

# REFLECTING ON TEACHER'S AUTHORITY THROUGH HANNAH ARENDT'S "THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION"

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**Abstract:** Child-centered education has become pervasive due to its emphasis on freedom, which is highly valued in modern society. This progressive approach has brought an inquiry into the teacher's authority which is viewed as traditional and irrelevant for students today. This essay aims to step back and to explore the concept of the teacher's 'authority' more deeply through Hannah Arendt's writing entitled "The Crisis in Education". It begins by analyzing what Arendt means by the 'crisis' in education, particularly in the American context. Then, by departing from the progressive interpretation, I re-examine the concept of 'authority' and its relation to 'freedom', based on ancient Greek and Roman understandings. Drawing on these analyses, Arendt asserts that teachers play a significant role because they prepare students to love and care for the world (*amor mundi*). Nevertheless, I argue that a teacher's authority must also include attention to the private realm that continues impacting students' learning at schools. Only in this way are students genuinely prepared for their responsibility as political agents in our society.

**Keywords:** authority, freedom, child-centered education, private realm, political realm, *amor mundi*.

**Abstrak:** Pendidikan yang berpusat pada anak menjadi kian populer karena sangat menekankan kebebasan, sesuatu yang sedemikian dijunjung tinggi oleh masyarakat modern. Pendekatan progresif ini membuat otoritas guru lantas dipertanyakan, karena dianggap terlalu tradisional dan tidak relevan lagi. Artikel ini ingin menelusuri konsep 'otoritas' guru secara lebih mendalam melalui tulisan filsuf Hannah Arendt yang berjudul "The Crisis in Education". Pertama, akan diselidiki makna 'krisis' dalam konteks Pendidikan di USA. Kedua, sedikit menyimpang

dari tafsiran progresif dan dengan menimba inspirasi dari pemahaman Yunani dan Romawi kuno, artikel ini hendak menilai kembali makna 'otoritas' dan relasinya dengan 'kebebasan'. Ketiga, berdasarkan analisis makna 'otoritas' tersebut, Arendt menegaskan bahwa guru memainkan peran krusial karena merekalah yang menyiapkan siswa untuk mencintai dan peduli kepada dunia sekitarnya (*amor mundi*). Penulis berpendapat lebih lanjut bahwa otoritas guru harus memperhatikan dimensi privat yang sangat memengaruhi proses pembelajaran siswa di sekolah. Hanya dengan demikian siswa dapat sungguh siap untuk kemudian memikul tanggung jawab sebagai aktor-aktor politis dalam masyarakat.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** otoritas, kebebasan, pendidikan-berpusat-pada-anak, dimensi privat, dimensi politis, *amor mundi*.

## INTRODUCTION

During my childhood, I came across a metaphor comparing schooling with the journey of a boat crossing a river. On this boat, the teacher is a rower accompanying their pupils crossing the river from one side to the other. Although this metaphor might not perfectly describe the whole schooling experience, it demonstrates the traditional Thai approach to the educational process, particularly viewing the school as the 'intermediary' that bridges the private and public realms. Regarding a teacher-student relationship, teachers exercise a certain kind of authority based on their expertise and their role *in loco parentis* through which they assist and care for their students to transition to the adult world. Along this educational journey, students who were once dependent solely on their families are prepared to realize their aspirations and obtain what they need to live in society as it is.

Today, the teacher's authority in schools is increasingly questioned. In Thailand, for instance, child-centered education, a progressive approach that emphasizes students' autonomy in learning, was introduced by the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999), section 22. Both state and private schools, representing 78% and 22% of the total student popu-

lation, respectively, must implement these new guidelines in their schools. Teachers must integrate the facilitator role in teaching by providing more activities or experiments for students so they can learn and develop their ideas freely. This change has created widespread anxiety among educators concerned about whether this approach may decrease their roles and damage students' knowledge acquisition. In addition, alongside the progressive approach, through the rapid development of the internet and social media, a massive amount of data around the globe is available on pupils' portable devices. These innovations are viewed as effective educational alternatives that may replace mere learning from teachers as in the past.

But does the progressive approach, which undermines the teacher's authority, genuinely and sufficiently prepare students to integrate into society? Does the teacher's authority stand in opposition to student freedom? This paper explores these issues through Hannah Arendt's "The Crisis in Education" (1954), later republished as a chapter of *Between Past and Future* (1961). In this writing, Arendt examines the role of teachers by unpacking the concepts of 'authority' and 'freedom' in education. She contends that teachers play an essential function in preparing students to love and to care for the world we all share (*amor mundi*). However, I argue that, although the teacher's role is significant, as it still remains lacking in Arendt's view, teachers must simultaneously consider the influence of the private realm that continues impacting students in their learning at schools.

This essay consists of four parts. In the first part, I will look at what Arendt means by the crisis in education. In the second and third parts, I will philosophically analyze the terms 'authority' and 'freedom,' respectively. Finally, I will reflect on the teacher's authority in contemporary society.

## WHAT IS THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION?

When we look at a series of Arendt's writings, she focuses primarily on political issues, not so much on education. Nevertheless, because "The

"Crisis in Education" is one of a few works by Arendt on education, the essay can be even more valuable.<sup>1</sup> It demonstrates that an educational issue needs to be seriously discussed and it probably relates to her political ideas. But why did Arendt choose to reflect on this issue seriously? What does The Crisis in Education mean for her?

At first glance, we must construe what Arendt means by education. In "The Crisis in Education", Arendt (1961) defines education as the 'intermediary' between private and public realms or between family and politics. It is a place where students are introduced to the world and prepared to take responsibility as political agents in the future:

Normally the child is first introduced to the world in school. Now school is by no means the world and must not pretend to be; it is rather the institution that we interpose between the private domain of home and the world in order to make the transition from the family to the world possible at all.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, 'school' should not be viewed as a mere learning space, but it aims to assist students in acquiring sufficient knowledge and taking responsibility to care for our world. Drawing on such understanding, the Arendtian notion of 'crisis' in education does not refer to a particular problem whose immediate negative consequences we directly experience, such as the food crisis, the financial crisis, the environmental crisis, and so on, but it is the profound problem that impacts our political realm. It is worth noting that, for Arendt, the 'political realm' (the *vita activa*) is essential because it is where we exercise our democratic role as citizens by deliberating and making decisions that collectively impact all aspects of our lives. This crisis forces us to reflect upon the problem and to make a judgement to seek possible solutions and reorganize our society.

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1 Apart from "The Crisis in Education", Arendt wrote another essay on education entitled "Reflection on the Little Rock", discussing whether the American federal court should intervene in the issue of segregated schools in the State level by allowing black students to study at schools for white students. This essay was later republished in the book entitled *Responsibility and Judgment* (2003). As we can see from both writings, her analyses on education rest on her academic interest in politics.

2 Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 185.

In the same way, Arendt was concerned about education in America, which was influenced by the progressive movement which overemphasized students' freedom and rejected the teacher's authority. To analyze this issue further, Arendt starts with three assumptions of what 'will happen if': *first*, children have definite freedom and exercise their functions as political agents without any intervention from adults; *second*, influenced by modern psychology and pragmatism, teachers lack mastery of certain particular subjects, but can teach only in general; and *third*, teachers focus on 'doing' which pragmatism values highly rather than 'thinking'.

With regard to the first assumption, if we let a child govern the world and they have been freed from an authority, then 'the child has not been [truly] freed but has been subjected to a much more terrifying and truly tyrannical authority, the tyranny of the majority.'<sup>3</sup> This statement can be viewed in relation to Arendt's tragic experience of totalitarianism and her concern with what she called 'the banality of evil', which operated behind the *cognitive* mechanism of the tyrant leaders. But how might totalitarianism be related to education?

Arendt characterizes the banality of evil as related to the *thoughtlessness* she encountered in the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a former Nazi officer, in Jerusalem. This banality of evil refers to the inability to reflect on one's actions and on how these actions relate to or impact others. Thus, Arendt's preoccupation is beyond solely political dictatorship controlling the crowd, but it is about cognitive mechanisms of totalitarianism. In the same fashion, if children do not receive an education—or receive one without [teacher's] 'authority'—and are left alone in the world, they will not have the capacity to think critically and reflectively about their actions, about their relationships with others, and about society as it is. Without the ability to think critically, 'its danger to action and politics is obvious: it renders us passive, oblivious to both our options and our responsibilities.'<sup>4</sup>

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3 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 178.

4 Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Justice: On Relating Private and Public," *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981), pp. 327–352.

Regarding the second assumption, Arendt criticizes modern psychology and pragmatism, which emphasize the science of teaching in general rather than learning specific subject-based knowledge and expertise. Influential theorists in this pedagogy were, for instance, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey; their ideas were 'crucial to pragmatism having immediate educational application.'<sup>5</sup> For them, students' learning must include not only the cognitive dimension but also emotional and social dimensions. Nonetheless, the question about this pedagogy is whether students can acquire adequate knowledge to pursue their aspirations, because the teacher 'can simply teach anything; his training is in teaching, not in the mastery of any particular subject.'<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, Arendt's third assumption lies in the view of pragmatism that what is helpful for learning is what 'you can know and understand only what you have done yourself.'<sup>7</sup> Dewey, for example, emphasizes how students learn effectively by doing various physical experiments and social interactions with others. That is why students are encouraged to carry out several activities at school, including playing. However, the question is whether this sort of pedagogy, without solid knowledge, will genuinely enable students to integrate into society and be responsible for it.

Similar to the context of American education, the progressive method was implemented because it was considered more appropriate during significant immigration, creating cultural diversity among children. Also, the emphasis on a student's freedom and rejection of the teacher's authority was perceived as more relevant to the American value of liberty. Nevertheless, the famous work of Rudolf Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, demonstrates the crucial problems caused by this progressive pedagogy. Johnny, as he represents many students at that time, learned how to read

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5 Jim Garrison and Alven Neiman, "Pragmatism and Education," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyers, Richard Smith and Paul Standish (Victoria: Blackwell, 2003), p. 22.

6 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 179.

7 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 179.

by a 'look-say method', sometimes referred to as the 'whole-word approach', meaning learning how to read from 'words as wholes, as carriers of meaning, and that they should be tackled in context'.<sup>8</sup> From Flesch's perspective, Johnny's inability to read is caused by this whole-word approach that does not offer a systematic knowledge of basic phonics from teachers. From Flesch's experience of teaching Johnny phonics, Johnny can read more effectively.

That is why Arendt refers to 'the bankruptcy of progressive education' that causes the education crisis in America. How can students care for this world if they cannot acquire a genuine and adequate understanding of what the world is through their serious learning at schools? For Arendt, education was going in the wrong direction and needed to be redirected again through what she elaborates further: the teacher's 'authority'.

## WHAT IS AUTHORITY?

After looking at the crisis in American education, Arendt views the teacher's authority as very significant for education. For her, 'restoration' is urgent, and to bring that about, 'teaching will once more [need to] be conducted with authority.'<sup>9</sup> However, what does she mean by authority? How is the teacher's authority related to education?

At first glance, to most people, the word 'authority' often refers to the notion of hierarchical power in which those in higher positions dominate or take control over others. Arendt defines this kind of authority in Platonic origin, referring to *βία*, force and violence, and *πείθειν*, persuasion. Nonetheless, what Arendt suggests in politics and education is not this authority with power (*potestas*), but authority (*auctoritas*) that has its root in the verb *augere*, meaning 'augment,' and thus, 'what authority or those in authority constantly augment is the foundation.'<sup>10</sup> It resonates with au-

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8 Andrew Davis, "To read or not to read: decoding Synthetic Phonics," *Impact: Philosophical Perspective on Education Policy*, no. 20 (2013), p. 14.

9 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 181.

10 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 121.

thority in the Roman *polis*, where the Senate (the council of elders) did not command with power but advised citizens about the spirit of its foundation, including its constitution and traditions. Now, I will point out three aspects of this notion of 'authority' relating to education.

First, teachers do not have authority in themselves in terms of the power to do what they desire. Instead, the teachers obtain authority as 'representatives of the world'.<sup>11</sup> It means the teacher's authority derives from the credential trust given by the community or by society to take this mission to educate young students so that the students genuinely grasp the foundational understanding of this world. Therefore, the teacher's authority is 'the justification for acting in a certain way, on the basis of a mandate issued by a community.'<sup>12</sup> In Thailand, for example, in public and private school systems, a person must have a teacher's license obtained through a certain number of years of study and teaching training to exercise the role of a teacher. This license can be taken away in the case of a teacher's misconduct. For parents who teach in home-schooling systems, they must register at and receive permission from the Primary Educational Service Area Office (PESAO) or Secondary Educational Service Area Office (SES AO), depending on the student's level. Both offices must ensure parents' adequate capacities to organize this learning environment and to follow up on the student's learning process.

Second, the teacher's authority derives from their knowledge and expertise, which is to be transmitted to students. It is insufficient to know *how* to teach without knowing *what* to teach in depth. That was why Arendt was worried when she wrote of the 'neglect of the training of teachers in their own subjects'.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Michael Young argues that a school is a place where young people receive the 'powerful knowledge' which is the knowledge that we cannot just obtain from home or the community. This knowledge is context-independent or theoretical, meaning it is 'knowledge that is developed to provide generalizations and makes

11 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 186.

12 William H. Kitchen, *Authority and the Teacher* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 55.

13 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 179.



claims to universality'.<sup>14</sup> Today, this powerful knowledge is known as specialist knowledge, and teachers must specialize in particular areas of knowledge, for instance, in the sciences. In this way, teachers can introduce the world, not from their ignorance or prejudices, but as the world is understood in a particular field of inquiry. Eventually, this will give students an adequate basis for judgement about the world.

Finally, the teacher's authority consists not only of these qualifications but also of their love for the world (*amor mundi*) to which the teachers introduce the students. This love is not merely an emotion but is concerned with the continuation of the world. In an Arendtian sense, education is the imparting of this *amor mundi* from the teachers to the students. It is to ensure that children, with their newness, will change the world not for ill but for good. Through this love for the world, the teacher's authority will be a pathway 'for building, preserving, and caring for a world that can survive us and remain a place fit to live in for those who come after us'.<sup>15</sup> Without this love for the world, for Arendt, one is no longer capable of undertaking the role of a teacher.

In any case, however, the educators here stand in relation to the young as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility although they themselves did not make it, and even though they may, secretly or openly, wish it were other than it is. This responsibility is not arbitrarily imposed upon educators; it is implicit in the fact that the young are introduced by adults into a continuously changing world. Anyone who refuses to assume joint responsibility for the world should not have children and must not be allowed to take part in educating them.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, being a teacher, in Arendt's view, demands a love for the world and taking responsibility for it. This authority is not for oneself as the tyrant's authority is, but rather for the common good. Since the teach-

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14 Michael Young and Johan Muller, *Curriculum and the Specialization of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 111.

15 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 95.

16 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 186.

er is aware that children bring with them 'the fact of natality',<sup>17</sup> teaching them first to understand the world correctly and love it will orient the changes they can make in a positive direction. That is what the teacher's authority means, and its meaning goes far beyond a mere function to teach students but instead includes the greater horizon of love and responsibility for the world.

### WHAT IS FREEDOM?

One of the arguments often raised by child-centered education in opposition to the teacher's authority is the threat of that authority to the student's freedom. John Dewey (2015), for example, insists that the imposition of external authority will limit students' freedom regarding learning and further growth. The reason is that this freedom in the 'external and physical side of activity cannot be separated from the internal side of activity: from freedom of thought, desire, and purpose'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, providing the external environment and activities that allow students to exercise freedom of what and how to learn will foster their inner independence of personal growth toward thinking and effectively pursuing the individual aims each seeks. Nonetheless, we might ask again: what is freedom? Is it accurate to say that teacher's authority limits students' freedom in school?

One central Western liberal notion of 'freedom' is derived from the Kantian view that humans, as rational beings, can determine their own 'free will'.<sup>19</sup> It was undeniable that this new framework of freedom occurred amidst the decline of the dominant institutions of traditional authority: the State, the Kingdom, and the Church. Liberal thinkers saw these institutions as dangerous for individual freedom or self-determi-

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17 Arendt's concept of 'natality' is an essential aspect of human condition. It says that every child who is born in this world brings with them the newness that can potentially impact our world (see Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 61).

18 John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Free Press, 2015), p. 61.

19 See Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 143; Paul Standish, "Moral Education, Liberal Education and the Voice of the Individual," in *Education in the Era of Globalization*, eds. Klas Roth and Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), p. 35.

nation. In Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile* (1762), emancipation from the institution was taken radically, not only in his political ideas but also in his educational ideas. Instead of being framed by institutions, for Rousseau, 'what is to be learned should be determined by an understanding of the child's nature at each stage of his development.'<sup>20</sup> Rousseau reduces to a minimum all interventions of external authority by placing Emile in a valley far from the city, to study with a tutor whose role was to ensure an appropriate environment for his pupil without direct interaction. In this way, Emile could learn more effectively through nature.

Arendt rejects the notion of freedom in child-centered education and its rejection of authority. She invites us to trace back to the idea of 'freedom' rooted in ancient Greek and Latin languages. It begins with the definition of 'to act', the verb associated with freedom.

In Greek, 'to act' comes from the words *ἀρχεῖν*, to begin, to lead, and to rule, and *πράττειν*, to carry something through. The first word, *ἀρχεῖν*, refers to 'the outstanding qualities of the *free* man, bears witness to an experience in which being free and the capacity to begin something new coincide', and 'for only with the help of others could the *ἄρχων*, the ruler, beginner, and leader, really act, [and] *πράττειν*, carry through whatever he had started to do.'<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, in Latin, 'to act' derives from *agere*, to set something in motion, and *gerere*, enduring and supporting the continuation of past acts. It is rooted in the Roman belief that their freedom is related to their ancestors who founded the city and the responsibility they must continue building upon this foundation of the city (*ab urbe condita*). At this point, the notion of freedom is closely related to authority because a person who obtains this freedom also exercises authority by augmenting (*agere*) this city foundation.

Roman freedom was a legacy bequeathed by the founders of Rome to the Roman people; their freedom was tied to the beginning their forefathers had established by founding the city, whose affairs the descendants had to manage, whose consequences they had to bear, and

20 John Darling, *Child-Centred Education and Its Critics* (London: Paul Chapman, 1994), p. 6.

21 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 164.

whose foundations they had to "augment." All these together are the *res gestae* of the Roman republic.<sup>22</sup>

From the above, we can see that the notion of 'freedom', for Arendt, which derives originally from the Greek word *polis*, is related to her understanding of politics. In other words, 'the *raison d'être* of politics is freedom and that this freedom is primarily experienced in action.'<sup>23</sup> It is the freedom that individuals, as political agents, exercise through the interplay of their actions, which brings with it the renewal of the community or society where they live.

Nonetheless, for Arendt, freedom must be distinguished from free will because freedom is political, demanding that a person goes beyond life's necessities and self-preservation to undertake responsibility and love for the world. It is inaccurate to associate authority with injustice, oppression, and inequality because authority, in Arendt's view, guarantees the flourishing that comes from the exercise of freedom in collective life. In contrast, free will is merely self-focused, taking oneself away from the world. Worse than that, instead of making us free, the rejection of authority may create a space occupied by totalitarianism or tyranny.

Hence, Arendt disagreed with progressive education's claim for freedom in students' learning, as she argued, 'the very thing that should prepare the child for the world of adults, the gradually acquired habit of work and of not-playing, is done away with in favor of the autonomy of the world of childhood.'<sup>24</sup> Education is not just a period of development but has its political aims, because students, who bring with them newness to the world, must be prepared to assume their roles as political agents in the future. Freedom in education must not be based on free will or self-interest, which might lead to destruction, but is built on a foundation of love and responsibility that makes the world change for the better.

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<sup>22</sup> Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 165.

<sup>23</sup> Hannah Arendt, "Freedom and Politics: A Lecture," *Chicago Review* 14, no. 1 (1960), p. 28.

<sup>24</sup> Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 180.

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 that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and 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.<sup>25</sup>

### RECONSIDERING THE AUTHORITY OF TEACHERS IN TODAY'S CRISIS IN EDUCATION

Drawing on Arendt's analyses in "The Crisis in Education", we see how significant the teacher's authority is in education. Nonetheless, in my view, something is missing in Arendt's thought. Arendt seemed to be preoccupied with education mostly as it is related to the political realm, particularly in terms of the authority of the teacher as the 'representatives of the world',<sup>26</sup> and students being prepared to be the political agents who are prepared for 'the task of renewing a common world'.<sup>27</sup> This overemphasis on students' preparation for politics is possibly caused by Arendt's strict liberal perspective, in which the private and public realms must be separated.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, I argue that if school is viewed as the intermediary between private and political realms, teachers must also pay atten-

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25 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 193.

26 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 186.

27 Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, p. 193.

28 For Arendt, the distinction between the private and the public realms is important in her political thoughts. Drawing on Greek understanding, the household (*oiketai* or *familiares*) is where people labour for the necessities of life, such as food. In other words, it is where people are enslaved working for their human needs and their household master. In contrast, the political realm is where those who are liberated from the necessities of life (for examples, those masters of the household who have other slaves to work in their place) come together to discuss the political issues in the public. Arendt's separation between the two realms is to prevent the characteristics of the private (i.e., violence, the master-slave relationship, and so on) from entering the political realm where citizens are supposed to be free in their interaction in democratic process. The totalitarianism can be an example of ways in which the household governance is used in the state level.

tion to the private realm that continues impacting students' learning at schools.

To elaborate further, by using the analytical concept of 'intermediary', if 'school' is represented by 'y', it also means the school is located between the private realm or family ('x') and political realm ('z'). It seems that Arendt tends to pay attention only to the relation between 'y' and 'z', by emphasizing that the role of 'y' is to prepare students toward 'z'. However, we must not forget that 'y' is at the same time related to 'x'. The reason is that when students enter schools, they do not start from zero in learning but also bring previous knowledge, experience, and disposition, from their family background into school.

This concern is particularly important given the prevalence of wars, environmental destruction, violence, and poverty, which can diminish the child's experience of love. We can think of, for instance, some alternative schools that educate students who might not be able to study in mainstream schools because of their problematic behaviors and relationship with others caused by domestic violence during childhood. These are schools in which Martin Mills and others (2016) want to assist the students, who need not only contributive justice but also affective justice that provides 'the quality of relationships, care, and support available to students.'<sup>29</sup>

Other contemporary thinkers have researched this affective dimension or emotional development. For instance, Sue Gerhardt (2015), as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, defines how an early child's development impacts their later life, whether in self-esteem or relationships with others. Gerhardt analyzes those children affected by childhood trauma and suggests that to repair this, the child must be helped by another person in whom the child can place trust and regain a secure relationship. Nel Noddings (2013), a professor of Child Education, further illustrates the significance of care in education in her research on ethics and moral

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29 Martin Mills, Glenda McGregor, Aspa Baroutsis, Kitty Te Riele and Debra Hayes, "Alternative Education and Social Justice: Considering Issues of Affective and Contributive Justice," *Critical Studies in Education* 57, no. 1 (2016), p. 101.

education. For her, education is not only about cognitive development but must also pay attention to the ethical dimension. Through educators who are the 'one-caring' in real-life examples, students who are the 'cared-for' learn how to care for others at the same time. As she says:

A teacher cannot "talk" this ethic. She must live it, and that implies establishing a relation with the student. Besides talking to him and showing him how one cares, she engages in cooperative practice with him. He is learning not just mathematics or social studies; he is also learning how to be one-caring. By conducting education morally, the teacher hopes to induce an enhanced moral sense in the student.<sup>30</sup>

Returning to Arendt's expectation for school as a place where a teacher teaches students to love the world, I argue that unless students first experience being loved, they will not be capable of loving others and the world around them. Without this experience of love from the beginning, they may engage in the educational process with negative concepts about the world, making it hard to teach them to love the world and be responsible for it as political agents. Hence, the teacher's authority must also include this aspect of the teacher's affective disposition.

Finally, given the fact that today an unlimited amount of information from around the globe is available instantly on their portable devices, students in the third millennium have no difficulty accessing information. Although Arendt might never have imagined a phenomenon of this kind, it presents a challenge to her thinking on education. Do teachers still have the right to introduce students to the world when the students can use their mobile devices to know the world by themselves? Is the teacher's authority obsolete in this context? Does it restrict the liberty of children to discover knowledge for themselves?

These issues, I must accept, are complex and demand greater discussion. Nonetheless, my current view is that the teacher's authority is more necessary than ever in this context. So much of this information gives different answers to the same questions. Consequently, students must not

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30 Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), p. 179.

only know the world but must know how to go about knowing the world as it is, so that they will be critical and discerning users of the internet, able to make moral judgements about what they see and read –lest they are manipulated by those who post on the internet. In this context, the teacher's authority needs to be based not only on their subject knowledge but also on their expertise in helping young people make wise discernments and well-founded judgements. Therefore, the authority of teachers today must be valued, as it guarantees students' freedom, ensuring that they are prepared through education to become political agents who begin something new for a better world, a world for which they have come to love and take responsibility.

## CONCLUSION

Arendt's "The Crisis in Education" continues challenging us to reflect on education in our time more critically and deeply. We are invited to examine the educational crisis beyond merely a response to the problems we are facing, but in its relationship to the political realm that essentially impacts all aspects of human lives. Arendt's concern with education is not just with criticism of progressive education and its effects on the student's acquisition of knowledge, but more importantly, with how the students are sufficiently prepared to undertake responsibility as political agents, such that their potential newness can change the world for the better. In this way, there is no conflict between the teacher's authority and students' freedom, because both notions are the means whereby education is oriented to this greater aim. Nevertheless, teachers must not overlook the private realm that continues impacting students in their learning, notably in the current context of increasing domestic violence. So that schools can be a genuine place of what Arendt calls the 'intermediary' between the private and the political realms and prepares students for such an essential role of renewing the world today.



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