepted as a false dichotomy to try to separate thought from affect. Neuropsychology suggests that cognition cannot be understood without reference to the evaluative processes that include affect and emotion (Varela et al 1991). Social Psychology also suggests that understanding emotions needs to take account of the social and cultural context in which they are expressed. However, this distinction is useful here in examining the distinction between Dewey's definition of reflection and Arendt's version of thinking. The idea of reflection as an examination of existing ideas in the light of experience is central to the educational enterprises that can trace their ancestry from Dewey's work. Kolb's action learning cycle for example is a formulation of this as is Donald Schön's notion of the reflective practitioner.

However, as Kelly (2011: 1) points out, most teaching and other forms of complex social activity are "tacit behaviours which are embodied, unarticulated (and to some extent un-articulatable), and of which we may be largely unaware". Schön's concept of reflection-in-action does not really seem to do justice to this in that it implies some form of cognitive processing one step removed from the action itself.

One significant critique of Schön's work comes from Erlandson & Beach (2008) who comment "that having theoretical knowledge about discussions on analysing human practice is not the same thing as actually analysing human practice" (413). This, they argue, locates the locus of reflection as being in the mind of the thinker about practice rather than the body of the practitioner, and they respectfully suggest that Schön was guilty of using a Cartesian matrix, the outcome of which was a privileging of understanding over doing.

I am not arguing here that an educator's role in developing 'active citizenship' necessarily involves becoming more of a reflective practitioner, or even to practise reflexivity. I am arguing that engagement with the political through dialogue with others necessarily involves reflexivity in transcending the positioned self and potentially the dominant cultural narratives. Action, in Arendt's sense, involves bringing into being something new, unknown before, from the space between, not within individual thinkers.

Bleakley (2000) claims that reflective practice often becomes un-reflexive and falls into the dominant narrative conventions of our culture.

> Much academic writing in education can be said to lack body and image; vitality, movement, sensuality, sinuousness, fluidity, character, presence, immediacy, impact, and metaphorical depth. […] then the kinds of writing employed will constitute the kinds of reflection enacted. Flat, literal, instrumental and technical-rational writing will produce similar styles of reflection and reflective subjectivities. (12)

Bleakley (1999) used the term holistic reflexivity to refer to a more embodied process that permitted the inclusion of affective, aesthetic, and non-rational dimensions of awareness. This I suggest is closer to Arendt's approach than Dewey's emphasis on rationality as dominant and Schön's privileging of cognitive over affective processes.

4.2.4 On thoughtlessness and education.

In her analysis of the Origins of Totalitarianism (1951), Arendt tries to identify those elements which crystallised together to make the Final Solution appear a solution at all. She suggests that any ideology can fuel totalitarianism when it becomes the only one available; when the plurality implicit in our humanity, so important to Arendt, is denied and politics, the arena in which plurality is negotiated and explored, becomes impossible. She suggests that those elements are implicit in Western culture, in our way of thinking and consequently in our way of being.

For Arendt (1963), thinking was what Adolf Eichmann did not do; it was not that he was unintelligent: he was an effective, creative administrator. For her, thinking and evil doing were incompatible; following Socrates, she, perhaps naively, tended to assume that most people would prefer death than live at odds with their conscience.

In her discussion of Eichmann, Hannah Arendt claimed he was 'thoughtless' in the sense that he was unable to appreciate the human consequences of his behaviour, whilst playing his part in finding a solution to the 'Jewish problem'. He was not just following orders; he engaged fully with what he was doing and believed that he was a good citizen of the Reich. He was not forced; he volunteered, and found creative solutions, in his words he was doing

his duty. What Eichmann seemed incapable of doing was thinking and feeling from another's perspective, one of critical reflection on his own practice, of judgement in Arendt's terms. Or, in Bolton's terms introduced above, of reflecting on his own actions and their effects from a position of reflexivity.

For Arendt, thinking is unrelated to intelligence as such:

> The absence of thought is not stupidity; it can be found in highly intelligent people, and a wicked heart is not its cause, it is probably the other way round, that wickedness may be caused by absence of thought. 1978: 13

An illustration of this can be provided from one of my WEA courses on Hannah Arendt, when discussion centred on the extent of Eichmann's unthinking ordinariness. One student, a retired medical doctor, argued that most ordinary people were like Eichmann, uninclined to think and feel deeply about the work they did and the moral dimensions of the action they took. He suggested that Arendt's familiarity with the world of philosophy and the classics led her to expect too much of those who had not had the privilege of such an education. Another student took exception to this; she claimed that her dad, who was relatively uneducated, still knew the difference between right and wrong and that her experience of educated people did nothing to convince her that formal education and the capacity for moral judgement were necessarily connected.

Despite her own erudition and classical education, Arendt does not seem to regard education as the answer to the question of how to protect the world from itself; indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, she is keen to protect children from the political indoctrination of adults and to avoid a situation where an older generation transfer their moral responsibility for their actions on to the next.

4.2.5 Emotion, affect, and reason.

In this chapter I have promoted an understanding of Arendt's terms 'thinking' and 'judgement', which although not rejecting the importance of rationality, attempts to balance this with a concern for the affective component which arises from engagement with the world around us. I have also proposed a role for reflective practice in that it can prove a means to step back from that world and engage with other perspectives, so creating scope for agency and enabling inclusive judgement.

However, as Zembylas (2020) points out, Arendt herself was deeply sceptical about the role of emotion in political life. However, in her account of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, her judgement was that his crime against humanity was his incapacity to be touched by the suffering he contributed to. Zembylas suggests that the key to understanding this apparent contradiction is in the way in which these powerful emotions are shared in the public realm.

> Compared with the reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life – the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses – lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance. (Arendt 1998: 50)

Arendt's concern was with the way in which the feeling expressed could become the focus of attention rather than the events themselves which gave rise to these feelings. Zembylas argues that Arendt's dismissal of political education as a form of indoctrination was grounded in her own experiences of totalitarianism where powerful emotions were manipulated with tragic effect. She was dismissive of all forms of sentimentalism when considering political events, preferring instead a 'heartless' confrontation with reality.

However, for this 'reality' to have any impact it needs a sensitivity to others' experience, which Arendt regarded as an essential aspect of humanity. In other words, there needs to be a 'heart' there to confront. I have used the term 'affect' rather than emotion to imply this moral sensitivity. This in no way replaces the need for the exercise of reason and rationality, it just needs to be clear in whose service they ae employed. This distinction is picked up again in the next chapter where the nature of this relationship is explored in the context of 'neighbourly love'.

4.3.1 Thinking in the conservatory.

> If the central task of education is the introduction of a student qua newcomer into a world that is always already growing old, then it is the responsibility of the educator to create a space, what we might call a 'conservatory,' where students are able to be students, that is, to engage the world from a distance, a location where they are able to think about this old world that, ultimately, they will be asked to renew and repair. (Duarte 2010: 495)

Edwardo Manuel Duarte, in his 2010 article *Educational Thinking and the Conservation of the Revolutionary*, argues that the conservative role of education in protecting the potential for natality, discussed in the previous chapter, is best understood in terms of Arendt's take on thinking. He asks, "How can the life of the student be both educational and pre-political, that is, remain apart from, and yet in some way also engaged with, the world?" (495).

His answer rests in an understanding of the nature of thinking developed in Arendt's final book *The Life of the Mind* (1978) where he claims that "while the activities of the mind are always related to the world, they are not *of* or *in* the world. The mind's activities are always the result of a withdrawal, a move that is *disruptive*" (497). It is this disruptive process of

withdrawal that I am describing above as an expression of reflexivity. It is in this way that thinking is both a solitary activity and one held in concert with others. Arendt (1978) uses the metaphor of spectators at the theatre, each making up their own judgement about a shared experience. It is the world held in common that unites these thinkers, in that the thinking itself makes use of the signs and symbols which are in themselves aspects of the common world. The thinker as such can never be truly alone, but they can create a space from which to observe, to become spectators, from which judgement and action can become possible.

> If men were not distinct, each human being distinguished from any other who is, was, or will ever be, they would need neither speech nor action to make themselves understood. [… Such is] the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals. (Arendt 1978 175–76, 178)

This withdrawal from the world to be able to participate in it, to become a spectator prior to becoming an actor, Duarte claims as an educative process. To the extent that this leads to action, it becomes a political process, or at least to the genesis of one. This, I suggest, is one of those qualities that lies at the political heart of education for 'active citizenship'.

The case study that follows aims to contextualise this discussion and to illustrate how the 'soundless dialogue' described by Arendt can become a shared experience.

4.4.1 Aliens in Armagh.

Here I recount a case study not directly from my own teaching experience but from a teacher in Northern Ireland. It is reported by McSharry & Cusack (2016) in research undertaken for the Five Nations Project; a teacher education programme run by the

Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT). (The Five Nations includes the four nations of the UK plus Eire.)

The teacher was concerned that in their Catholic secondary school the students never talked about the divisions that still existed in the town despite two decades of peace and power sharing between the different communities. As Citizenship Coordinator, she opened up space for discussion in her classes, where students acknowledged that there were still parts of the town they would not visit in school uniform, and certain shops that their parents forbade them to use. Arising from these discussions, a group of students decided to create a short animation which followed a family of aliens from a different planet visiting the town and struggling to make sense of the different allegiances and symbolism which marked the divisions so apparent to, but un-reflected on by, their hosts. This developed into a cross-curricular project, and with support from senior management, the completed animation became a teaching resource for other year groups and other local schools.

For those students involved in creating the animation, the learning was quite profound, but this also extended to other students in local schools who watched the completed animation. In the discussions that followed, these other students admitted that they had not really thought much about the conventions and symbols which divided their town; it was just something they grew up with but felt uncomfortable about. Being able to see their own situation reflected through alien eyes enabled them to articulate something of this discomfort. A frequent comment was that the differences between the two communities became more superficial the greater the distance from which the visitors came. This

distance introduced some reflexivity into the reflection. In Arendt's terms, plurality was extended by including animated aliens into the thinking process.

This was a project owned by the children but facilitated and envisioned by the teacher. Other members of staff were supportive but cautious, some commenting on the courage and commitment shown by the teacher most involved. Some parents too expressed concerns about the controversial nature of the content. The fact that para-military groups still operated in the area, and that explosive devices had recently been discovered, highlighted the dangers inherent in reflecting on those discordant areas where passions are deeply rooted in collective histories and violence is never far away. In 1969 Arendt published *On Violence* in which she explained how politics and violence were mutually exclusive and that the former was inhibited and eclipsed by the latter. This case study illustrates well how the fear of violence can also potentially threaten the emergence of an educational process with a clear political dimension. In Arendt's terms, it can inhibit the appearance of these young people as free citizens able to take action in the public realm.

In terms of conserving the potential for natality, discussed in the previous chapter, I argue that the teacher is protecting her students from the intrusion of the adult world by creating a space for reflection on their experience. She is inviting them to attend (Hannam 2016) to this aspect of their shared world and to relate authentically with each other. In this she is bringing them to action, bringing into existence something new to them, as glimpsed through the animation. This in turn provoked reflection in those who viewed it. This thinking may apply the rationality desired by Dewey, but it also engages with deep and difficult emotions. It is this affective component that gives it a political dimension so often lacking

from other activities presented as expressions of Active Citizenship. It is the element of reflexivity that provides an opportunity to stand back from the world, from where to make a moral judgement.

The teacher's role involved more than creating a space for discussion and encouraging her students to attend to their feeling regarding their received townscape. She also had to have the courage to stick with this project and take responsibility for her students' activities within the institutional and wider setting.

The aliens animation had the potential to become a project qualification. The guidance I provided for centres, mentioned above, might encourage teachers to consider how this form of accreditation could help to justify the use of curriculum time in an assessment dominated system. The teacher involved commented on the level of commitment required to see the animation project through to completion and to be able to harness and direct the students' enthusiasm in the face of indifference or direct suspicion. She too commented that this was only possible in a year in which she did not have Head of Year responsibilities, hoping that younger teachers would find the time and energy to continue with this challenging work. My experience suggests that they need all the guidance they can find to support and justify this type of educational activity.

4.5.1 Thinking and judgement in 'active citizenship'.

> It is more than likely that men, if they were ever to lose the appetite for meaning we call thinking and cease to ask unanswerable questions, would lose not only the ability to produce those thought things that we call works of art but also the capacity to ask all the answerable questions upon which every civilization is founded. (Arendt 1977: 62)

For Arendt, thinking stands apart from action but very much informs it. The unpredictability of the consequences of action can only be held to account by a constant dialogue encompassing a plurality of perspectives. Thinking itself, although often experienced as a solitary activity, is inevitably a relational and social process, whether the dialogue takes place within or between individuals. What is important is to create an awareness of plurality, to bring into consciousness divergent views and to shine a moral and aesthetic light, as well as a rational one, on to the immediate, rather than abstracted, pressing concerns.

> Thinking deals with invisibles, with representations of things that are absent; judging always concerns particulars and things close at hand. But the two are interrelated in a way similar to the way consciousness and conscience are interconnected. If thinking, the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue, actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness and thereby results in conscience as its by-product, then judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances, where I am never alone and always much too busy to be able to think. The manifestation of the wind of thought is no knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this indeed may prevent catastrophes, at least for myself, in the rare moments when the chips are down. (Arendt 1971: 417)

For Arendt, thinking is a preliminary requirement for judging. Only in this way is action less likely to have the undesirable consequences Arendt tried to comprehend in totalitarianism and Eichmann. For Arendt, judgement requires both a withdrawal from the world and an engagement with it. It involved the apparently solitary activity of thinking in conversation with aspects of one's self and the communal activity of thinking in the company of others, even if their voices are memories brought to attention in the mind. It is not a version of a normative common sense but can be regarded as a sense developed in common.

> The presupposition for this kind of judging is not a highly developed intelligence or sophistication in moral matters, but merely the habit of living together explicitly with oneself, that is, of being engaged in that silent dialogue between me and myself which since Socrates and Plato we usually call thinking. This kind of thought, though at the root of all philosophical thinking, is not technical and does not concern theoretical problems. (Arendt 1964b)

Arendt also refers to judgement as a manifestation of 'taste', following Kant's usage, "which declares something about ourselves while simultaneously reaching out to others" (Clark 2002). It is a revealing of our-selves and our position in the world based on reflection and reflexivity rather than an intellectual endeavour or application of rationality. Judgement for Arendt is not about the pursuit of truth, that is the domain of science, rather it applies to those areas of moral judgement in which a diversity of views is possible.

> I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent. [… T]his is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or feel like someone else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue […] the stronger is my capacity for representative thinking, and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion. (Arendt 2005: 241)

Thinking and judgement are difficult to separate in this Arendt influenced vision of 'active citizenship'. The point is that this is not a principally rational process, although rationality is not excluded, but a form of moral consciousness developed from engagement with others rather than abstracted appeals to universal truths. The latter may be regarded as teachable, but the former rely on opportunities for the type of authentic dialogue found through action in the world, or at least in an educational setting, to have the opportunity and freedom to become spectators or witnesses in a world where action is possible.

The issue for educators becomes, therefore, not how to teach children, or adults, to think in a particular way but to help lead them toward opportunities to practise this uniquely human faculty of thinking.

4.5.2 Practice for Judgement.

Stacy Smith (2001) in *Education for Judgement: An Arendtian Oxymoron?* proposes a clear role for judgement in education, despite Arendt's claim, based on Kant that moral judgement is "a peculiar talent which can be practised only and cannot be taught" (Arendt 1977: 215). Smith uses the term "practice for judgement" (75) and emphasises the dual meaning of the word to be both an act of doing and an act of preparation. She also draws upon the idea of continual learning from practice to blur the distinction and locates this clearly within the realm of education. As argued in chapter three, the claim that "education can play no part in politics" (Arendt 1972: 177) does not mean that "preparation for politics – in the spirit of preparing children for the task of renewing a common world – can play no part" (Smith 2001: 79).

Donald Gillies (2015: 154) argues that "judgement is the key element of reflective practice" and that Arendt's concepts of judgement and thinking provide a fruitful tool in developing beginning teachers as reflective practitioners. I would suggest that it is a vital tool for educators at any stage of their professional practice particularly, but not exclusively, in any activity claiming to enhance 'active citizenship'. To illustrate this, I will review below what practice for judgement looks like in the context of the examples provided so far.

The EU referendum adults from chapter three had a clear judgement to make which both motivated them to attend and provided a worldly focus which gave purpose to their research and discussions. The tutors shared the same dilemma; we were all in the same citizens'-ship together. The plurality of views and positions represented within and beyond the group added to the potential for reflexivity, a process which could be modelled, but not taught, by the tutors.

In the case of the Y9s discussed in chapter one, the uniform issue gave them that 'worldly' focus; the outcome mattered to them as they had to wear it. It was the teacher, however, that drew their attention to the potential for judgement; by suggesting that they could collectively decide what issues they wanted to make a difference to rather than following the Assistant Principal's recommendation that they should only be encouraged to campaign on those matters they could influence, such as what charity the year group should support.

The teacher's judgement was to ignore this recommendation from Senior Management, an instant decision but one that involved a complex balancing of considerations both rational and affective. It also involved a reflexive stance in determining the extent to which agency was available in this particular situation. In this case the teacher's reflective practice had an impact on the type of citizenship experienced by the students.

The Y7 litter pickers (also from chapter one) were not able to 'practise for judgement', just as they were not 'brought to action' by this activity. There was no opportunity to make a collective decision and little opportunity to experience plurality, except perhaps by encountering the strange adult volunteers who seemed to enjoy picking up litter. Even the teachers and teaching assistants who took part also were not challenged to 'think what we

were doing'. Although such collapsed timetable events had to be meticulously planned in advance, this does not rule out the planned provision of situations in which thought and judgement are required.

The guidance for EPQ supervisors introduced at the start of this chapter was an attempt to enable teachers to see how existing qualifications can be used creatively to support situations in which a degree of agency is required, in which a consideration of a plurality of views is expected, and in which a judgement needs to be made. By inviting a focus on the students' concerns and passions, the potential exists for a more personal experience which engages with affect and aesthetics as well as rationality. However, for that to be possible the supervisor needs to be able to appreciate that a diverse range of outcomes can meet the requirements of the qualification, and they need to be able to see the investigation through their students' eyes. Although the students are the ones directly involved in bringing something new into the world, to protect this natality, the supervisors need to provide the benefit of experience, without stifling their students' passion and enthusiasm: a process requiring a degree of reflexivity and a willingness to explore fresh insights from different perspectives.

The Aliens in Armagh project mentioned above required judgement on the part of the teacher to balance her responsibilities to her students, her own position in the school, and the school's place in the wider community. It was a judgement that required rationality and realism as well as courage and a determination to support her students wherever they went along the path she had opened up for them. The existence of a network of colleagues across

diverse schools (the Five Nations network) provided support and encouragement in addition to any found locally.

4.6.0 Chapter Conclusion.

In this chapter I have suggested that this activity which Arendt called 'thinking', and I have described as a form of 'embodied reflection', includes affective aesthetic as well as more purely rational elements. I disagree with Arendt's separation of education and politics, to assert that education can play a part in introducing a degree of reflexivity to this activity, to move beyond the positions of those present, and to draw attention to voices unheard and perspectives hidden to the participants.

In the example of the choir, a space for reflection was opened up; the student was invited, not only by the supervisor but by the structure of the qualification, to think about what they were doing. My own role here was to create guidance for those involved to think more deeply about what they are doing as supervisors, and in particular, to suggest other perspectives which are broadly political and concerned with issues of power and social impact. In doing this I have found Hannah Arendt performing a similar service for me.

Arendt called this thinking without a banister; I am calling it reflection with extra reflexivity. Bleakley called it holistic reflexivity. I suggest that any educator concerned with democratic participation has a particular responsibility to introduce this plurality from an ethical position; one which is also political, in that it is engaged with the students' world. I suggest that this can be considered as a quality of reflective practice.

The next chapter looks beyond the subject area of Citizenship to examine what it means to love the world in Arendt's sense and further explore the nature of reflexivity in practice.

Chapter Five:

On becoming a question to one's self.

[Photo 5] *Bridget the Rhinoceros.*

Quaestio mihi factus sum [I have become a question to myself].
(The confessions of St Augustine X 33, 50)

With word and deed, we insert ourselves in 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: 176–7)

5.1.0 Introduction.

This chapter explores further Arendt's thinking regarding our relationship with the world in which we find ourselves. Arendt's notion of action, as applied in chapter three to the context of political education, is re-examined here in the light of teaching without an explicit

political or citizenship agenda. The aim is to illustrate that what I have referred to as 'the political heart of education' can emerge, whatever the context or content of the teaching.

In the previous chapter I stressed what others (Canovan 1992, Young-Bruehl 1992) have identified as the affective aspect of Arendt's phenomenology of thinking, making links with notions of embodied reflexivity in educational practice. The sense of thinking as a dialogue between 'myself and I' is developed in this chapter in relation to an understanding of the positionality of self in the world which arises in response to Augustine's statement *"Quaestio mihi factus sum"* (I have become a question to myself).

It is the nature of that relationship between the subjectivity of thinking and our collective experience of the world that concerned Arendt. I suggest that this relationship also lies at the heart of the potential for education to facilitate the renewal of this world. Previous chapters have noted that the consequences of a rejection of the world created through political inaction and the repression of the public sphere feature in Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism. The withdrawal from engagement with worldly concerns into an idealised realm of philosophical reflection or spiritual contemplation becomes a focus for this chapter. The role played by educators in drawing attention to the human world and the attitude they exhibit toward it were not Arendt's primary concerns, but any engagement with Arendt's thinking from an educator's perspective throws up fundamental questions about the project that we, as educators, are undertaking.

This chapter examines what makes this educative process political, one which is central for any education facilitating an engaged citizenry. In chapter three it was argued, with Hannam (2018), that Arendt's use of the term **natality** to mean a new beginning in the world can be

regarded as an educative process and as such one that could be influenced by pedagogic practice. Arendt refers often to the way in which each birth potentially brings something new into the world and that this capacity for renewal is at the heart of political action. Hannam (2018) extends and challenges Arendt's thinking to argue that bringing the child into the wider public sphere is an educational process that is fundamental to the development of a political being able to exercise a degree of freedom in an otherwise alien and unreachable world.

Whilst the focus of previous chapters was mostly Citizenship Education in schools, here I extend this argument to adult education in the context of mental health. In the first part of this chapter, I widen the scope of this investigation to include my Psychology teaching, particularly mental health courses with adults. I also show how the themes arising from my journey with Hannah Arendt outlined in previous chapters can be applied to this aspect of my teaching. This provides a means to contextualise further the educational implications of these ideas, and to explore the commonality of these themes across the range of my professional identities. I touch again on the difference between Arendt's take on being in the world and that of Heidegger. Both shared a worldly experience of love, and lived through the holocaust, yet one retained a passionate involvement with worldly events and the other shows an apparent indifference to such an atrocity. The previous chapter, following the emphasis placed by Canovan (1992) and Villia (1996), mentioned how Heidegger's orientation toward mortality was his default position, and it contrasted this with Arendt's focus on natality. This chapter goes a step further in exploring the nature of that relationship with the world and promotes the orientation which Arendt has, by drawing on her reading of St Augustine, characterised as *Amor Mundi.* A term which Arendt scholars,

such as Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (1992), have translated as 'love of the world'. It is understanding quite what this means for an educator that is central to the journey of this investigation.

This will involve references to Arendt's doctoral thesis (Scott & Stark 1996) entitled '*Love and St Augustine*'. Here she takes some of St Augustine's writings on neighbourly love and, having given them a phenomenological treatment, she transplants them to 1930s Germany where events were beginning to impact on Arendt's life. It is her response to them that matters here; unlike other thinkers, Heidegger notably, this does not lead to a withdrawal from the world or a focus on introspection, nor does it lose itself in the busyness of activity. Here is a response to the world as it is found, with all its messy contradictions, beauty, and horror, and an attempt to engage with it without the distorting lens of ideology, theology, or grand theory. It is here that I try to locate the genesis of the political impulse in my educational practice.

5.2.0 Bridget the rhinoceros.

The following sections collect together reflections on short courses run for the WEA at the Bridge Collective, who have been consulted on this part of the chapter. Their support is acknowledged here. At this stage in the research journey, I had been reflecting on Arendt's thinking in the light of all my teaching experiences and this *narrative of practice,* and the practice itself embody this.

Bridget is a rhinoceros, carved out of wood, one of six donated to community groups by the city council. Bridget lodges with a group providing peer support for those recovering from mental illness, looking for a life beyond a psychiatric label.

This is a venue for a range of Psychology courses that I have run on behalf of the WEA. One course looks at schizophrenia, the diagnostic criteria, explanations, and

treatments. It takes a critical stance in that basic questions are asked about the validity of diagnosis and the ontological status of the classification itself.

The students are all adults: some have a psychiatric history; others have been affected by this, for example as family members. Some are carers; others have no direct experience but are just interested. I do not know, and nor do I need to, which category a student fits into (and some fit more than one). The course is open to all and the realisation that the boundaries of 'normality' are blurred and impossible to determine is one of the learning outcomes.

In some ways I am covering material I have taught before in my A level courses, but the difference here is that most of the students have lived experience or have been personally affected in some way. The course was billed as educational, not therapeutic, with no expectation that students talk about their own experiences.

The particular image I have in my memory is of popping out of the class to visit the loo, whilst students were in mid discussion. I see myself returning and looking into the room from a distance where Bridget appears centre stage, holding the space in which diverse views and experiences are shared.

I found myself aware of the presence of my personal history, the setting, and the students. I felt responsible for creating expectations but trusted that the group would function without me. This was a rather strange sense of dissociation, observing proceedings as if I were returning as a student on the course, trying to make some sense of my life experiences alongside others doing the same. This description sounds as if I should receive a psychiatric diagnosis; however, the experience was familiar and in no way disturbing. I recall other times that I have felt at one with a group of students, about how, in the role of teacher, I have felt this integrity of communion.

Bridget herself is covered in artworks, created by members of the community, expressing a collective strength within individual diversity. She seems to be channelling the wisdom collected over time of those involved in this project and those whose lives have inspired it. Rhinos are both an endangered species and fearful animals when threatened. [27/01/2018]

5.2.1 Reflections on teaching Psychology.

The notes below are representative of my reflections on a series of courses with a mental health theme run for the WEA over several years in different locations including the above. I now ask how these reflections relate to Arendt, and in particular, her sense of 'thinking without a banister' mentioned in the previous chapter.

I find that running Psychology courses for adults has always appealed to students who have had personal encounters with 'mental health issues' in one way or another; indeed it's quite

unusual to find students who have not had some direct experience. The current term for people most severely affected is 'those with lived experience', echoing the language of phenomenology discussed in chapter two (Van Manen 1990). Some students are quick to identify themselves with a specific disorder and share details of their psychiatric history; others are more reticent. One course requirement is that however strange or frightening another's, or one's own, experience, it is to be respected and recognised as a valid event and legitimate route to understanding rather than pathologised or dismissed with a diagnostic label.

One difference I found between my A level students and these adult students is that the latter are more prepared to tolerate the ambiguity of not knowing the answers to the difficult questions posed. Whereas most of the 16–18-year-olds wanted reassurance that the professionals could be relied upon, that the theory was sound, and that effective treatment was available. Perhaps the adults' additional life experience led them to be more questioning of experts' truth claims. Certainly, my teaching style encourages this in that it involves presenting one perspective or explanation, and then critiquing it before moving on to another, leaving it for the students to discuss and decide which has the greater claim to truth. In contrast, my A level students wanted to know which was correct; they longed for certainty, perhaps fearful of impending exams.

Looking at one's professional practice through a reflexive lens, tracking one's positionality from a perspective outside of one's own is not too dissimilar to the experiences of symptoms associated with schizoid personality disorder. A difference is avoiding the tendency to pathologise the experience rather than regard it as a form of professional

practice or research. The reluctance of some student teachers to engage in reflective practice as noted by Bolton (2001) could be related to the anxiety of dissociation experienced when developing reflexivity. In the last chapter Bleakley (1999) reminds us of the embodied nature of a holistic notion of reflexivity, something felt as well as thought.

Regarding 'mental illness' as a legitimate expression of the human condition, both political and psychological, can provide a shared, if unsettling, sense of freedom from the boundaries of our collective understanding of our world. This resonates with Arendt's sense of 'thinking without a banister', explored in the previous chapter, and Eric Fromm's work *the Fear of Freedom* (1941). Arendt was quite sympathetic toward Fromm's ideas, although dismissive of the apolitical character of most Freudian Psychoanalysis (Young-Bruehl 1982).

The healing journey for many is expressed in terms of their rebirth, a reconstructing of identity which integrates aspects of themselves which are distressing or threatening. For some this involves redefining identities such as that of 'voice hearer' rather than schizophrenic, artist rather than patient, etc. This is a transformation, both individual and collective. It involves a deliberate membership of one social group rather than another. It is not something that happens in isolation, even if it requires some withdrawal from the world. It can be regarded as similar, in some ways, to Arendt's notion of natality. The movement toward acceptance and integration of aspects of experience labelled pathological is one of significant social transformation, as political as it is psychological.

The experience of being brought to the edge of our known world comes from the plurality of participants' experiences present in these classes, not simply the plurality of views as outlined by the teacher. This is all the more acute when some experiences carry not just a

threat of stigma but a fear and very real threat of treatment against one's will. What makes this a collaborative process is the plurality of voices that can inhabit the space within and between those present; not to mention the presence of a painted wooden rhinoceros, which effectively symbolises the process in that each section of its body has been painted by different members of the group.

5.2.2 Action, Plurality, and Natality in mental health teaching.

In all my adult classes there is a recognition of a **plurality** of views and a diversity of experiences. In my more explicitly political courses this could be divergent world views, and different life experiences. In my Psychology teaching this was often in terms of exploring boundaries of normality and individual differences. As teacher I would draw attention to these differences as integral to the experience of a shared enquiry. This involved examining the multiplicity of viewpoints of those present as they shared ideas, case studies, or histories.

As mentioned in chapter three, this process can be regarded as a 'bringing to action' through attention to plurality (after Hannam 2016). This involved some change in the relationships between those present. It includes a recognition of unity in diversity, of finding that although others' experience is different from one's own there is the same underlying commonality of experience itself. In Arendt's words: "because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live" (1998: 8). By opening up new possibilities, including the idea that what we think we

know is conditional on our unique experience of the world, there exists the potential for reflexive awareness and the emergence of freedom.

In secondary school Citizenship and the political courses for adults, I aim to create a sense of **positionality**, a recognition that there is no 'view from nowhere', as mentioned in chapter two, and that as your experience of life changes so does the position from which you form a view. Likewise, in my Psychology teaching I explore the different perspectives that can be taken and then reflect that none of these offer an exclusive take on the reality of lived experience.

The classroom here becomes a **public** sphere where views can be expressed, and participants can share openly their views and experiences with others. This requires a **freedom** which may be easier to create in an adult class due to the institutional constraints and expectations of a school, but it can also be established in schools, within limits under licence from the adult taking responsibility.

The community that hosted the mental health courses that Bridget shared describes itself as

> A company whose members are creating: A democratic community where people who have experiences, beliefs, and feelings that have sometimes been labelled as mental illness are welcomed and can talk about these experiences freely, safely and without judgement; a place to participate in friendship, support, learning, teaching, discussion, being active, and making a valid contribution both within the collective and the wider community. (Bridge Collective 2020)

Here is a clear statement of the intention of creating something new, of bringing about change collectively both for those directly involved and in the wider communities in which they live. This embodies Arendt's notion of **natality**, of bringing something new into the world. It is not about an individual's aspirations to achieve a status beyond that of their peers, which is often implied in the mission statements of educational institutions, nor is it

about a process of individual recovery from illness, which is the model of much mental health provision.

This 'place to participate in friendship, support, learning, teaching, and discussion' is a **public** space (in Arendt's terms) where individuals can relate freely. It is not a 'social' space in Arendt's sense as constrained by the norms of the dominant conventions of normality. The activity that takes place here could be characterised as **Action,** in Arendt's sense: "the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" which "corresponds to the human condition of plurality" which is "specifically the condition […] of all political life" (1998: 7).

In '*On Revolution*', Arendt (1959) made a case that participation as an active citizen was not just a key contribution to the maintenance of a successful republic but also a key contributor to the 'public happiness' identified by the Founding Fathers. In response to rising concern about adolescent mental health, I have argued that Active Citizenship is good for students' mental health (Walker 2015). It is a frequent reflection from those involved in the Extinction Rebellion movement that participation in this collective endeavour provides a sense of transpersonal purpose which goes some way to counter individualised despair.

My mental health courses for adults are flagged up as educational rather than therapeutic. However, it could be claimed that educational and therapeutic aims can converge, and that recovery is not an individual process but one which involves creating new forms of non-pathological relating with implications for the wider social context. The reference to talking about experiences in the Bridge community statement above can be regarded as both educative, therapeutic, and political.

Standish, Smeyers, and Smith (2007) draw on Wittgenstein to argue persuasively that philosophy applied to education can be therapeutic. The analysis of everyday language ('mental' and 'illness' for example) can provide an insight into the limiting potential of such terms. The community statement above has this analysis implicit in the reference to 'sometimes been labelled as' and more explicitly suggests that non-judgemental dialogue of peers has a therapeutic value for participants and the wider community.

The process of exercising **power** to bring into being something new is one involving dialogue, "for speech is what makes man a political being" (Arendt 1998: 3). Talking with others as equals; of sharing experiences without judgement and exercising that power collectively without interference from others is central to Arendt's theme of renewal of a common world.

> There may be truths beyond speech, and they may be of great relevance to man in the singular, that is, to man in so far as he is not a political being, whatever else he may be. Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves. (Arendt 1998: 4)

The expression of views and experiences that 'others have labelled as mental illness' is a recognition of **plurality** and an exercising of the power Arendt identified as latent in collective action. In this case it represents a refusal to recognise a limited version of what it is to be human, where only certain qualities and ranges of experiences are considered 'normal' or acceptable. By presenting a diverse human subjectivity in a **public** space, which I claim this open access course is, it not only gives some validity to experiences judged as delusional by others but it also subjects these experiences to scrutiny. Seeing 'abnormality'

from different perspectives of 'normal' can help make some sense of them; that can then be held in common.

> Only the experience of sharing a common human world with others who look at it from different perspectives can enable us to see reality in the round and to develop a shared common sense. Without it, we are each driven back on our own subjective experience, in which only our feelings, wants, and desires have reality. *Margaret Canovan, from her introduction to the Human Condition.* (Arendt 1998: xxv)

An educational orientation would imply an openness to learning about the diversity of experiences. A therapeutic orientation more concerned with minimising the distress which comes with some of them; however, these different approaches are potentially complementary. The part education can play in creating relationships in which action and natality is possible is one in which a diversity of experiences are accepted as valid. It is one in which a distance can be opened up between being in the world and one's experience of it, to enable thoughtful action and careful judgement. Many educators have always aspired to this approach, Socrates for example, but it is easy to lose sight of this aspect of the role under a deluge of deliverable content, normative outcomes, and learning without thinking.

5.2.3 Finding the political in Teaching Psychology.

The Psychology teacher identified in the introduction seems most removed from the other, more politically inclined, professional identities. However, the day after the loo experience described above, I was running a session on democracy for the WEA where I introduced John Dewey's definition:

> A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. *It* […] is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. (Dewey 1916: 44)

I recognised the commonality of experience and the consequent breaking down of boundaries as the common ground between these different teaching subjects. The

acknowledgement of the importance of a community welcoming a **plurality** of experience, found in the Bridge community statement above, is an application of Dewey's interpretation of democracy, and a recognition of the **power** of talking together in a **public** space of **freedom**, where judgment can be suspended.

Hannam and Echeverria (2017) also refer to the above quotation from Dewey in their chapter on the democratic nature of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) within the practice of Philosophy for Children (P4C). They define CPI as a "model of educational praxis which can enable the conditions necessary for democracy to exist" (4) and relate this to an understanding of citizenship as "a way of existing in a plural democracy, rather than something to be possessed in a phenomenological sense". This resonates with the civic republican tradition as identified in chapter one, from which most forms of deliberative democracy arise. It also resonates with the distinction made in this thesis between citizenship as a quality of relationship rather than as a potentially divisive status conferred on some, but not others.

As well as outlining the way in which CPI potentially 'connects individuals to each other and their society' in Dewey's terms above, they also draw on Arendt's concept of action and the freedom on which this depends to give CPI a clear political location.

> Thus there is an interesting consequence of bringing Dewey's thinking together with Arendt. It becomes possible to conceptualize the testing of ideas through speech in the dialogue, by the unique people comprising the plurality which is the CPI, and understood in Arendtian terms as action. Further, since it is action in the condition of plurality that makes the political space possible, the CPI can itself be understood as part of the public or political sphere. (Hannam and Echeverria 2017: 5)

In retrospect I consider that an unarticulated aim of my mental health teaching is to create a community of inquiry where the mystery of the human condition is both recognised and

shared. I am claiming that these explorations of others and our own experiences lead to a deepening of awareness, which can be witnessed as a shared event. One in which each participant is touching something of the others' experience, however alien that may be. In so doing, their own unique strangeness is also discovered. It seems that all of my Psychology teaching has had this at its heart; perhaps this could help to explain my initial motivation to study the subject, which was derived from my own adolescent estrangement and alienation. I find in teaching the subject the excitement of glimpsing a shared subjectivity, a sense of union with something beyond individualised selves. I recognise this enjoyment in my early teaching years and again in my more recent adult teaching, although it was somewhat lacking during the intervening years of overly exam focused activity.

The reflections mentioned above unite the diverse professional identities outlined in the introduction with the individual life history from which they arose. Through a process of sharing diverse experiences and views, such as that potentially found in a CPI, the individualising tendencies of our culture can be transcended to bring out a change in the relationship of those involved and potentially the wider society. This creates a starting point for change and impact on the world; it becomes a political activity, one that is materially affected by the pedagogic route taken by the educational professionals involved.

For Hannah Arendt, who seemed to spend much of her life in the company of long dead thinkers, the madness she encountered was in the world around her. How she managed to live with this reality without completely retreating into a world of the mind (or an '**academic**' detachment) is the subject of the next section involving St Augustine.

5.3.1 Love and St Augustine.

It seemed strange to me to find the beginnings of a political orientation toward one's place in the world in the writing of a Catholic Saint, but this is what Arendt sets out to do. The distance created by her Jewish background and immersion in the philosophy of German existentialism added some originality to her discussion. Arendt appears to have selected some of Augustine's ideas, taken them out of their historical context, and imposed her own interpretation, ignoring that which does not fit or even contradict. Essentially this is the same process that I have taken here with Arendt's work. I am in good company doing this to Arendt as others have readily admitted to doing the same (e.g., Smith 2001). This thesis does not claim to be a work of Arendt scholarship; it is an investigation of my own reflection on practice that has emerged through my reading of Arendt.

Scott and Stark (1996), in their interpretative essay published with their new translation of Arendt's original (1929) thesis including her 1960s updates, make the claim that an understanding of Arendt's political thinking is incomplete without an appreciation of the formative nature of her early debate with herself and her reading of Augustine. They claim further that Arendt scholarship (e.g., Young-Bruehl 1982 & 2006, Canavan 1992) has tended to dismiss this work as the 'pre-political' period in Arendt's life before the realities of the world interrupted her rather more introspective philosophical journey. Scott and Stark give two reasons for this; one is that such theological thinking is quite alien to most contemporary Arendt scholars, many of whom are US based and removed from the intellectual milieu of existential philosophy in pre-war Europe. Second, that an interpretative bias exists in giving a more conventionally political interpretation of Arendt, closer perhaps to the ideological positions of the interpreters.

Although the ongoing debate is tangential to this thesis, the analysis of Scott and Stark, and Spengeman, reviewed below, is relevant to dilemmas about the political dimension of professional practice which is central to this investigation. The way in which a phenomenological understanding of the nature of political agency, '**willing**' in Arendt's terms, is understood is central to the argument developed here as it relates to the role of education and that of the educator.

In her 2014 thesis, Sarah Spengeman attempts to build upon the work of Scott and Stark and build a bridge between Arendt's early and mature writings.

> Against the otherworldliness of Augustine and the philosophers within the Western Tradition, and against the world-destroying nature of totalitarianism, Arendt's mature political theory affirms that existential meaning can be found by acting together in the common world. Contra Augustine, who encourages us not to be at home in the world, but rather to comport ourselves towards it as if we are pilgrims on our way to our true eternal home, Arendt would have us found (and re-found) a public world, which we can belong to, and in which we can be at home. More importantly, Arendt would have us embrace this common world as the location for the expression of human freedom and as the site for the creation of meaning. (406)

Both of Arendt's mentors had a fascination with Augustine's confessions; Heidegger found in them many transgressions of the Western philosophical tradition which he claimed to have overturned, and Jaspers found echoes of his phenomenological thinking (Scott and Stark 1996). It was Heidegger, who had a Catholic upbringing and early in his life embarked on training for the priesthood, who initially supported Arendt's thesis topic (ibid). Indeed, some aspects of their relationship as lovers involved exchanging letters full of Augustinian quotations (Spengeman 2014). Young-Bruehl (1982) suggested that it was Heidegger's attempt to distance himself from his precocious Jewish student in a climate of growing anti-

Semitism, including that of his wife, that led to the move to Berlin and Karl Jaspers to become her supervisor.

Sarah Spengeman (2014: 126) again:

> In *The Human Condition*, Arendt identifies Augustine as the philosopher who is responsible for elevating the *vita contemplativa* above the *vita activa*. Even more problematically, he affirms this life as open to all and, indeed, as a requirement for salvation. In response, she makes an argument for the reclamation of the meaningfulness of the life of action. To do so, she re-appropriates Augustinian concepts precisely to counter Augustinian otherworldliness.

Arendt's version of Augustine neighbourly love seems very pertinent in our version of 'dark times', as it did in those that Arendt was becoming aware of whilst she wrote her thesis in 1923, the full horror of which only became apparent later. Her whole approach to Philosophy can be regarded as a response to those times. Where Heidegger withdrew, Arendt engaged with this world passionately and critically, clear sighted but committed.

Arendt finds in Augustine the origins for her meaning of natality and freedom. Which, as found in previous chapters, and in the work of Pat Hannam, is central to any educational endeavour that aims to develop those relationships central to Dewey's vision of democratic education. In Augustine, Arendt picks up on a type of love he called '*Caritas*' which was central to the Christian entreaty to 'love thy neighbour as thyself', which for Augustine only becomes possible when combined with a love of God. Arendt detaches this from the divine world and points to a more existential understanding of the relationship between self and other which is developed in her latter works on thinking and judgement.

> What totalitarianism in Europe taught us is that a society made up of such individuals, individuals who have lost their faith in the traditions of the past, who are in constant competition with each other, and who bear no responsibility for a shared public life, are easily transformed into lonely (and politically impotent) masses. (Ibid: 128)

This transformation with its political consequences is one of social relationships, between self and other. If education is to play a part in preventing such catastrophes, then a focus on the lived experience of this relationship becomes relevant. As the political and personal become inseparable then psychological questions regarding the nature of selfhood become legitimate aspects of this investigation.

5.3.2 On becoming a question to myself.

> Hence it is by no means a simple withdrawal into himself that Augustine opposes to the loss of self in dispersion and distraction, but rather a turning about of the question itself and the discovery that this self is even more impenetrable than the hidden works of nature. (Arendt 1996: 149)

It was Augustine's phrase *'Quaestio mihi factus sum' (*I have become a question to myself) which resonated with the existential thinking Arendt was engaged in. This is not a question of 'who am I?' which tends to focus attention internally and so position the self psychologically. It is more a question of 'where do I find myself'? It is a question of positionality and relationship, with others, and with the world in which we find ourselves. The answer for Augustine was to find one's authentic self in God; for Arendt it was in the world created by human endeavours, which positions us in relationship with each other. Focusing on this experience of becoming a question opens up the potential for freedom, which enables a choice between Augustine's godliness or Arendt's worldliness. Both can be regarded as alternatives to the alienation and loneliness of the individualised self of modernity.

For Arendt, this is at the centre of an existential question that she approached in a radically different way to her inspirational teacher Heidegger. She ended up taking a position closer to that of her mentor and doctorial supervisor Karl Jaspers. This is a positioning of 'being' in the world which she and Jaspers called to be a 'citizen of the world'. It is contrasted with the theology of Augustine whose love of God, Arendt claims, creates an alienation from the world. In his role of a spiritual leader of the early Roman Church, Augustine positioned worldliness as the opposite to godliness. This, Arendt claims, contributes to a tradition which privileges spiritual experience over earthly endeavours, values abstracted knowledge over tacit understanding, and, I suggest, makes it easier to ignore our responsibilities to others in our shared earthly world.

Whether the sense of world alienation identified by Arendt is theological or philosophical, and for Arendt the two are part of the same tradition, the outcome is similar. This is removal into an idealised landscape of high thought, or a mystical communion with something other than the uncomfortable realities of living with neighbours on the same planet. Both are not earthbound and risk undervaluing the earthly connection with other inhabitants of the world: both human and non-human, I suggest.

5.3.3 On Love and Freedom.

Arendt uses Augustine's distinction between *Caritas* (neighbourly love) and *Cupiditas* (love as craving) to explore the role of freedom in our relationship with the world. The latter involves attachment and can become possessive; the former, less conditional and potentially more detached. *Cupiditas* involves an attached relationship with the world and a

strong identification with possession and individuality, whereas *Caritas* implies a more thoughtful or reflective relationship, with an element of reflexivity.

For Arendt, love as *Cupiditas* belongs in the private realm; *Caritas* on the other hand belongs in the public realm of freedom and politics (for Augustine it belongs to God), which is why it is politically significant. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's use of the word love in the title (*For Love of the World)* of her influential 1982 biography of Arendt risks conflating this distinction.

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that Arendt warned of the dangers of sentimentalism and emotionality for the public realm (Zembylas 2020). As an example, she used Hitler's expertise in manipulating a patriotic 'love' (Donald Trump could provide a more contemporary example). Distinguishing factors include the reflexive quality of thinking; of questioning your own individual and group identities, as well as the application of reason.

Arendt herself does not help by referring to love more often in its romantic, possessive form.

> Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only a-political but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces. (Arendt 1998: 242)

Rachel Paine (2016) draws on Arendt's later work *The Human Condition* (1998) to suggest how Arendt seems to have moved on from Augustine's Latin usage. Here Arendt uses love exclusively to refer to *Cupiditas* and respect for *Caritas;* perhaps reflecting her exposure to more colloquial forms of English usage familiar in her newly adopted American home. Arendt claims that:

> What love is in its own, narrowly circumscribed sphere, respect is in the larger domain of human affairs. Respect is a regard for the person from the distance which the space of the world puts between us, and this regard is independent of qualities which we may admire or of achievements which we may highly esteem. (Ibid: 243)

This distance, I suggest, is an expression of reflexivity, and in this form respect is non-judgemental. It is from this position of thoughtful respect that a freedom can be exercised which moves beyond existing forms of relationship between self and others. In Arendt's terms it enables action to exist and political activity to emerge in the world.

Rachel Paine (2016: 1) expresses it in this way:

> Love is often depicted in Hannah Arendt's work as an unworldly and insulating passion that creates a barrier between us and the public world of political action. However, there is a kind of love that, I suggest here, is a necessary condition for the freedom Arendt places at the centre of being human. *Cupiditas*, our passion for the possession of another lies in stark contrast to *caritas*, the love graced by its transcendent character. […] 'The grace of love' may, I suggest, be the condition that must be in place for individuality and political freedom to arise. (Ibid)

Paine (2016: 13) asks: "What is the 'grace of love', or *Caritas*, that makes our experience of love something other than the satisfaction of a desire or appetite?" She suggests that it is "not the grace found in the love of God, but […] can be found in the making of a human world". This is the world in which we can make a difference "that lasts beyond our own life-span." In other words, we become active citizens of this world rather than passive subjects of another.

5.4.1 The consequences for education.

The application of *Caritas* as unconditional love to education will be familiar as it forms the basis of many descriptions of the educational relationship from widely different pedagogic

perspectives. What, I suggest, distinguishes the application of Arendt's concepts of action and natality to education is the emphasis on creating the conditions where collective freedom can be exercised, and the recognition that this is a political activity. I further claim that, for practitioners, this involves a stepping back from the world of current norms and educational outcomes. It is this which makes it possible to identify when they are opening up pathways of enquiry for their students, and when they are closing these down with an emphasis on accepted correct answers; or when they are overly focused on measurable outcomes where the immeasurable ones may have more consequence. This involves a questioning of oneself and a removal from the world, however fleeting, within the busyness of teaching. This was touched upon in chapter four in the discussion of reflexivity in reflective practice (Van Manen 1995) and Schön's (1983) reflection in action.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl and Jerome Kohn (2001), both students of Arendt, report that "In her seminar, every participant was a 'citizen', called upon to give her or his opinion, to insert him or herself into that miniature polis in order to make it, as she said, 'a little better'" (2001: 254–255). Her style was to pose questions, offer differing perspectives and only express her own views in the context of the views of others. This is a reflexive stepping back which invites her students to 'become a question to themselves'.

My role as teacher in all the contexts discussed in this thesis seems to involve opening up a public space in which my students can experience themselves, too, as a question. My 'mental health' teaching throws this into sharp relief because I can share often unfamiliar and at times disconcerting aspects of human experience. In this way, "the discovery that this

self is even more impenetrable than the hidden works of nature" (Arendt 1996: 149) becomes a learning outcome which poses more questions than it answers.

In the adult psychology classes discussed above, showing respect means avoiding pathologising certain experiences, and examining critically the construction of 'normality'. There is also an attempt to establish a sense of commonality, in the context of diversity. My approach across all subjects is to value that diversity encountered, whether different experiences of life or differences in interpreting such experiences.

The transformation, facilitated by neo-liberalism, of the commodified individualised self into an apolitical, isolated, atomistic being makes addressing issues of mental health part of any attempt to renegotiate relationships and renew our common world. This is central to this chapter's attempt to explore the shared political themes within Psychology and Citizenship Teaching, irrespective of the knowledge shared. The cultivation of respect in the classroom, the drawing of attention to the differences that exist between those present, within the us rather than between us and them, is central here.

Augustine's *Caritas*, or at least a mutual respect and openness, is a precondition for the freedom to exist which enables political activity in the public realm to be encountered. I suggest that what some students get out of these adult classes is a sense of communion in diversity, of connectedness and freedom beyond their individualised experience. It is also a precondition for Arendt's critical 'thinking without a banister' (2018) to become a shared practice for education to contribute to the renewal of the world held in common. In such a setting, regardless of subject content, it is possible for the attributes and skills of an 'active citizenship of the world' to emerge. Following Arendt, we can conceive this as a process of

becoming in the public world, with potential political implications. This takes us closer to the political heart of an education that enhances 'active citizenship'.

Jon Nixon (2020: 59) claims that, for Arendt, "the prime purpose of education was to enable each individual to develop the capabilities and dispositions necessary to enter the public sphere as independent minded citizens". I suggest that one of these capacities is that of 'becoming a question to oneself' and that an essential disposition is that of a non-possessive love or respect, for the world in all its diversity.

Conclusion: for love of the world.

[Photo 6] *Child left to own devices – an educational failure?*

> It requires courage even to leave the protective security of our four walls and enter the public realm, […] Courage is indispensable because in politics not life, but the world is at stake. (Arendt 1968a: 156)
>
> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it […] 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. (Arendt 1968b: 196)

6.1.0 Introduction.

The conclusion briefly reviews the central conceptual concerns which run through this thesis and summarise how these have been addressed. I then reconnect with the professional identities introduced and touch upon some of the issues which emerge from these different

professional perspectives. This leads on to suggestions for potential next steps in research and in my own professional practice.

The growing worldwide phenomenon of school strikes and climate change activism, in response to the perceived lack of action on climate change by those 'in power', provides an opportunity to review the conclusions of this thesis. It also serves to illustrate the extent to which some of Arendt's ideas may be useful for those practitioners concerned with the challenge posed in the above much-quoted passage (e.g., Gordon 2001, Biesta 2010, Nixon 2020) which appeared in full at the beginning of this thesis. Initially, I review the story of this investigation, illustrated by the evolution of the thesis title, and then I provide an answer to the question implicit in the final title.

The school climate strikes provide a source of hope for many, but also an indictment of our existing educational institutions, and a challenge to those who work within them to find the courage needed not to leave a generation to its own devices. This thesis provides an account of what attempting to meet this challenge involves across some sectors of education.

6.1.1 The story of the research journey.

This enquiry started with a very specific focus on one aspect of education – that of Active Citizenship – as a pedagogic tool with a clear educational outcome, that of creating active citizens. This is what, at that time, I understood as the central aim of Citizenship Education in a democracy. That naive clarity was soon lost as it became apparent that 'active citizenship' is a highly contested term meaning different things from diverse political

perspectives and consequently any consensus definition of an active citizen was out of the question. What initially seemed a pedagogic journey became a philosophical one as questions arose regarding the purpose of education, the nature of citizenship, and the meaning of politics. In the later stages of the investigation, the very construction of selfhood itself and our relationship with the wider world became subject to question.

It became apparent early in the research process that it would be optimistic indeed to expect any simple answers, let alone pragmatic advice for practitioners desperate for guidance. Yet what has emerged is a profound recognition of the complex web of meanings in which our educational endeavours can become entrapped and the extent to which this can obscure fundamentally different orientations toward our shared world, which can have immense implications for future generations.

The analysis presented in chapter one recognised that the diversity of views regarding the purpose of Citizenship Education has a long history rooted in political ideology. It also provided an explanation of why the introduction of compulsory Citizenship Education by the Blair government in 2001 failed to realise the potential for radical change some of us (e.g., Leighton 2012, Walker 2016,) read into Crick's (1999) wording of his committee's recommendations.

It was the application of Arendt's concepts of **natality** and **action** that provided a route to understanding where that radical promise could be found, but this required a more embodied methodology to examine it within my practice. Van Manen's (1996) 'phenomenology of practice' and Arendt's storying methodology (Benhabib 1990) provided this, which became a unique feature of this investigation. The journey then became a more

philosophical enquiry as the meaning of the concepts derived from Arendt were explored in a variety of educational contexts. My own educational practice has been influenced by embodying those practices of reflexive thinking and critical reflection, in dialogue with students and fellow education practitioners and doctoral students, which Arendt regarded as key tools of responsive citizenship. This too is an original feature of this investigation in that it illustrates the value of such a philosophical enquiry.

6.1.2 The difficult conception of the Research Question.

The evolution of the research question which has guided this investigation can be illustrated through a consideration of the frequent revisions of the title at different stages of research as the application of Arendt's concepts shaped the nature of this enquiry.

This thesis started life at the proposal stage with the working title ***Education for Active Citizenship: a phenomenological exploration***. This at least signalled the broad area of investigation and the methodological approach. A title on the first draft of chapter one was ***Creating Active Citizens: the teacher's role*****,** which narrowed the focus somewhat but implied an educational outcome that limited itself to the **dominant culture** (Williams 1958) of individualising liberalism. I have explained in chapter one why the focus on the meaning for 'active citizenship' within the civic republican tradition needed to be on the quality of relationship between actors rather than any observable change in the behaviour of individuals which could be objectified as a learning outcome.

This then morphed into ***What is the educator's role in the development of 'active citizenship'?*** which did not individualise the process and included a wider range of

reflection, such as that on my work as a senior examiner. It also had the benefit of presenting a research question; albeit an unanswerable one, due as much to the challenge of defining the term 'role' as the contested nature of 'active citizenship' itself. As Arendt's concepts were contextualised in terms of my practice, the notion that 'active citizenship', as a form of political action, could be deliberately developed as an explicit educational practice became more problematic. One issue was Arendt's insistence that the classroom did not belong in the public realm, which was effectively challenged by Hannam (2016, 2019) and Biesta (2013). But even when it is convincingly argued that freedom and action can appear in the classroom, these are not predictable consequences of a scheme of work, recognisable in sequential stages as the term development implies. It was then considered that 'active citizenship' may be '***created***' in the classroom, something which the educator may contribute to. However, this implies some form of creative process, that 'active citizenship' is a fabrication in an Arendtian sense, arising from the work of those participating which is contrary to her notion of action (Arendt 1998), which I now argue is central to a political understanding of 'active citizenship'.

Because action is more easily recognised in retrospect, the term '***realised***' was adopted for a while; it implied that this quality of citizenship participation could only come into being when some aspect of this action was manifested in the public realm. It was likely, however, that for most readers unfamiliar with Arendt, the double entendre would be completely lost. ***The role of the educator in bringing 'active citizenship' into being*** was then adopted; it had the advantage of resonating with existential phenomenology and the potential disadvantage of confusing the reader. It also seems to imply that it is the role of the

educator to bring 'active citizenship' into being, which even if that were possible, is not the argument being developed in the thesis.

The next area of contention is the role of educator, as the investigation considered opportunities for agency and hence action to arise within an educational setting. One issue is that the educator as such may not be an essential part of the process; action in Arendt's sense could emerge despite or even as a challenge to the educator's intentions. In response to this, the title briefly became ***the role of education in bringing 'active citizenship' into being***; however, this becomes too broad as it potentially involves all forms of education, including policy and curriculum, which did not feature in this research.

The term 'role' was also problematic because it can refer to a collection of social norms or a job description on which a consensus can be reached, which is unlikely given the subversive nature of an Arendtian understanding of action in 'active citizenship'. The term **professional identity** has been used in this thesis to describe this relational space between the experience of individual subjectivity in the context of institutional norms and roles. This sense of identity has been queried by the device of introducing distinct practitioner 'identities' within my own practice. My reading of Arendt has facilitated this process but left many questions, which can only be touched upon here.

The thesis does not argue that education should set out to bring one specific manifestation of 'active citizenship', although it does suggest that the experience of action in an Arendtian sense can be recognised in some educational contexts. It should also be acknowledged that the research is based upon the examination of the practice of one educator, in dialogue with students and fellow practitioners, illuminated by his reading of specific concepts from

the work of Hannah Arendt. A more limited, descriptive title such as **an educator's journey in search of 'active citizenship', in the company of Hannah Arendt** seems to avoid some of the pitfalls mentioned above. What this does not do, however, is to help clarify the central research question, which brings us to the penultimate version of the title **in search of the political heart of education for 'active citizenship': a journey in the company of Hannah Arendt.** This has an implicit research question which provokes a series of sub-questions which are examined throughout the investigation. It also acknowledges the 'embodied' quality of the investigation and the affective nature of Arendt's take on thinking. Heart implies a lived, felt experience rather than a more abstracted form of knowledge.

The final title at the head of this page both implies that the term 'active citizenship' is under recurring review and the reference to Hannah Arendt suggests the route taken in examining it, whilst recognising its generic relevance beyond subject boundaries. For the reasons explained in chapter one, this research does not attempt to redefine the term for educators' use; rather by providing a phenomenological exploration of its meaning, it highlights those aspects that are in danger of becoming lost in the current educational uses of the term.

6.1.3 Locating the political heart of education for 'active citizenship'?

This account above shows how the research question itself was revised and refined as research progressed, and taken for granted, concepts became problematised. In its final form, a question implicit in the title becomes **"Where is the political heart of education for 'active citizenship'."** This provokes a series of sub questions regarding the contested

meaning of each of the terms used, which were examined in the body of the thesis. Below is a summary of the conclusions reached.

Locating the political heart of education for 'active citizenship' lies in an appreciation of the nature of 'active' and 'citizenship'. Citizenship implies both a status, that of being or becoming a citizen and a craft or quality of engagement that breathes life into that status (Tully 2014). That engagement implies a quality of relationship between the individual citizen and the world in which they find themselves. Finding oneself in the world in the Arendtian sense is not a given, however, as it is neither the atomised individualised world of modern selfhood nor some abstracted or idealised concept. It implies taking an attentive position toward the world held in common with others and a stepping back to become an observer, to be able to think independently and critically about that which is observed and from that position exercise a freedom to act, or not.

I suggested in chapter three that the **action** in 'active citizenship' is not dependent upon one's status as citizen. It is action itself that becomes a precondition for becoming a citizen; it brings citizenship into being. Action is primary; legal status, secondary. The latter, a consequence of the exercise of **power**. In effect, the status of citizenship itself is historically the outcome of public actions, generally of a revolutionary nature.

This is not simply a matter of having knowledge about the world: it is quite possible for knowledge to obscure the embodied reality of being in the world shared with others. Knowledge alone can mean we find ourselves in some other place, a place Thomas Nagel (1986) called 'a view from nowhere', an abstract place which, I suggested in chapter two, is often where formal academic education can lead. That is why the search was for a 'political

heart', for without that citizenship exists in potential only; without an embodied being positioned in the world held in common, it lacks an active quality.

Arendt used the term *Amor Mundi* to refer to this form of engagement with the world, arising from her more 'worldly' interpretation of Augustine's term *Caritas* as discussed in chapter five. She wrote, in a letter to Karl Jaspers, "What is most difficult, is to love the world as it is, with all the evil and suffering in it" (Arendt 1992: 142). This she claimed as a political rather than a meta-physical orientation. I am claiming this as an educational orientation too, one that potentially leads to an active and responsive membership of this world. This is where the political heart of education for 'active citizenship' can be sought after; it cannot be found, however, as the journey is part of what Arendt called the human condition.

In summary, seeking the 'political heart' of education for 'active citizenship' involves:

1. A setting in which the potential for **freedom** is possible. This I suggested in chapter two, following Arendt (1968a), is best regarded as a form of **situated agency** rather than a form of individualised autonomy.
2. The existence of unresolved questions that give rise to a **plurality** of positions, which can potentially be taken by the student.
3. The opportunity for critical **reflection** on these positions and the requirement that the student come to a **judgement** in concert with others taking alternative views into account.
4. A **reflexive** stance in which existing knowledge and dominant perspectives can be challenged, including assumptions about identity and selfhood. Students need to be

able to step back and examine the world, including their place in it and their responses to it.

5. An **embodied** orientation toward the world in which the students find themselves; in which the link between the object of study and the life of the student is explicit.

Below I apply this summary to the School Climate Strikes, which provide a timely illustration of the usefulness of Arendtian concepts for educational practitioners.

6.2.0 On school climate strikes.

The phenomenon of school strikes that focused on climate change emerged in various parts of the world during the later stages of writing this thesis (2019). They provide an illustration of the value of Arendt's concepts when applied to Citizenship Education and an application of the key criteria identified above.

1. **The possibility of Freedom:** For these strikes to occur, the potential of **freedom** needed to be present within the situation. Although students were breaking rules, and in some cases incurring penalties, these were not so severe as to make the activity impossible. The action needed to be conceivable by those taking part. In more totalitarian states such acts would have been unthinkable, not just because they would be severely punished but because the idea itself would not appear in public.

In that this action took place in the **public realm,** and arose out of freedom, it can be regarded as a **political** act in Arendt's terms. It was an action taken by those without full formal citizenship rights in most countries, but in terms of the above criteria, it is

an act of 'active citizenship'. Legally, formal citizenship implies a contract between a nation state and the individual member conferring rights and responsibilities. In this way, it is an institution born of liberal individualism and a Foucauldian technology of control (Foucault 1977). The school strikes subvert this as an act of responsible global citizenship potentially contributing to new institutions.

This **action** delivered on the promise of **natality** as something novel was brought into being, reaching across much of the globe. The consequences of the action could not be known by the actors. The action was an exercise of **power**, in Arendt's terms, as the latent power of many was exercised rather than being surrendered to those perceived as 'the powerful' few.

2. A **plurality** of views existed both within the wider society and within the school or college communities, both on appropriate ways to influence decision makers and on the legitimacy of action taken by this age group. This created both the potential to take dissenting views but also the need to reach a decision on whether to participate. A position had to be taken, to strike or not. As a form of collective action, this may be taken by a group, but the existence of a clear choice to strike or not demanded some form of independent **judgement**. This is **action** in Arendt's sense to the extent that it was taken in common with others but implied a commitment from each participant. For most of those involved, I suggest, it was a deliberative act, a moral response.

3. **The opportunity for critical reflection and the need to come to a judgement.** The school's institutional response in the UK was often ambiguous. Many schools

responded by trying to tame the political nature of this action. Debates were organised on strike days, or students encouraged to organise recycling and awareness raising events within school (reminiscent of the Y7s litter picking featured in chapter one). Most have an educational value but stop short of being political activity in an Arendtian sense. It is only when the students take responsibility for the action, beyond the control of their teachers, that it becomes political. In this way, the students' action also challenged adults and parents to take a position and come to a **judgement** in Arendt's terms.

4. **A reflexive stance**: That the strikes took place outside the school gates illustrates the position of the school discussed in chapter three, as a transitional space between Arendt's private and public realms. It also reinforces the notion that the school can provide a space in which the option to act is both conceivable and debatable. Arendt would be one of the first to point out that the school can also fail to conserve that potential for action by closing down options for debate. On the other hand, an educator who encouraged participation in such a way that not taking part is not perceived as a viable option, in effect, removes the challenge of making a judgement. In this case, the student becomes an activist without the opportunity to first become a spectator and is drawn thoughtlessly into conformity with their peers. Something which Arendt had experienced in 1930s Germany.

5. **An embodied orientation toward the world**: The students are responding to a perceived threat that has a potential impact on their lives, an immediacy which arguably impacts their generation more than any other. The action invited a

thoughtful response, one that for many posed a dilemma. This may not have been entirely or even partially based on reason. It included an affective dimension, an embodied response of holistic reflexivity (Bleakley 1999), as discussed in chapter four.

This affective orientation toward thinking, which Arendt characterised as *Amor Mundi* (love of the world), positions the thinker as acting within the world of human creation, the public realm, in which politics is possible. When education is regarded as taking place in the public realm then its political implications become more explicit. Education which does not recognise the potential for human agency becomes apolitical. If some degree of freedom exists then, whatever the subject, the educational process can be regarded as a preparation for citizenship of the world, in Arendt's terms.

6.3.0 The key conceptual contributions of this inquiry.

This application of Arendtian concepts across a broad range of educational activities is one of the original contributions of this thesis. Each chapter has explored these concepts in different educational sectors. This section picks up on some of the overarching themes and assesses their contribution to applying Arendtian ideas to education. The climate strikes and my own practice as educator are used to illustrate the points made.

6.3.1 Citizens or Citizenship?

From an Arendtian perspective, to refer to an individual citizen rather misses the point that citizens only exist in relation to each other and their shared world. It was suggested in chapter one that the tradition of liberal democracy contributed to a state of atomism or dissociation which Arendt (1998) called 'world alienation'. This she regarded as a potential pre-cursor to totalitarianism and a major existential threat to humankind and the planet we share. This was at the time of the Cold War but the current concerns regarding climate change reinforce her warning. To the extent that striking students are acting in concert, they are challenging this and the powerless individualism it brings. Even Greta Thunberg's initial action, although apparently taken individually, was extensively shared on social media and although solitary she was very much not acting alone.

The psychological effects of 'world alienation' were touched upon in chapter five and the current emphasis on adolescent mental health was cited as a consequence of this. This conjoining of mental health and political concerns in this way, I argue, benefits from the application of Arendt's thinking and is another original aspect of this investigation.

As I have noted in chapter one, the production of 'Active Citizens' has become an educational outcome across secondary and adult sectors without any consensus or critical analysis of the term. A shift toward regarding 'active citizenship', in this more overtly political sense, as an educational outcome would be quite a significant one. However, moving away from an individualised toward a more collective focus risks the loss of the very thing that makes political action in the public realm possible from an Arendtian perspective: the emergence of plurality and freedom.

6.3.2 Freedom as Situated Agency.

This thesis explored Arendt's (1954b) conception of **freedom**, which is not the property of an individual or an absence of restraints; for her it is the essential quality of political expression and the most distinctive feature of our humanity. It is something to be protected by institutions which may need to limit the freedom of others. For her, genuine citizenship can only exist where freedom is possible, and this is unequivocally a political act. In chapter two, I suggested that it can be regarded as a form of **situated agency** as outlined by Emirbayer & Mische (1998). This was explored through examples of practice to illustrate how this is manifested as action within my interpretation of an Arendtian form of 'active citizenship'.

Climate strikes illustrate this well, in that they arose in a space outside the academy but in an educational context. Agency existed here, not within individual actors, nor institutions, but in the relational networks formed between them, much of this facilitated by social media. They are a continuation rather than an interruption of learning about citizenship, irrespective of the existence or otherwise of it as a formal subject. They become fully political acts in the public realm because of the potential of freedom within it.

The emphasis on knowledge acquisition rather than on the development of the capacity for thinking and action (in Arendt's terms) risks the loss of freedom altogether. Liberal democracy tends to view freedom as an individual right, educationally to make up my own mind as if 'mind' could be 'owned'. A recognition of that political freedom is situated, not in

the individual mind, nor in collective activity, but in attending to the creative space between them, providing an educative experience which goes beyond acquisitional learning.

6.3.3 Thinking without a banister – Reflection & Reflexivity.

The stepping back from and then moving toward the world is a key theme of Arendt's philosophical work. This thesis claims that from an educator's perspective what matters is the capacity for reflexivity in practice and an embodied connection with the world held in common with one's students. This is illustrated in the examples from practice provided in this thesis and in the shared experience of being human in response to the climate emergency.

Greta Thunberg's own sense of hopelessness and depression was claimed to be related to learning about climate change from her teachers at school (Ernman et al 2020). She also mentions the sense of hope that learning about the actions of the suffragettes and Rosa Park in the US civil rights movement gave her. This is an account which resonated with thousands of others and illustrates the 'therapeutic' role of hope and action. It is akin to something Arendt (1965) referred to in connection with the American Revolution as 'the public happiness'. It also illustrates the value of **powerful knowledge** (Young 2013, Jerome 2019) as discussed in chapter four.

This sense of hopelessness and despair can be regarded as a global pandemic, not just impacting one generation, and it is as prevalent among educators as among their students. Finding the courage to take responsibility as educators when the 'world is at stake' includes acknowledging this despair as a rational response to a mad world rather than some

pathological condition that can be managed by some, individually focused, therapeutic intervention. The therapy here involves developing the capacity "to love the world as it is, with all the evil and suffering in it" (Arendt 1992: 142), which, I argue, is an educational process. One which involves the educator in thinking and acting politically with their students, gently guiding them into the world rather than abandoning them in it. This is clearly a challenge for any educator and educational system, but that is the 'beautiful risk', to steal Biesta's (2013) phrase.

It was argued in chapter four that for Arendt this thoughtful activity is as much an affective process as an intellectual one, and that for such knowledge to manifest as action, the embodied orientation that Arendt called *Amor Mundi* needs to be at the heart of education. The climate strikers required not only the **powerful knowledge** that others before them had made a difference by acting in concert but also the affective connection with the world as they find it, to provide the motivation to turn reflexive thinking into political action.

As Duarte (2010) argued, the capacity to step back from the world, to recognise and reflect upon alternate views and courses of action, is an educational process, although not one that necessarily arises in all those institutions claiming to be educational. Arendt (1993) was very aware of this and warned educators to protect that capacity to think freely and so to conserve the potential of natality. With climate strikes, the action itself took place in the public realm outside the school gates, but I suggest that the opportunities to think provided within those gates, or elsewhere, were essential in enabling them to bring something new into the world, something unpredicted, something which resonated with others and offered hope to many.

6.3.4 Education for 'active citizenship' transcends subjects, sectors, and institutions.

This thesis offers a vision of 'active citizenship' which frames citizenship as a political event rather than a legal status. As mentioned above, most climate strikers were too young to have full citizenship status legally, but in taking some responsibility for our collective impact on the world, they became citizens politically. This is a responsibility educators can support in the development of skills that provide the ability to respond as well as the **powerful knowledge** (Young 2013, Jerome 2019) from which to make informed choices. It is not a responsibility that the educators can take on behalf of their students. It is, however, something they can help to conserve and protect from outside pressures. It is arguably something that we educators have failed to do, but the challenge is such that perhaps success will always elude us; however, having a clearer sense of what the challenge involves can only be helpful.

Arendt's vision of politics was not utopian; her reading of recent history is not one of steady progress. Her emphasis on freedom means there are no guaranteed outcomes. By regarding politics as one of the highlights of human culture rather than a messy business best left to others, she offers hope not just to those striving to renew the world but for those who regard their responsibility to their students as supporting them in this endeavour.

In the introduction I outlined how the terms '**apolitical**' and '**antipolitical**' would be used in this thesis. In terms of the climate strikes, those schools offering alternative activities such as debates are effectively removing their students from the public realm and neutering the political dimension of the activity. This is, in effect, apolitical.

Anti-political activities or policies were defined as those which actively discourage or inhibit political activities. Schools that disproportionally penalise striking students are attempting to do this. Paradoxically perhaps, those schools who remove penalties altogether, by closing on strike days for example, are also removing the opportunity for engagement with political decision making and removing the freedom of choice.

The characterisation of 'active citizenship' developed in this thesis and outlined above positions **political** activity, in the radical civic republican tradition of Crick and Arendt, at the heart of education for 'active citizenship' irrespective of subject, content, or institution.

6.4.0 Reviewing the contributions and impact of this research.

A key indicator of the validity of the conclusions drawn above is their usefulness for other practitioners. However, in these fields of education, usefulness itself is problematic and an issue of positionality. The position taken here, following Arendt, suggests that one of the key tasks of education is to facilitate the renewal of the world. The usefulness of these concepts for practitioners can be judged by the extent to which they illuminate that process. Feedback from the professional interventions and conference presentations to colleagues and students suggests that this approach has a lot to contribute.

I have claimed that thinking with Arendt in the ways demonstrated throughout this thesis makes a unique contribution to any discussion of the political dimension of education, within and beyond the field of Citizenship Education. Here some of her ideas have been explored in the context of one educator's relationship with colleagues and students in a variety of educational contexts, and the impact of this evaluated in terms of its potential to

touch the experience of others. I also claim that the narrative method used provides a model for practitioner/researchers to examine critically their own reflective practice.

The next section revisits the potential contributions of this research identified in the introduction and asks to what extent they have been realised. Some indication of further research and dissemination of ideas is provided.

6.4.1 Contributions to Citizenship Education in the UK Secondary sector.

In chapter one, a model was proposed which articulated an educational use of the term 'active citizenship' which is consistent with Crick's (1999) civic republican vision. This model was used to explain the failure of this interpretation to gain widespread support as policy initiatives tended to default to the more dominant communitarian interpretation (as supported by Jerome 2012b).

Some of the implications of this have already been shared with colleagues through membership of the ACT guiding council and articles, blogs, and course materials (Walker 2013, 2015, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2020), which are available to those working in the field. The explicit link between Crick's ideas and those of Arendt made in this thesis are not found elsewhere in the literature on Citizenship Education. Feedback from colleagues on these has both influenced the published outcomes but also the direction of this research journey.

My campaigning for the recognition of social action projects within the community of project advisers and examiners is ongoing, and the guidance for project supervisors mentioned in chapter four is now widely distributed (Walker 2017b). This guidance was informed by the understanding of 'active citizenship' developed here, based on applying

Arendt's concepts of freedom and action. Presentations on this have been made at moderators' meetings and at conferences (Walker 2017a).

6.4.2 The contribution to Arendt scholarship.

Although Arendt scholarship is considerable, application of her thinking to education is more limited. There is no research that has applied Arendtian concepts in this way across all the fields of activity examined here. Jon Nixon's (2021, 2020, etc) contributions have focused mostly on their application to the higher education sector, although much is generic.

This is not an appeal that all educators concerned with citizenship should read Arendt; she is at times obscure and difficult, giving rise to a body of scholarship which tends to become inwardly focused. Turning the lens toward education could help sharpen the questions asked. It may be that the implications of Arendt's thinking for education are yet to be fully explored and that it is those such as James Tully (2008, 2014) and Gert Biesta (2011, 2013) who have engaged with and gone beyond Arendt that will have the greatest impact. My own contribution to this process is to focus persistently on what it means in practice and to engage the practitioners' perspective in any discussion.

Some of the preliminary conclusions from various stages of research have been shared at conferences in the UK (Walker 2016, 2017a, 2019, 2020b) and in some articles (Walker 2015, 2018). The discussions that arose and reflections on feedback provided have encouraged and guided further research. The next step is to set about writing further articles which disseminate the findings of this thesis internationally among those scholars

involved in applying Arendt's thinking to education. My involvement with the recently formed Global Transformative Education Network (GTEN 2021) has facilitated contact with some practitioners exploring Arendtian thinking in various educational contexts in different parts of the world. I plan to use this and other networks to explore with colleagues what could be regarded as an 'Arendtian Pedagogy', on which this research begins to provoke questions.

6.4.3 The application of Arendt's concepts to adult education in the UK.

The period covered by this investigation (2013–20) corresponded to a shift in my practice away from Citizenship Teaching within a secondary school setting toward a less prescriptive curriculum and more equitable power relations in adult only WEA classes. Initially, these were focused on distinct Psychological or Political subjects but the influence of working toward this thesis has created a greater synthesis of topics in which an Arendtian influenced pedagogy is apparent. 'Beyond Ideologies' (Walker 2021), for example, is a course that uses a plurality of perspectives as a starting point and creates a requirement for coming to judgement in collaboration with other students. Most of these are offered online and reach a wide variety of students with different educational backgrounds. The courses on Hannah Arendt have attracted academics from diverse fields. Reading matter for the course included early drafts of sections from this thesis, and some students requested a full draft and have contributed to the discussion arising.

In chapter three, it was mentioned that a group of tutors and staff from the WEA continued to work toward the introduction of a Practical Political Education pathway which linked and

promoted a series of courses. My contribution was to promote an Arendtian understanding of 'active citizenship' and suggest this replaced the term 'active citizen' in the statement of educational outcomes. This led on to me being offered the role as coordinator of a Community of Practice (subject-based tutor support peer groups) for the area of Citizenship/Political Education. This will give me the opportunity to share more widely an Arendtian perspective with colleagues involved in the field. The WEA is the largest third sector provider of adult education in the UK and one of few with a commitment to public democratic education (WEA 2020).

Another area in which many of these ideas are relevant is the emerging field of environmental education, which spans several sectors. Here the emphasis is not just on understanding the impact of human activity on the natural world but also in developing the skills and understanding to be able to influence that impact. At present in England, it is a cross-curricular theme in a way similar to that of Citizenship Education before it became a compulsory subject. Some educators in the field have attended my WEA courses on Arendt, where such ideas are discussed (Martin 2021). This is fast becoming an important global trend in education, one in which the application of Arendt's political thinking to education as explored in this research has something to contribute.

6.4.4 The application to adult mental health education sector in the UK.

My psychological courses for adults offered through the WEA have also developed more of a focus on the potential for new forms of self-identification and relationship to emerge, which could facilitate collaborative forms of social action. This forged new connections between

apparently disparate areas of teaching which are emerging as significant contributions to the field of client-led adult mental health education. The work examined in chapter five with the Bridge project has led on to partnerships with similar grass roots organisations and the development of more widely accessible online courses for the WEA funded by the Wellcome Trust (Walker 2020a).

Some of these groups are linked with the Exeter City Council Co-Lab initiative, which is running a project (CoLab 2021) to develop locally based response to the proposed new framework for Community Mental Health (NHS 2020). This draws together, in different working groups, representatives of mental health service providers and community groups that represent a wide range of stakeholders to come up with proposals for implementation of the framework in Exeter. I was invited to participate in one group because of my work with the Bridge and Wellcome Trust funded WEA courses. This group's title is 'shifting the mindset' which has a remit of looking at ways to facilitate collaboration between very diverse groups and individuals with radically different perspectives on mental health, from clinical psychologists to user groups, medical practitioners to community activists.

My contribution is to frame this process as essentially an educative one of expanding one's thinking to encompass a diverse plurality of views, but also a political activity in which power as well as 'mindsets' are potentially being shifted. One outcome identified in the framework is that of service users more actively participating in managing their own mental health, which can be regarded as a form of 'active citizenship'. The lack of consensus on the meaning of 'mental health' parallels that of 'active citizenship'.

It is early days yet, but this illustrates the potential impact of this research beyond formal educational institutions. I have introduced the participants to an Arendtian understanding of action in the public realm, to the therapeutic value of a reflexive stance to mental health, and the political dimension of freedom. The aim of creating new relationships between participating organisations offers the "chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us" (Arendt 1998: 196). In this context, *Amor Mundi* includes a respectful and caring orientation toward all aspects of the 'world', however diverse and distressed.

My interpretation of the challenge and opportunity offered by this initiative is an unpredicted outcome of this research. The extent to which this interpretation resonates with others and enables them to view this collective undertaking in a different light is a measure of impact, which may take time to recognise. The project itself is supported and to be evaluated by the Wellcome Centre for Cultures and Environments of Health based at the University of Exeter.

6.4.5 Methodological contributions and the transformation of practice.

The narrative method used illustrates how Arendt's concepts can be applied across different aspects of educational practice. This is a unique contribution of this research. Its importance lies less in enhancing an understanding of Arendt's concepts, which will always be open to discussion, but more in providing examples of how these concepts can be put to work in different ways across diverse educational settings. The methodology itself has been shared and discussed with colleagues (many following professional doctorates themselves) at

various conferences in Plymouth (Walker 2017c, 2019) and Liverpool, online (Walker 2020b).

The impact on my practice is outlined in the story of the research process itself, a gradual shifting of identification away from diverse educational roles toward a clearer integrated stance, borne of the process of reflexivity in reflection that Arendt called 'thinking without a banister'. At times this was unsettling and undermined what I thought I knew, but it was transformative in terms of how I came to understand better what I was doing and consequently how I acted when those, often fleeting, opportunities for freedom arose. My capacity to recognise such opportunities was aided by the engagement with Arendt's concepts that this research facilitated.

6.5.0 Critiques.

This section considers some criticisms of this investigation, both methodological and theoretical. The implications of these for further research are briefly explored and some suggestions offered. Initially, I return to the fictional focus group initiated at the start of this thesis. As researcher, I have asked myself what could be said from these diverse perspectives, on the assumption that they had read the thesis only but not engaged personally in the research journey.

6.5.1 Revisiting the professional identities.

I now ask the reader to imagine that the practitioner 'participants' introduced at the beginning of this thesis meet up again to reflect on the extent to which their concerns have

been addressed in this research. Some of the comments reflect concerns tangential to the nature of this investigation but they do represent legitimate concerns of the different communities of practice to which these '**identities**' belong.

The Citizenship Teacher.

I found chapter one useful in that it went some way toward answering my questions about the status of Citizenship Education in England, particularly the section of why Crick's vision has had such limited impact. I can appreciate how Arendt's concepts of action, power, and natality could have value for Citizenship specialists and think more could be done to share these with colleagues.

However, as chapter three progresses, the focus widens, and the concepts become more nebulous. Without a background or/and specialist training in Citizenship Education, I cannot see these ideas resonating with, or even being considered by, other subject teachers.

The implications of chapters four and five are downright dangerous to the status of Citizenship Education in the UK in that they risk weakening the argument for Citizenship as a discrete subject. Although I can appreciate that this is not the intention, the emphasis on reflective practice lacks a sharp political focus and could have the opposite effect to that desired. Trying to suggest that activities with no explicit citizenship content can be regarded as examples of Active Citizenship undermines the work of those promoting effective Citizenship Education.

The Senior Examiner.

I don't think enough attention was given to the role of assessment in facilitating Active Citizenship. The project qualifications certainly have a role to play in complementing the knowledge-based qualifications, but without a grounding in the subject I fear that the suggested aims are unrealistic. The use of Arendt's conception of action to provide a theoretical underpinning may be useful for teachers but it presents far too many problems for examiners who need something more demonstrable and communicable to make meaningful assessments possible.

Very little of practical value is provided for those of us involved in developing the existing GCSE qualification in Citizenship to enable teachers to use it to justify their support for Active Citizenship within their courses. Indeed, the examples provided are critiqued to such an extent that the impact is more likely to put practitioners off claiming that they are attempting to practise Active Citizenship.

Regarding the project qualification, my concern is that the existing qualification has not been widely taken up in schools because it does not meet the criteria for rigorously assessed qualifications set by government and therefore fails to find funding in mainstream secondary schools. The project is doomed from the onset. Sorry to be so pessimistic but that is what working for exam boards for 20 odd years does to you.

The Adult Educator.

I found much that resonated with my own experiences and concerns. However, I am still no clearer on quite how adult education is expected to change the world. To be honest, however, I did not really expect to find an answer.

The meeting between political education and critical psychology was quite original and worthy of wider circulation among those (admittedly limited number of) adult educators working in the field.

I can appreciate that, overall, the concepts introduced and illustrated here probably have more currency in the adult education sector where outcomes are less prescriptive and there is more scope of innovation. Sadly, that sector continues to shrink.

The Teacher of Psychology.

Well for me my expectations were pleasantly exceeded, but admittedly they were low to start with. My concern was that the political would overshadow the psychological, but I found in this a greater insight into how psychology has the potential to contribute more to political involvement and to challenge the implicit individualising tendencies of the subject matter. The adolescent mental health crisis certainly challenges psychology teachers in schools and college and a greater reflexive awareness could benefit their mental health as well as that of their students.

I am familiar with the situational approach to agency and can see how this parallels the way in which Arendt's thinking about freedom is portrayed. However, I do wonder if other Arendt interpreters would see it in the same way.

6.5.2 Interpretation bias, unrepresentative sampling, and other issues.

It is certainly a fair criticism to suggest that I have been selective with Arendt's thinking and adapted it to fit my own concerns. This thesis applies an interpretation of some of Arendt's concepts, leaving it to others to discuss what Arendt 'actually meant'. Canovan (1992) suggests that Arendt's thinking is best regarded as a work in progress as she developed these concepts throughout her life, as others have continued to do after her death. My aim has been to discover a meaning in Arendt's concepts that contextualise my experiences as an educator, in the hope that these will resonate with the experiences of others.

This distinctive contribution blends professional and theoretical knowledge, which is shaped by involvement with different communities of practice and selected according to the themes examined and arguments developed. Its value lies in the extent to which others can

recognise the stories told and appreciate the interpretations offered. The aim was to extend Arendt's thinking by applying it to a series of specific contexts. It can be argued that another practitioner would select and interpret their practice differently and that other conceptual tools could give rise to different conclusions. The next step here would be to do just that and enrich the dialogue with a plurality of perspectives.

6.5.3 Overemphasis on verbal language and claims of elitism.

Because Arendt presents thinking as an internal dialogue, there is an implication that this requires some sophistication in the use of language. Consequently, she has often been claimed as elitist by her critics. Wolin (2001) for example concludes that her approach is profoundly anti-democratic because her emphasis on thinking limits participation in the political realm to an educated, literary elite, the philosopher kings of Plato's imagination. I argued in chapter four that this misrepresents Arendt's understanding of thinking as a process, which is deeply moral and impassioned because it is positioned in the interaction between aspects of self which are fundamental aspects of the human condition.

However, this does involve a withdrawal of the thinker from the world, if only for a moment, to become a spectator, so facilitating judgement and the freedom required for action. It implies a separation between thought and action which Schön's (1983) version of reflection *in* action arguably does not and Bleakley's (1999) notion of holistic reflexivity seeks to avoid. In this investigation, there is certainly a tendency to regard reflexivity in research as a language-based project, arguably prioritising this over other forms of expression. Coming to judgement on matters of morality may well be more of an affective,

immediate, and 'embodied' process than Arendt acknowledges. For many, the political heart of education I am seeking could be closer to intuitive, situated affect than the language-based thinking process implied by Arendt.

It is certainly the case that many, myself included, find reading Arendt a difficult process; the provocative attribution of unfamiliar meanings to familiar terms and the frequent references to classical writers are challenging to say the least. I am always seeking examples, asking what this means in practice. My attempts to relate these ideas to my educational practice arise from this frustration and I accept that it could take Arendt's ideas to places originally unintended. I argue that this is a valuable exercise and that Arendt's aim has always been to stimulate thinking beyond boundaries rather than create an edifice of orthodox theory.

Other writers, bell hooks (1994) for example, may well be able to reach the same point, but to communicate the journey in a way that other educators may find easier to follow. I selected Arendt here because of the value I found in her concept of **action** in trying to answer my original question regarding the political essence of 'active citizenship'. Feminist critics have provided a perspective which goes beyond the gendered binaries which often cloud Arendt's language (Benhabib 1998). Also, Psychoanalytic insights, such as those presented by Gemma Fiumara (2001), do much to restore the balance between reason and affect in our mental life. These go beyond the scope of this investigation but do provide further lines of enquiry.

6.5.4 The implications for Citizenship Education are not made explicit.

To suggest that many aspects of Citizenship Education lack a political dimension in an Arendtian sense is not an argument for reducing curriculum provision. Likewise, my exploration of political elements of my Psychology teaching does not imply that specialist Citizenship Teachers are not essential. The features outlined above regarding the political heart of education are not exclusive to any specific subject area. Citizenship classes in secondary education, in the UK at least, remain the subject area most likely to be able to encompass most of these aspects.

In reference to the Arendt quote at the start of this chapter, formal Citizenship Education in the UK still provides scope 'to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world'. It was always recognised within the field of Citizenship Education that other subjects also address these issues and that a creative teacher can take the curriculum content and use it to examine issues that are current and relevant to their students to prepare them to become political actors in their world.

It is also pertinent to point out that formal Citizenship Education has a recognised socialising role in developing social cohesion and the transmission of current values and norms. There will always be a risk that this can become a form of indoctrination, which can "strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new". Initiatives such as teaching 'British Values' and the anti-terrorist Prevent agenda, if not treated critically, run this risk.

6.5.0 Beyond the professional identities – a final personal reflection.

The research for this thesis included reflection on those personal values that influenced the route taken by my professional 'identities'. The extent to which these

identities can be regarded as 'mine' was also questioned as each was to some extent constructed by the institutional context and educational culture in which they operated. Arendt's practice of 'thinking without a banister' has revealed something of what these diverse identities held in common and where they diverge.

I no longer work in schools as a Citizenship Teacher or trainer and my role as principal examiner for A level Citizenship disappeared with the qualification in 2018. I have little opportunity now to influence the GCSE qualification and my role in the development of more politically orientated project qualifications is nearly complete.

My identification as a 'citizenship specialist' is waning, but I still hope that the subject can respond to the challenges of renewing a common world. What makes me more hopeful are the responses of students and teachers to the challenges posed by the world in which they find themselves, regardless of subject boundaries and formal educational outcomes. Young people seem more prepared to see the challenges they face in a political context, from the Climate Strikes of 2019 to the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement. Arendt's concepts can help to understand and support such actions, even if they offer little guidance for curriculum planners or schemes of assessment.

Personally, I have taken a step back, which facilitates reflection at the cost of involvement. The one area in which I have become more involved is in adult mental health education. My contribution is to highlight the political context of education for 'mental health' and provide a critical perspective which resonates with those involved in the field of peer led mental health education and those who see themselves as on a recovery pathway. Recovery here is conceptualised more as a collective, educative process which has an increasingly explicit political context. The Covid-19 crisis has illustrated the way in which 'well-being' becomes a political endeavour, from which no one is exempt. It has magnified concerns regarding social inequality and alienation from each other and the natural world.

In the Human Condition (1998), Arendt paints a picture of human nature as deeply political, which has the potential to transcend the individualising tendencies of liberalism whilst still recognising the freedom in diversity. It is a vision which challenges the models provided by mainstream Psychology in that it emphasises the political nature of the relational aspects of being in the world. My polarised professional identities of Citizenship Teacher and Psychology Teacher have now become one and my opportunities for action now reside in the challenge of bringing the political challenge of citizenship into in the context of psychology teaching for adults.

My search for the political heart of education for 'active citizenship' has led me to discover the political heart of education for 'mental health'.

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