

# HANNAH ARENDT AND THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

## Hannah Arendt y el problema de la educación

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### Abstract

The central objective of this article is to rediscover the crisis of contemporary education, in light of the political and educational thinking of Hannah Arendt. She discovered that education cannot be separated from tradition and authority, on the pretext of effective quantifiable innovations in the field of education. Rather, citizens must be educated to be able to exercise freedom. To develop this theme, Arendt, like Heidegger, proposes a return to Greek wisdom in order to illuminate the times of political darkness and critical emptiness in education, a consequence of the advent of the society at the time of the Modernity, which compromised the ability to think and act. Educating for freedom implies recovering the treasures of tradition and understanding what corresponds to the exercise of authority, which is not related to blind obedience but to the recognition of knowledge. Education must then lead to the encounter of others and the world through the exercise of freedom in a public space and plurality. It can be concluded that education has a task of resistance and reconstruction against the darkness of any educational and political system that threatens the basic freedoms of citizens.

### Keywords

Education, freedom, authority, tradition,

### Resumen

El objetivo central del presente artículo es redescubrir la crisis de la educación contemporánea a la luz del pensamiento político y educativo de Hannah Arendt, quien descubre que no se puede separar la educación de la tradición y de la autoridad con el pretexto de innovaciones cuantificables eficaces en el campo educativo. Más bien, hay que educar ciudadanos que sean capaces de ejercer la libertad. Para desarrollar este tema, Arendt, al igual que Heidegger, plantea un retorno a la sabiduría griega para, de esta manera, poder iluminar los tiempos de oscuridad política y de vacío crítico en la educación, consecuencia del advenimiento de lo social en la época de la modernidad, la cual anuló la capacidad de pensar y de actuar. Educar para la libertad, implica recuperar los tesoros que tiene la tradición y comprender lo que corresponde al ejercicio de la autoridad, la cual no se relaciona con la obediencia ciega sino con el reconocimiento del saber. La educación debe, entonces, conducir al encuentro de los otros y del mundo por medio del ejercicio de la libertad en un espacio público y plural. Se puede concluir afirmando que la educación tiene una tarea de resistencia y de reconstrucción frente a la oscuridad de todo sistema educativo y político que atente contra las libertades básicas de los ciudadanos.

### Palabras clave

Educación, libertad, autoridad, tradición

**Suggested citation format:** Nieves Loja, Gerardo Miguel (2017). Hannah Arendt y el problema de la educación.

*Sophia: colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, 23(2), pp. 211-226

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## Introduction

The article entitled Hannah Arendt and the problem of education aims at looking at analyzing and judging the contemporary educational reality that has been reduced to statistical results leaving aside the priority objective of education that is to train thinking, critical and free citizens. At present it is thought that tradition and authority are not necessary, that calculation and the measurable are sufficient with a growing devaluation of word and action in public space. This theme, studied by Arendt in North America, also concerns the youth of our environment. Hence, a liberating education is needed to form new citizens capable of building other political spaces. An innovative education, which is not only a matter of repeating and calculating but, rather, committed to solving the problems of the world. To carry out this research, we will proceed to a re-reading of the work of Arendt in relation to the contemporary educational reality.

Hannah Arendt is undoubtedly one of the most relevant thinkers in the contemporary world in the field of political theory and criticism of education. It represents an alternative thought of resistance and reconstruction, especially when the political horizon is obscured by totalitarian regimes that nullify equality, political freedom and the spontaneity of citizens. Arendt denounces the reductionisms of education to purely quantitative aspects, merits and the disappearance of common sense. An education that creates new oligarchies under the protection of socialist governments, putting in crisis the authority and tradition present in the political and educational reality.

The present paper it is about answering the following questions, Are young people educated to respond to the problems of the world? Are students trained to simply obey and obey of their superiors? Are there educational proposals and experiences for young people to think for themselves and not simply repeaters of doctrines and ideologies? Why, despite the contemporary educational snobbery, such as the virtual and the deconstruction of teaching-learning, has authority and tradition come into crisis?

This reflection will begin with Hannah Arendt's denunciation of the crisis of education, because tradition and authority have been neglected to prioritize calculation and meritocracy, thus losing the taste of participating in public space. Education will then be approached in the context of classical Greece which can be divided between pre-Socratic and post-Socratic, of which the former constitute a paradigm of politics and education for Hannah Arendt. Sadly, the thinking of the latter still

lingers in the minds of some educators and politicians, thus impinging on the liberating character of education and politics.

Subsequently, education will be addressed in the time of Socrates who represents the educator and politician who does not presume to know everything, who does not seek to govern, but wants the truth to make its appearance in the citizens. To educate is to teach to think for itself. This type of education acquires a commitment to liberation for those who are poor in rights and participation.

Finally, education is plural, open and non-dogmatic. It is not nationalistic or regionalistic, worse, ideologized. Hannah Arendt strongly emphasizes the need to turn our eyes to the present tradition even in communities, peoples and institutions. No one starts from scratch. Faced with the crisis of authority, it is necessary to emphasize not violence as well as force, but in persuasion, dialogue and knowledge. In order to carry out this dialogue of contrast, classical Greek thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and some contemporaries like Gadamer, Freire, Jaspers, Ricoeur and the modern philosopher Kant will be used.



## The crisis in education

One of the reflections on education by Hannah Arendt has undoubtedly been the article "The Crisis of Education" (Arendt, 1961: 224)<sup>1</sup>. The merit of Arendt is to link the issue of education with the great problems of the century, among which are the world war and the rise of modernity that reduces the individual as an object of supply and demand in the market space. The human being offers only his manufactured products and, in addition, has lost the capacity to think and to give answers. Everything is planned; you do not need to think for yourself.

It is undeniable, too, that education has an important link with politics, a situation that has its roots in Rousseau when education is considered as a political instrument through which the absolute superiority of the adult over the child can be affirmed, thus destroying equality. These educational spaces, which still persist, make the educator look like a kind of dictator in the classroom: he is the only one who knows, who can and who orders, and if someone thinks differently, he is punished in different ways. This educational model is doomed to repeat the same thing (Arendt, 1961, p. 229).

In health, something happens with education: the large health transnationals carry out their experiments in poor countries, and then

apply the results to their people. In the same way, there are theories in education that, for the sake of innovation, have proved to be a failure because they reject theories and rules that promote common sense. Un-tested theories are applied in reality, and, according to Arendt, this is the cause of the crisis in education: the disappearance of the *sensus communis* in the bosom of a mass society.

Arendt (1983a) criticizes radically the rule of the wise, because it can lead to the tyranny of those who know above those who do not. This experience has much to do with the “meritocracy” that leads to the promotion of scientific democracies, dedicated to managing things, among which is education. These meritocracies lead to the establishment of new oligarchies or new nobles, based on the talent that even they are sheltered by socialist governments that are in charge of selling the image of the best endowed with the consequent undervalue of the principles of equality (230).

One of the key concepts of Arendt is that of authority, which disappears in the political and educational contexts of modernity with the ominous advent of force and violence. According to Arendt, authority is placed in the field of legitimacy and recognition and is precisely what young people are not living. Young people are going through a crisis of authority, they have become independent of adults to become autonomous; however, have fallen under the tyrannical authority of the youth group. Adults strive to keep the boys passive by trying to keep them as far as possible on a childish level, away from the needs of the contemporary world.

True education must constantly renew itself with the arrival of new human beings who are born, who must learn to relate to life and to the world. Therefore, it is necessary an education that offers the necessary conditions for their development and growth of life, based on the right to see and be seen, to speak and to be heard in the public and plural space. This process must be done in a processual way, guided by the world of adults.

Contemporary education, based on welfare, is more concerned with teacher competencies than with authority. The competence of the teacher is based primarily on his knowledge of the world and the ability to transmit this knowledge to students; while authority consists in the ability to take responsibility for this world, which is ours and that is under the responsibility of adults.

Along with the crisis of authority in education, there is also the crisis of tradition. This situation consists of the lack of valuation of the treasures present in all historical time, they are not named nor registered, nor is there a historical narrative. This forgetting, sometimes on purpose, prevents us from opening acts of freedom. In this sense, the ancestors

are true models for the living. This is precisely the educational model of classical Greece that simply consisted of “making you see that you are completely worthy of your ancestors”. In this context, the educator is a “partner in discussion and work, not a know-it-all. The authority of the teacher consists essentially in the revaluation of the past which grants him all legitimacy” (Arendt 1983b, 240)

Finally, in this context, the school must teach young people what the world is like, and not only carry out an instruction in the art of living. Children and young people should not be separated from the world of adults. Education is learning and can be taught without education. Learning never ends; we must learn to love the world to take responsibility, to undertake something new.

Arendt's reflection on the crisis of education does not simply remain in the complaint; she elaborates an alternative, a way of rebuilding the citizen through education. It begins by analyzing education in the post-Socratic Greek world, when education becomes elitist, and then approaches the pre-Socratic world, which is precisely where the thought of Hannah Arendt is fed.

## Education in post-Socratic Greece

It is important to remember that education in the Greek world is linked to politics and philosophy (Compayre, 2016, p.2). However, for Plato, the child belongs to the State and not to the family; for example, in Sparta, the father had no rights over the education of children. It is also an education centered on warriors and magistrates, who received a high intellectual education. This elitist tendency is found even in the modern philosophy of Herbert Spencer, who complains that society takes care of the sick, the poor and the miserable; he affirmed “nourrir the incapable aux dépens des capables, c'est une grande cruauté”<sup>2</sup> (Spencer, 2008, p. 78), a radically exclusive affirmation, since every human being is capable of saying, acting and counting as responsible subject. Man, according to thesis defended by Paul Ricoeur, is able to promise, to answer, to ask, to enter into conversation and to dialogue, to be recognized as capable entity.

Returning to the Greeks, Plato placed music as a fundamental element in the education of warriors, even more than the word. Men of state should have made merits, and after a very long formation, up to 50 years of age, based on the education of body and soul, they could become political men. It is an education absent from the world and practical. In

short, the king had to be a philosopher and the common mortal was excluded from action and speech (Compayre, 2010, p.3).

Then Xenophon, disciple of Socrates, in his work called *Cyropaedia*, poses the education of children and adolescents as a matter of gymnastics and moral virtues completely separated from their family environment and the city (polis). It is an education in which citizens know about laws, temperance and cultivation of the land, but live far from the common world, unrelated to the problems of the world. This is precisely the limitation of Greek education, when education is transferred to academia, leaving behind the problems of the world and its possible solutions.

According to Aristotle, who in the *Politics* treatise analyzes education, expresses his admiration for science and speaks of lessons for the most advanced, asks children to avoid contact with the society of slaves, to be formed in their customs and virtue, especially in the relationship between social life and education. No matter what practical and material use it is of no importance, for free men must devote themselves to leisure, gymnastics, grammar, music, and drawing. Of these, the main one is music, since it exerts in the heart a moral influence capable of modifying the affections through the word and the poetry (Moreault, 2002, 75). However, Aristotle's pedagogy is an instruction for the aristocratic person, that is, for a minority, thus excluding the large majorities made up of slaves and workers. Education was a privilege for free men, while those who were not free, that is, the majority, were subject to the world of the private and the pre-political (Arendt, 2000c, 135).

This elitist vision of the Greeks of education is strongly disputed by Hannah Arendt, precisely because it is destined and oriented to a minority, dedicated to leisure and contemplation, neglecting the problems of the world. Hence her return and the recovery of Greek thought before the time of Plato and Aristotle.

## Socrates does not teach

Arendt's thinking is a political theory that has a lot to do with citizen education. It is not only an "invitation to resist oppression, to incite public opinion" (Moreault, 2002, p. 115), but also a philosophy to achieve freedom. Arendt (1991) proposes, then, to replace the contemplative philosophy of history, which takes refuge in the idea of the absolute, by a political philosophy that must remain and manifest itself in the public space of the

citizenship (*Vita Activa*), similarly to Socrates who “brought philosophy down from heaven to earth” (p.44).

For Socrates, “his activity consisted in making public, through conversation, the thought process that developed in the marketplace, like the flute player” (Arendt, 1991, p. 48), who does not seek the power but the truth manifested in the opinion of the citizens. This brought to the educational space means training and educating young people to be friends with the truth, concerned not only with the search for power, but also with a commitment to teach and think for themselves.

Arendt, an admirer of Socrates, speaks of love of wisdom: “Only those who are inspired by Socratic eros, love of wisdom, are capable of thinking and trustworthy” (Arendt 1983a, 57); that is, that the love of wisdom is an experience of meeting, of dialoguing, of asking questions, so that the opinion (*doxa*) of free citizens is born in this way in the public space and not in the darkness of the private. This citizen participation in opinion is not a subjective illusion or an arbitrary distortion, but truth is always linked to it (Gresson 1947, 76).

Socrates is the example, the model, the ideal type of unprofessional thinker invoked by Arendt. He is a “thinker” who knows how to remain one man among others, he does not flee from the public square, he is a citizen like any other, he does nothing, he does not demand anything outside of what everyone can expect and do (Vallée 1999, pp. 123). He is able to pay with his life. Socrates attributes “the right to analyze the opinions of others, to reflect on them, asking their interlocutors to do the same” (Arendt, 1983a, 191); he does not conclude or synthesise, he leaves open the participation of citizens; does not manage or manipulate speech in the world of propaganda. Precisely, this is the limitation of contemporary education, which, concerned about having the greatest professionals, has been distancing itself from the common citizen, a dichotomy between those who know and those who do not know. The expert has moved away from the problems of the world to take refuge in the privacy of his laboratory.



## To educate is to teach to think

It is said above that Hannah Arendt moves away from the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle because they replaced action by the philosophical contemplation of the eternal forgetting the problems of the world, bringing education to academia with the participation of a minority dedicated

to leisure. They divided the city (polis) between governors and ruled, which did not exist in the time of Pericles. Arendt (1983b) invokes pre-Socratic Greek political thought, because modernity with the advent of the social has erased the true meaning of politics and education, resulting in total dependence on labor, leaving aside the act with others to conquer a new situation. At work, citizens manufacture in a private environment and, after finishing, expose their manufactured products in the market. It is a space of supply and demand only and people do not build a political space. It is not important the education of the working class, they are only dedicated to work; someone thinks and speaks for them.

To educate is to teach to think for themselves. As Heidegger says, "thinking consists in taking a path of reflection and understanding..." (Arendt, 2002, p. 41) For Arendt, thinking means being in conformity with oneself; is a movement that leads one to understand that man (individual) does not derive any personal benefit from this activity, that is, that the middle-end category has no application in Arendt's political theory. Thinking does not have an interest of calculation, "is the dwelling (...) away from the residences of men (Taminiaux 1985: 111). This disinterested thinking does not presume to possess the truth, but to remain oriented to the truth. In this sense, the educator is not one who has the truth, but who seeks it and builds it with others, is priceless, takes into account the other, the citizen.

According to Arendt, the task of thinking is like the fabric of Penelope: it is undone each morning what she had finished knitting the night before. "The activity of thinking cannot be the privilege of a few, it is a question of going back to educational experiences rather than doctrines about education" (Arendt 1996: 39). For Arendt, love is a condition for the act of thinking. For her, "the art of critical thinking always has political implications" (Arendt 1991: 65). It is worth remembering the work of Paulo Freire, who affirmed that education should lead to the liberation and development of a critical thought and consciousness through the action-reflection process, and not a contemplation that numbs citizens (Freire, 1965, P. 30). Hence Freire directed his educational process to the adult peasants, and not to a minority of aristocratic children as did Plato and Aristotle.

According to Freire, men educate each other through the mediation of the world; In a similar way, according to Arendt, the human condition is thought of as love of the world; Heidegger, however, thinks death as the most authentic possibility of being-there<sup>3</sup> (Heidegger, 1986: 73) and as an essential condition for reconnecting with Being: "I am con-



demned to death, I am for death” (p. 80). In this sense, Arendt breaks with Heidegger’s statement when he says that we come into the world for life, a life shared with others, and that every child that comes to the world is a hope and a solution to the problems in the world. For Arendt, men were not born to die but to innovate in different fields: it is the miracle<sup>4</sup> that will save the world from human affairs. For this reason, all education must be committed to the world of life, and children are called to learn to share this world with others. This experience is contrary to Nazism that refused to share the land with the Jewish people.

## Educate to be free

Good education is not strictly quantifiable or mechanically measurable; it promotes free men, those who participate in the public affairs of the city, not the slave who is reduced to the private and condemned to the silence of production for sale. In this chapter, it is a question of first analyzing freedom in the Greek city (polis) and then the world of slavery as a pre-political experience, that is, slavery and political darkness.

For Arendt, the city (polis) means the place, the place in which and by virtue of which the being-there is historical and political. The polis is the place of pro-venience, the being-there in which, from which, and for which pro-venience comes from. To explain the polis, Arendt uses Pericles’ definition: “We love beauty within the limits of political judgment, and we philosophize without the barbarous vice of indolence” (Arendt 1983a, 222). That is, what is beautiful is in citizen participation, when people take the floor, they think about their historical and political reality. This experience, which is political, when taken to educational spaces, means to educate the senses, among which is the pleasure of participating with others, marveling to participate in the public space, which is full of light and not of darkness. It is precisely here that Hannah Arendt, a thinker in the times of political darkness brought about by totalitarian regimes, has the merit.

The Greek city was guarded by a Constitution, which avoided the domination of the majority in relation to minorities. On the contrary, it guaranteed the equality of citizens, because they are not born equal, but because there is a law that grants rights, even to those who do not have them. Men are unequal by nature, therefore, they need an artificial institution that protects them and guarantees equality between them. It is, in this sense, when citizens have a Constitution that guarantees their rights,



the moment when it can be considered that in that place (topos) there is political freedom. It should be noted that equality in education, besides being a right, is also a deconstruction of attitudes of superiority that are visible in classrooms. Generally the teacher, with his quantitative merits, is superior and is in a position of advantage with respect to the students who are always considered, consciously and unconsciously, as underage with respect to the knowledge.

Later, Arendt (1983b) refers to Aristotle's definitions to explain what a politician is because of the poor translations and interpretations in the Western translation. For Aristotle, the man is *zôon politikon*, what Arendt will translate by *bios politikos*, that is to say a man of action (praxis) and of word (lexis). Action, according to Arendt, means to take an initiative, to undertake, (archein) to begin, to set in motion (gerere). A clear example of this is the student movements of Harvard and Berkeley in the 1950s when young people were willing to act to change through their own efforts. However, today, the taste for politics and freedom has declined, has devalued. This situation of "submissive" students brings some questions; does our education encourage students to have the pleasure of speaking and having opinions? Are we educating for submission and silence?

All training and education must provoke and promote the ability to think, judge and act. Whoever who that does not think should not and cannot act. Hence, for example, in totalitarian regimes citizens do not think for themselves, they are educated only to repeat phrases and slogans elaborated earlier by specialists in the revolution and those who handle an ideology. Here education is not integrated with the reality of the world, but it impedes the capacity of citizens to act. In addition, citizen action is not an isolated, but plural fact, where subjects spontaneously participate in public space. This political action has nothing to do with the ability to manage the political, inspired by the Machiavellian category of means and ends.

Man is also a living being capable of language (*zôon logon ekhon*), through which a nexus is established with reality, something extra-linguistic that has to do with the world, with otherness, that is, with free men. However, these men are not only those privileged who belonged to the Greek city, but all those who may not have had the opportunity to study in elite schools and specialized academy. For this reason, the rights-poor must trust, love and not forget the popular discourse where they were born and which, unfortunately, is considered as imperfect, mythical and incomplete, that does not possess the episteme of the world of the

specialized. With force and vigor, Arendt claims the word and action of ordinary citizens, a liberating language through which the opinions of the rights are heard in public space. Precisely, the Socratic pedagogy tried that the citizens give birth to its word and its opinion. This was, precisely, the work and dedication of Paulo Freire, when much of his educational career was dedicated to poor adults in Brazil.

The political, ethical and educational paradigm of the Greek city was freedom and happiness (eudaimonia). This happiness was not a synonym for pleasure of a sensation, but to lead a virtuous life according to reason. In this sense, happiness corresponds to lead a life as a free and responsible citizen, who is a friend of philosophy and research, so there is an experience of happiness in education. It is not, then, to watch and punish, nor to educate based on fear, but on freedom. In this regard Freire said that “educational practice is effectiveness, joy, scientific ability and technical mastery in the service of change” (Freire, 1965, p.20).

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## Educate for plurality and communicability

Hannah Arendt was fifteen when she read “Psychology of the Conceptions of the World,” by Jaspers. In 1926, he moved to Heidelberg to attend Jaspers classes, with whom he did his PhD thesis on Love in St. Augustine. In April 1933, she met Jaspers for the last time before the war; it was only in October 1945 that their epistolary contact was resumed before her visit in March 1950, after the fall of Hitler’s National Socialism. Arendt relates a testimony of this relationship with her teacher Jaspers. Between the two is established not only a friendship, but an intellectual relationship of listening and sharing; she says:

I have never forgotten his listening ability, so difficult to describe, this tolerance always on the fly to resort to criticism, as far from skepticism as from fanaticism; a tolerance which, finally, is the realization of the idea that all human beings are endowed with reason and that, for no reason, a human being can be infallible. At that time, I was tempted, at times, to imitate his way of speaking, because this way became for me the symbol of a direct man, of a man without ulterior motives (Arendt, 2000a, 153).

The friendship between Jaspers and Arendt was unconditional and transparent, and it was Jaspers who invited her to write what had happened in Nazi Germany. In spite of the communicational difficulty of the time, they always corresponded and met many times in postwar Ger-

many. Arendt, referring to her friendship with Jaspers and her admiration for him, says:

I love only my friends and the only kind of love I know; I believe in the love of people. Jaspers alternately plays the role of inspirer, tactician, supporter, schoolteacher, but remains a teacher (Arendt, 2006, p.27).

This citation shows what the relationship between teacher and student should be. The role of teacher does not end with an academic period, but is an imprint that is never forgotten. It is also possible to say that Jaspers shows true wisdom in knowing how to listen, accompany and make his student one of the most relevant contemporary thinkers in the field of political science.

Jaspers and Hannah Arendt talk a lot about Plato, not only from his “experiences” with the tyrant Denys, but also from the tyranny of reason. Both agree with the fact that being a professional thinker confers no privilege to impose views on action. In this sense both Arendt and Jaspers, defenders of plurality, did not make the choice for a single way of thinking and believing, but of the multiple and the plural:

The unity of humanity and its solidarity cannot consist in a universal agreement on a single religion, one philosophy, or one form of government, but in the conviction that the manifold opens up to a unity that hides and reveals diversity at the same time “(Arendt, 2002, p 104).

This shows that education must be plural, open and not dogmatic. Jaspers’ effort is to go against strictly contemplative philosophy, based on results, calculations and statistics needed in the world of the market, but not fundamental in politics and education. In Jaspers, reason can become a universal bond, because it is neither wholly within or above men, but in practical reality, it lies between them. The definitions of reason proposed by Jaspers lead to very ancient and authentic political experiences.

According to Jaspers, plurality is based on “communicability.” Humanity, writes Jaspers, “is communicability itself” (Revault, 2010, p.65), and existence, in philosophy, designs the model of an attitude where men can speak (Arendt, 2002, p. 155) while the individual in himself, alone, cannot be reasonable: it needs others. Jaspers’ thinking is spatial, because he always refers to the world and men: his intention is to create a space for others and for me (p. 78). So education cannot be isolated, but be in relation to others and to the world.

For Jaspers, freedom is not a concept, but a living political reality (Arendt, 2006, p. 94). It is in this sense how we must understand his new

concept of humanity and the theses of his philosophy; all his philosophical work was conceived from the perspective of a world citizenship. We see, then, how Arendt and Jaspers are close to Kant, being plurality for them a condition of politics and education. All regionalism and nationalism are enormously damaging.

It should be emphasized that education should encourage the encounter of others; In this way Hannah Arendt specifies that Jaspers is the first thinker and the only one to take a stand against loneliness, the only one to whom solitude seemed to him “unhealthy” and who dared to question “all ideas, all experiences, all values” (Arendt, 2000b p. 99). The human being must be educated to share the world and not to erect walls that are distant from each other. According to Jaspers, the relationship between men is, subjectively, a call for unlimited communication and, objectively, is based on universal comprehensibility. It is no longer the man who speaks to himself in a solitary dialogue, they are, on the contrary, men who speak and communicate with each other, all inhabitants of the earth. All this has very important repercussions in the field of the political, education, and even of the social; that is, that every decision must be contrasted, one cannot act in Plato’s way: to receive oracles or inspirations to apply to the different realities of the world.

The theory of history that underlies Jaspers’ theory of communication implies a permanent recovery of “truth, not dogmatic, but communicative” (De Launay, 2002, p.9). For Arendt (1996), unlimited communication, which means at the same time faith in the comprehensibility of all truths and in the willingness to speak and to listen, as a prerequisite of all human exchange, is one of the ideas, if not the central idea of Jaspers’ philosophy. Thus, truth and communication are mutually enriched and essential in education.

For both Jaspers and Arendt, the truth is what I can communicate, without ideologies or isms. Hence, education should not be ideologized by any party or movement. Arendt emphasizes that the central axis of Jaspers’ thinking, as it has been exposed since 1935, is that “to be authentically true, the truth must be communicable... because we are only what we are for the community of mutual understanding conscious” (De Launay, 2002, p.17). Every action must be guided by the ideal of an accomplished communication. To act and communicate rationally is to place oneself as close as possible to the anticipation of the transcendent (for Jaspers), the kingdom of ends (for Kant).

One of the central problems of this philosophy is, then, the question of communication as such. The affinity of this method with Socratic



maieutics is obvious, with the exception, however, that what is called Socratic maieutics, for Socrates, becomes the call to Jaspers. It implements, in fact, the Socratic method, but removing its pedagogical aspect. As for Socrates, the philosopher, for Jaspers, does not have an existence different from that of other men. There is no longer even for him the Socratic priority of asking questions, because in communication, the philosopher is among his peers whom he can ask for help, just as they can turn to him. In this way, philosophy came essentially from the sphere of sciences and specialties, and the philosopher is also fundamentally deprived of any privilege (Arendt 1983a, 66).

## As a conclusion

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Many peoples in history have been able to resist political, economic, cultural and educational invasion. These resistances have been given thanks to the wills inherited from the ancestors. These “treasures” have become a kind of bridges between the past and the future that have given life. However, in addition to knowing how to value and remember these treasures, “it is necessary to have conscience in order to be able to name it, record it and narrate it historically” (Longhini, 2017, p.4). These treasures of the past are wisdoms of coexistence, harmony and education that tradition is called to bring to the historical present.

It is important to consider that the tradition (of tradere, to deliver) defended by Arendt, is also a wisdom that can not be despised by contemporary scientific currents that consider as a minor wisdom. Precisely, these theories have been proven throughout the history and they have all their validity and actuality. For this reason, contemporary education should not only try to feed on schools which consider that if something is not measurable and quantifiable it is worthless. For example, in many indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian highlands, their cultural and educational traditions have allowed them to resist exclusionary Eurocentric theories that do not educate community life, solidarity and the art of living in community. Every contemporary educational proposal must turn a blind eye to the tradition present in the memory of the peoples that has survived for centuries, and avoid treating it as a separate issue; it must be integrated as far as possible as a transversal axis in many disciplines, especially in the field of human and social sciences. And, precisely, this is the purpose of Edgar Morin, author of the complex thought, when he speaks of the seven necessary knowledge for the education of the

future (2011), a proposal elaborated from the Latin American ancestral wisdoms.

It is important to remember that, in the Ecuadorian case, some years ago and, still persisting in some places, education has been given with violence. The children were beaten and threatened by their teachers. All this because of a misunderstanding of authority. The children complied with the orders of their educators, not for their knowledge, but for fear of being punished. In this sense, it is profoundly illuminating the thought of Gadamer (1991) who states that “the authority of persons is an act of recognition and knowledge, that the other is superior to one in judgment and vision, and for this reason his judgment takes precedence, that is, they have priority over self-judgment” (p.236).

Returning to Arendt’s reflection, it would seem that young people have become independent of their teachers and parents, because they have based authority on blind obedience, it has been forgotten that authority is not granted but acquired in the practice of life. Where there is authority based on knowledge, not strictly scientific, there is recognition.

Arendt’s approach is an invitation to educators to be able to accompany and provoke in students, as did Socrates, a new participatory attitude in public affairs. The participatory exercise of citizens, through the word, is a source of freedom, and constitutes a response to the problems of the real and everyday world. Educating is also a way of awakening a critical awareness of resistance to neoliberalism and its market.

Liberating education is neither based on calculus nor on the category of means-ends; does not possess the truth but rather seeks it in community, far from any utilitarian category. The education that teaches them to think for themselves, to participate politically in the plural public space and that relies on their language, will forge citizens capable of acting politically.



## Notes

- 1 The French translation is used in: Arendt, Hannah (1961), *The crisis of the culture*, Paris: Gallimard, pp. 222-252.
- 2 “The fact of feeding the incapable at the expense of the capable, would be a great cruelty.”
- 3 Being-there is the Dasein, the subjective existence, the opening and the surrender of the man to the being, to the world.
- 4 The miracle must be understood not in the religious or superstitious sense, but in the sense of the arrival of newcomers who will begin a new beginning, which will act in all improbability.

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Date of receipt of the document: May 16, 2017

Document revision date: May 30, 2017

Date of acceptance of document: June 15, 2017

Date of publication of the document: 15 July 2017