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**Be at Home in the Word:  
An Artist's Take on Art, Artists, and Pedagogy:  
*Philosophy and the Arts in Education***

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Figure 1. My review-copy of the book *Art, artists, and pedagogy* as an object to live alongside of.

*Rather than thinking of this in terms of sense-making—that is as an act of understanding—I take inspiration from Hannah Arendt’s existential (re)definition of understanding as the lifelong task of reconciling ourselves to reality and trying to be at home in the **word**.<sup>1</sup> [emphasis added] (Biesta, 2017, p. 39)*

This is a good book. It should be archived in your collection and you should come back to it often. Actually, there’s no *other* way to be with it. You must come back to it repeatedly. You must read it sequentially sometimes and you should also read it from its last chapter to its introduction. Occasionally, read the chapters out of order; skim the table of contents and read according to your preferences and curiosity; or be counterintuitive and read the parts that

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<sup>1</sup> Biesta’s use of the “be at home in the world” idea is printed as “be at home in the *word*” once in his book *Letting Art Teach* (2017), a fortuitous typo—I presume—that I retain and use here for poetic effect.

contrast your taste, interests, and familiarity. Read the essays aloud when you're alone and read them in silence with others. Underline and markup whatever resonates with you. Annotate the margins with your questions. Leave bookmarkers and sticky notes in it. Leave it on your bookshelf, nightstand, or in your bag—ignoring it for months while you busy yourself with the tasks of being grown-up *alongside/with* the world—then be surprised by the fact that it exists and you own it. Take photos of its pages. Draw in it. Lend it to others. Post about it. The book is now in paperback and reasonably priced for an academic book, so it can even be assigned as a class text. Use the excuse of “teaching through” the text to hear differing things that others might have to say about it. Have a creative response to the book through your art, your teaching, and the working out of your own philosophies. Put all the creative responses that this book triggers back into the world.

*Art, artists, and pedagogy: Philosophy and the arts in education* is a book that takes key thoughts from the Dutch educational scholar Gert Biesta and butts those moments up against a variety of arts scholars' interpretations of certain bits of Continental philosophy (a little over half of them concentrating heavily on the works of Deleuze and Guattari), specific arts-based case studies, philosophical interviews and conversations, some ruminations on pedagogy and methodology, and—of course—the authors' own theorizing. I read the book cover to cover over an eight-month period because I was invited by the editors of the *International Journal of Education & the Arts (IJE)* to construct a response to it. In all probability I may eventually have bought this book even without the invitation to review it. However, without the task to dutifully examine it on behalf of others, my actual reading of it would have occurred in the same *organic* and extended manner I suggest in my opening paragraph for *your* reading of it. I would have read it slowly, incompletely, and in bursts over a lifetime, occasionally finding “moments of exhilaration” (Goulish, 2000, p. 45) that resonated with my ever-changing situationality and then possibly—*maybe*—I would have a variety of creative responses to my encounter with the text(s).

The way I'm proposing that one might live alongside/with this book is not unlike what Gert Biesta describes in his own review of the book, which also serves as the concluding chapter *within* the book. Biesta draws an analogy between his reading of the chapters and the way that he “walks the museum” (p. 147), learning to be more patient, more observant to what may have been previously overlooked, and “getting better” at critical reflection through an emergent practice and sincere repetition. As a teacher who frequently assigns museum-going to my students, I've identified this means of critical reflection as a *saunter* or a “[a] walk along slowly and aimlessly... mus[ing] ... leisurely” (Barnhart, 1988, p. 960) that opens up the possibilities of engagement, mostly because of the purposeful lack of measurable objectives. The time spent and the sincerity of the visitors' presence near those objects/texts can be

enough for them/us to have a generative experience and more importantly to continue accumulating the incremental components of ones' personal maturation and education.

The echo between how I think you might use this book and Biesta's idea of a slow, leisurely, bemused and perhaps "aimless" walk through a collection of—say—painted portraits, is something I had already begun to identify about halfway through reading the book. Sitting in coach, in the sky between Salt Lake City and Chicago, without a notebook to jot down my thoughts, I used the blank inside covers of *Art, Artists, and Pedagogy* to work through an idea about how I might explain the reading of this book or the study of theory—in general—to my students (see Figure 2).

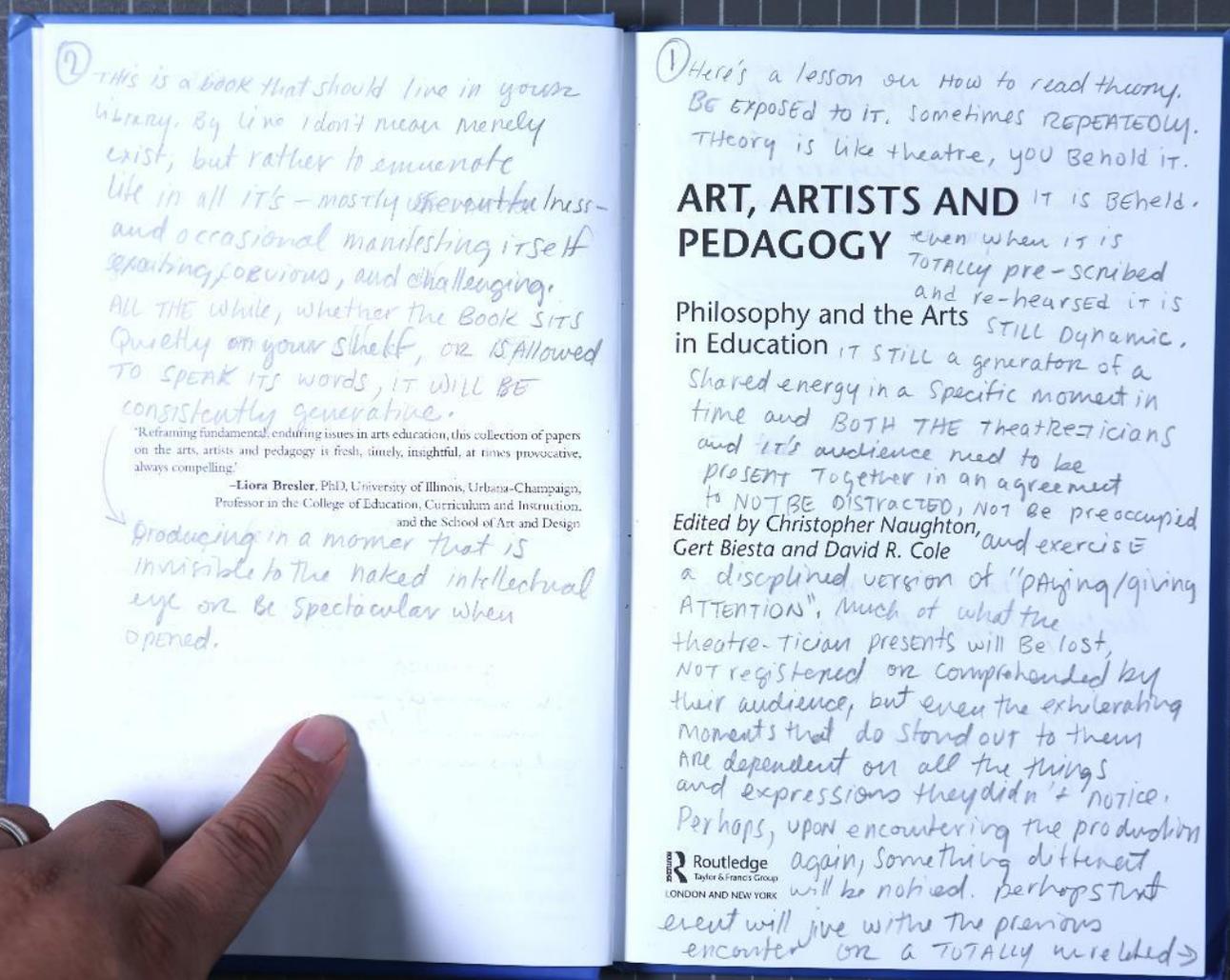


Figure 2. Some of my notes on the inside cover of my copy of *Art, artists, and pedagogy*.

I've transcribed some of those notes here:

Here's a lesson on how to read theory. Be exposed to it. Sometimes repeatedly. Theory is like theatre, you behold it. It is beheld. Even when it is totally *pre-scribed* and *re-hearsed* it is still dynamic. It is still a generator of a shared energy in a specific moment in time and both the *theatreticians* and its audience need to be present together in an agreement to not be distracted, not be preoccupied, and exercise a disciplined version of "paying/giving attention". Much of what the *theatretician* presents will be lost, not registered or comprehended by their audience, but even the exhilarating moments that do stand out to them are dependent on all the things and expressions they didn't notice. Perhaps, upon encountering the production again, something different will be noticed. Perhaps that event will jive with the previous encounter or a totally unrelated production. Perhaps the audience member will only notice what they noticed prior, but this time because they are slightly older—because they have a few more experiences—the thing they recognize now looks slightly different. And this is how you move beyond knowing *about* theory to understanding the material of the work you do (*working through theory*), even if that work looks nothing like the theory/theatre that inspired it.

The blurring between theatre and theory brings me to this last part of my review and also to a gesture that can only be beheld. I'm a slow reader, but when I have a deadline I figure out a way to enact the "saunter"—with all of its leisureliness—within the compressed time of the deadline.<sup>2</sup> I read with a pencil in my hand and I read aloud, speaking/performing the words of the authors I'm reading as a means to be near the text and behold it at the same time. The aloud-reading, my note-taking, and my surgical underlining of "moments of exhilaration" within the text are also a creative response and I understand them as artworks in and of themselves. In my encounters with any text that requires my critical reflection and engenders my creative response I've taken my cues—as you may have noticed—from author and performer Matthew Goulish (2000) who taught me that critical doesn't necessarily mean "criticizing" and therefore "critical" is also not separate from "generative". In fact a "criticality" that aims to "look and look again" (p. 82) almost always leads to generativity.

Goulish (2000) calls these encounters, "moments of exhilaration" (p. 45), found out of *re-spect* (the looking and looking again) that is "an effort to bring our own imperfections into

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<sup>2</sup> In this case it took me 8 months, which may seem like a lot, but remember a book like this takes me a lifetime to be alongside/with.

sympathetic vibration with these moments, and thus effect a creative change in ourselves” (p. 45). I found many moments of exhilaration in *Art, Artists and Pedagogy* and as a reviewer of the book I feel compelled by the formality of academic publishing traditions to isolate a few of these moments in order to speak to the nature of the whole book. This is an impossible task since—as I and Biesta have noted—this book is a corridor of difference and no single chapter or pull-quote can speak to the whole collection in any manner that is faithful to the experience of being alongside/with it. In lieu of that less-messy gesture I’ve chosen to show you one moment of exhilaration of each of the book’s 15 chapters. Each moment of exhilaration presented here is both a shout out to the particular author of that chapter and a moment from which I hope the readers of this review might understand why I started by saying that this book is a good book, that you should own and slowly live alongside/with like you do with all the other texts in your study collection.

learning, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) simultaneously present deterritorialisation as a potentially singular and/or collective form of engagement, that can be characterised as inquiry of a multiple nature leading to social, political and personal change. In effect, the term, deterritorialisation, which is central to capitalist functioning, has many levels, and is not solely exploitative, therefore opening up the concept as a potential arts-based fulcrum for understanding key processes in the world from an innocent and playful perspective.

This small example of the concept of territory serves to show how Deleuze and Guattari (1987) ask educators to think with and deploy new concepts, and to constantly exercise their imaginations in coming to terms with a philosophy which is always in flux. What is especially valuable for teachers and researchers is the idea that Deleuzian scholars are determined to remove and deny the constant reiteration of binaries in education. For example, labelling children as successful or failing, correct or incorrect: in art – ‘a good likeness’ or ‘not a good likeness’; in music – ‘in time’ or ‘not in time’; in drama – remembered your ‘words’ or forgot your ‘words’; in dance – the ‘correct step’ or the ‘incorrect step’. Instead, the application of Deleuzian concepts to arts education allows for a connected middle ground to emerge, around the ‘and ... and ... and’, instead of the ‘either ... or’.

Another problem faced by arts educators and the various curricula are the strict definitions and hierarchies produced for the student assessment. For example at the launch of the ‘Task Group on Assessment and ...’ in 1988, a dance teacher asked Professor Paul Black: ‘How can you ... after moving to the floor in the terms of the National Curriculum?’ This simply to reiterate

sets up an anomaly and disjunctive synthesis within the same book ... tive difference or philosophical position. To acknowledge difference ... something with which arts educators are starting to engage far more ... elaborates on philosophical ideas taken from Dewey, Levinas, Foucault, Derrida and Heidegger. His work has been widely read and valued ... seeking a philosophical means to stem the tide of global standardisation and capitalist enfeeblement of education.

What does this book have to offer by way of insight into the role of art in education? *Art, Artists and Pedagogy* is not a literal ‘how to teach’ manual; the ideas presented here are to encourage the educator to question practice and reinvent pedagogy along philosophical lines. The book is not a philosophy of art, in that the concepts do not remain in a space of pure philosophy; it is applied to arts education. Different theoretical framings by each contributor offer what they see as productive and critical in the context of the twenty-first century and arts education. Above all, this book consistently works with difference, to recognise how we view the world, and sets up arts-based thinking that informs art, artists and pedagogy, without embracing what is tired and gone before.

Gert Biesta, in Chapter Two, reflects on the absurdity of education as an endless cycle of measurement and competition. Biesta produces an alternative to the arts that avoids the pitfalls of individual *expression* and *creativity*. ‘creativity’, Biesta shows how the arts have been instrumentalised – to be used as serving some other attributes, be it mathematical skill or other area of expertise. Biesta continues by maintaining that the view of art as a place to ‘express

Figure 3. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 1, Naughton and Cole, (p. 2)

①  
PUSH  
have too little consideration for the integrity of what we encounter, our intentions and ambitions will result in the destruction of what we encounter, the destruction of what offers resistance. At one end of the spectrum we thus end up in the destruction of the very world in which we seek to exist.

②  
WITH-DRAW  
But the opposite scenario is also conceivable. This is where the frustration of encountering resistance leads us to withdrawal. We abandon our initiatives and ambitions because we feel that it is too difficult, not worth the effort, too frustrating, and so on, to pursue them. If the first response runs the risk of destroying the world, the second response runs the risk of destroying ourselves, destroying our very existence in the world, our existence as subject. We literally disappear from the world.

To exist in the world, to exist as subject, thus means that we try to stay away from these two extremes, although they are always on the horizon if we try to exist in the world. It means that we try to stay in the middle ground between world-destruction and self-destruction. Existing in this middle ground can be described as dialogue – as being in dialogue – as long as we do not think of dialogue as conversation but see it as an existential ‘form’, a way of existing in the world – not withdrawing from it – without putting ourselves in the centre of the world but leaving space for the world itself to exist as well – hence existing *with* the world. Dialogue is not a dispute or a contest where there is always, in the end, a winner. Dialogue – trying to be in dialogue, trying to exist in dialogue – is precisely where winning is not an option; it rather is an ongoing, lifelong challenge. It is the challenge to exist with what and who is other; it is the challenge to exist as subject in the world.

Boom!  
The middle ground between world-destruction and self-destruction is therefore a thoroughly *worldly* space. It is also, then, a thoroughly *educational* space, not because there may be all kind of things one can learn there, but because it is a space that *teaches* you something that is fundamental about human existence, namely *that you are not alone.*

#### Art, dialogue and education: ...rown-up existence

There are, of course, many definitions ... and many discussions about why such definitions are either essential ... definitions of art are explicitly

ration of what it might mean to exist in and with the ... not to master or domesticate – which would ultimately ... the reality one is encountering – but to come into ... to stay in dialogue. Encountering the reality of pain ... bodies, including one’s own body, encountering resis ... sibilities, meet limits and limitations, and out of this ... and find forms that make existing-in-dialogue possi ... ‘doing’ of art.

Viewed in this way, art itself appears as the ongoing ... to be *in* the world, the ongoing attempt at figuring o ... now; to be – here – now.

Existing as subject, existing in and with the world, ... simply follow our desires, not simply do what we w ... ‘measure’ our desires, bring our desires into dialogu ... offers resistance to our desires. Here we encounter ... understood educational distinction between what w ... ‘grown-up’ ways of being and the point I wish to mak ... ject in and with the world means that we try to exist

There are several caveats here. It is first of all im ... tion between the ‘infantile’ and the ‘grown-up’ s ... developmental terms, that is, as a trajectory from the i ... should be understood as two different ways of being ... ing. ‘Infantile’ refers to a way of being that is total ... our desires as they present themselves to us – and th ... the question of where our desires actually come from, ... really our ‘own’ desires and how many of them are fab ... control, remains an open question. Nonetheless, the d ... us to do something with them.

If the ‘infantile’ refers to ways of being that are tota ... the ‘grown-up’ refers to a way of being where we tr ... our thinking and our doing, to the question of which ... we ought to have, which of our desires are *desirable*.

Figure 4. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 2, Biesta, (p. 16)

there are material and non-human rhythms that are effective and applicable to the modes of transformation that are being advocated in this chapter. In the painting of Michel Leiris, there is a definite non-human, unworldly quality to the work, which points to going beyond the boundaries of the 'familial-human' in the creative process. There are boundless artistic opportunities to be had in extending and explicating material and non-human complexes as they appear in the world, and to extending the logic that this generates; and this expanded practice could involve, for example, the processes that lie in creatively interpreting the work of an anthill, or in performing a drama based around the dynamics of a bridge. The Deleuzian approach would be to extend and deepen arts-practice in a material, processual, metaphysical way without making it clichéd, banal or obvious.

- Teachers recognising themselves as artists involved with complex and ongoing pedagogic processes. It can always be problematic to add to the pedagogic load of a teacher, or to try and artificially extend the burden of their jobs by constantly updating their roles with new identities and new features given the latest research or trend in the field (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004).

However, one could say that the connection between Deleuze's (2003), philosophical analysis of the paintings of Francis Bacon and real pedagogic action takes an artist's sensitivity to make sure that the work is not merely representative thinking is avoided. Rather than merely taking the work as a blueprint for action, or translating them literally to interpret the work as 'the body as 'meat' and 'the body without organs', the high quality of the teacher is to articulate and see these bodily changes in the work. For example, these changes can be found in an analysis of old age in film, literature and real life, and could be further imbued with Deleuze's (2003) theory on Bacon and the power taken from changes in the body with inner, spiritual changes to connect outer, observational changes in the body with inner, spiritual feelings of being in the world (or the loss of being in the world).

- Transforming assessment practices in the work of 'the meat' and 'the body without organs' of the importance of concentrating on the importance of concentrating on the work as a formative, ongoing, inter-related, complex process. The ways in which the body, the material world and the work form under pressure from life. New assessment practices and the thinking skills necessary to articulate the work changes over time, and therefore has the potential for transformation (Cole & Hager, 2010) for learning and assessment function. Such a model will loop back to the beginning of the work.

The problematic of an arts-based education, research and using Deleuzian concepts to practice. On one side, one could argue, as Eliazer does, that the application of Deleuzian concepts in this chapter, can lead to a thoroughgoing analysis of method or practice and this action avoids the temptation to undertake, and which may be tempting to undertake, and which may be tempting to undertake. On the other side of the argument, one could argue that the concepts are already in and are an integral part of practice, not properly theorised or understood (Cole, 2010). This chapter is a good example of the Deleuzian approach to theorists, which leads to the question: *What does this mean in arts-based education?* The point here is parallel to the 'in-between-ness' in education. On one side, the work of the artist can help us to delve into what we are doing in education, relationships, development, and so on. On the other side, in education, but possibly not recognised or theorised, it can be theorised badly: 'If we think of our education as a process, we may find ourselves pushing so hard that the machine breaks under the pressure' (Biesta, 2017, p.14). Rather than with, due to the sensitivity it requires, the opacity of the work, invisibility that it hides within. The Deleuzian connection to practice is exactly in this 'in-between' space, where the unconscious works, and where nature has not been commodified. This is the place where arts-based education is opened up through the deep engagement with the work, as seen in the portrait of Michel Leiris.

Note

An interview and representation of this painting can be found at <http://www.artsandculture.gov/learning-resources/2015/05/francis-bacon-discussing-photography-and-more.html>

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Beijaard, R., & Schmitt, R. (2007). *Toward a New Social Theory of Learning* (2009). *Toward a Process Philosophy for Learning*. *Symposium on Electronic Arts 09* (ISEA 2009). <http://www.artsandculture.gov/learning-resources/2015/05/francis-bacon-discussing-photography-and-more.html>

Figure 5. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 3, Cole, (p. 28)

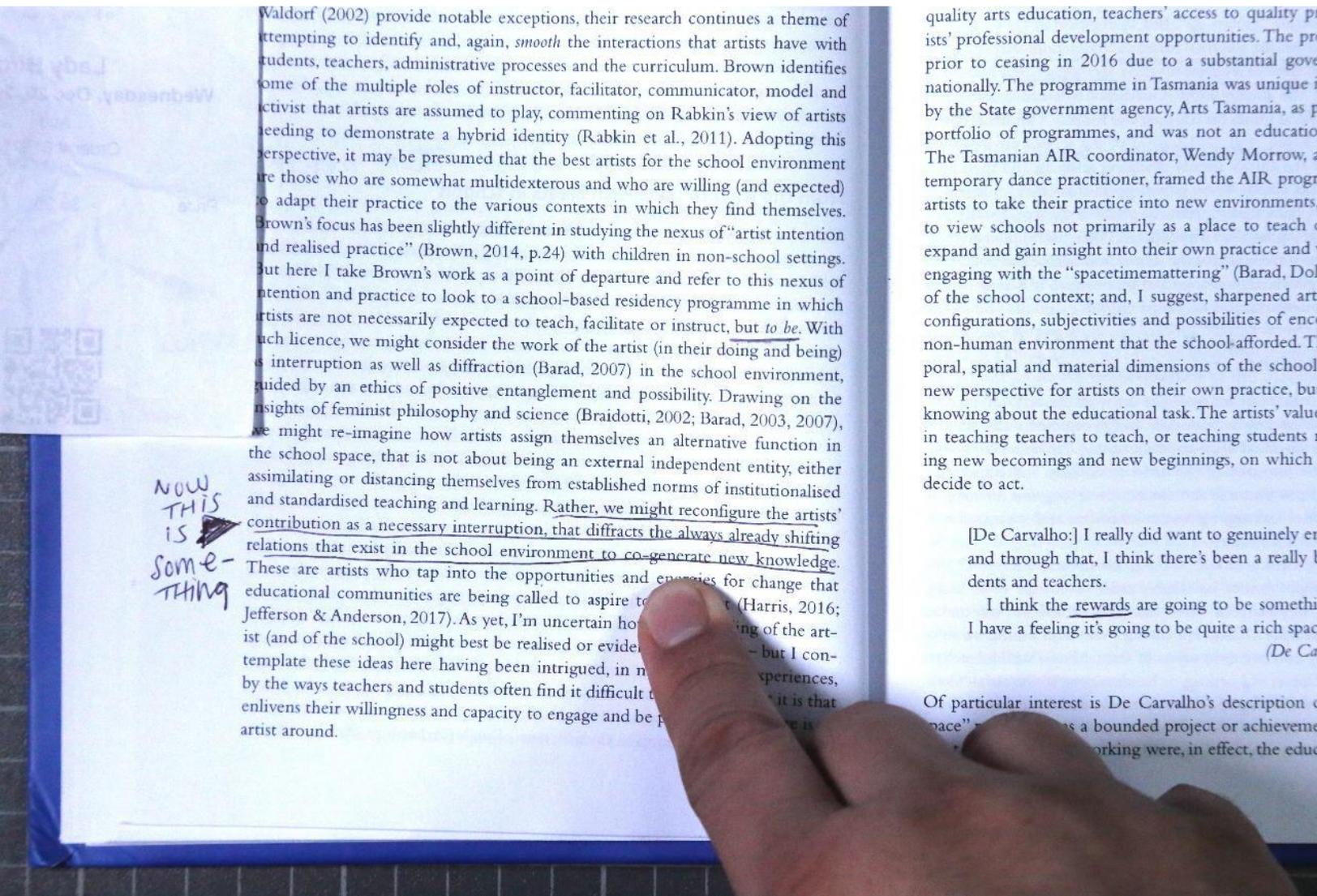


Figure 6. A "moment of exhilaration" in chapter 4, Hunter, (p. 34)

that Biesta refers to: 'But it is ultimately only in the middle ground that existence is possible. The middle ground is therefore not a place of pure self-expression, but rather a place where our self-expression encounters limits, interruptions, responses' (Biesta, 2017, p.15). To create the work with the dancers becomes a middle ground where the choreographer allows his desire to meet with the affective possibilities engaged in by the dancers.

If we consider percept, affect and sensation we can see certain commonalities between these elements and pedagogical practice (Masny & Cole, 2012). The origin as a non-human starting point in nature as percept is engaged, whereby change occurs leading to affect and blocs of sensation. This might be typified in work that uses such non-human starting points as the landscape; or moods; soundscapes - such as a reverberant stairwell, a sound, or something that might be more accessible, that might be re-made in the dance or music work (Naughton & Lines, 2015). One of the most provocative aspects for the educator that arises from Deleuze and Guattari is this interaction between the percept and the affect. The percept is seen as a point of beginning, just like Khan taking the dancers and his ideas as material to evolve a work that captures their bodily expression. It is as if he is working, not by forming something, but watching how percepts become dance. For an educator this can be a sense of working with students to negotiate openings and different kinds of engagement. This undertaking through the work of the educator and student can in turn change and alter with the materials, as in the transformation from percept to affect. Affect produces art that is not a thought response, but a 'nervous response' where art is felt, a physiological change, that may not necessarily be recognised amongst the community until a later date.

## Concepts

The implications of the concept for art educators is that this framing provides a means to re-consider the philosophy that underpins the arts curriculum, and ultimately educational practice.

The concept is seen as like art in that it brings an openness and intensity into play. Again like art, the concept arises from a plane of immanence, or plane of composition, to be followed by shifting yet sequential steps that lead to the self-conscious subject. Unlike the concept however, art does not attain the 'embodied event' (WP, pp.65-66), as it is always located in the material and blocs of sensation for Deleuze and Guattari; while the concept occupies the immaterial, the virtual, it does not need to be embodied.

the denotation of the concept from a system which recreates itself following a prescribed linear process in Kant, to an ever-changing phenomenon in Deleuze and Guattari's reading.

It is from Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) that Deleuze and Guattari derive their principle thought on the concept. For Spinoza, God has supremacy, but there is no distinction between God and attributes. Attributes can be read as the means whereby we observe something, which might be a sense of place, a feeling, a visual depiction presented by another object. The importance of this premise is that if God has created all things, seeing God in what is presented in his creation means that we remove any hierarchy; we respond to his 'attributes'. In this two-way interaction of recognition of God in nature, we recognise that we have an influence in how to respond to what has been termed 'expression' through the attributes.

From expression, it may not be that the plane of immanence alone produces the concept, but the pre-defined concept may also produce a plane of immanence or that our previous understanding of a concept limits how we respond. Just as we may recognise God in things that are attributes of God, so we may say that recognising the 'attributes' removes any hierarchy to arrive at a point where the experience of being and pre-determined concepts are not to be placed above one another.

This points to what we allow philosophy to become, prescribing how we respond (Naughton, 2012). The implication for the arts is that we may create a concept, a way of seeing the world, that is not excluded by a philosophical concept. Let us take for example the concept of 'art' - how we configure 'art' puts us back to what our own concept of art is, and this in turn will prescribe what we do in art and perceive in art.

Taking the concept of 'art' in particular the implications of the 'expression' in Deleuze and Guattari's reading, this has implications for challenging the current hierarchies in the arts curriculum. In music for example our concept is most commonly a hierarchy of dynamics and tempo. These elements are then notionally used to structure and musical notation. However, if we take the concept of 'art' as a starting point, this order can be changed and in turn challenge the hierarchy of music. Without the hierarchy (e.g. of dynamics and tempo), educators can change the hierarchy of the arts curriculum, making art, and not colour. Use of the concept of 'art' challenges the hierarchy of the arts curriculum, as seen in the work of the Italian Futurists, such as Umberto Boccioni (1892-1916) and Giacomo Balla (1871-1959). The concept of 'art' is fundamental to creating a new curriculum documents, and a new vitality in the arts curriculum.

Figure 7. A "moment of exhilaration" in chapter 5, Naughton, (p. 49)

stances of coding and capture through new, reimagined con-  
 s and reversals (Cole, 2012).  
 rhizome to break free of standardised form, seek heteroge-  
 nences and enact a politics of the multiple can be seen as a  
 totalitarian power, translating and differentiating it into a  
 le freedoms (Marzec, 2001). In jazz, this possibility is present  
 e the expectations of the audiences, the alertness of the musi-  
 built into the setting are encouraged. An improvisation then,  
 thought that renders the political possible through an artistic  
 d becoming or deterritorialisation. As Deleuze (1982, p.171)  
 ulant for the positive 'element from which the value of values  
 s potential to embody and express a will to power. Art then  
 al to not only offer an alternative to educational norms and  
 ty, but transform them through a pedagogy of improvisation  
 and capable of re-forming and re-igniting changing expres-

**Improvisation as educational space**

Improvisation offers hope in an educational climate that is riddled  
 existence that work to close down the possibilities of rhizom-  
 onal language and pedagogy is laden with normative condi-  
 der usage of educational words like 'learning', 'outcomes' and  
 in the corporate educational landscape) that work to at best  
 into actions of compliance or at worst operate unquestion-  
 ed system that stops them thinking about images of educational  
 ing, exciting and emancipating. A pedagogy that arises from an  
 er can mobilise the body, and inflame and stimulate creative  
 ments:

the power of suggestion over the muscles and senses, which  
 temperament are originally active ... all art works tonically,

Jazz departures 59

can speak to educational theory and practice and find its own means and 'language'  
 to do that. This might involve artists' accounts of their own cultural work and think-  
 ing delivered in a manner that is juxtaposed with other forms of thinking to engen-  
 der rhizomatic movement – such as I have presented here in this chapter.

Educational spaces take on different forms and meanings when viewed through  
 the lens of an expanded sense of music (Lines, 2004). 'Musical' concepts can be inves-  
 tigated as concepts that have a broader significance with things. Rhythms infiltrate  
 our relational lives in many ways, such as physical movements, heart-beats, shifts in  
 daily practices, and the natural motions of sun, moon and planets. Melodies can be  
 seen as pulses of natural action and life, the shifting tones of voices and environmen-  
 tal shapes, the daily patterns of rhythms and tones. Harmonies extend to resonances  
 between people, cultural action, nature, technology; resonances that take on various  
 qualities of difference and ecological meaning. Dynamics are the shifts in intensities  
 and the dramatic contrasts we encounter in daily life. Timbre, like tone, expresses the  
 particular qualities of things, the qualities we experience as particularities in events.  
 This kind of expansive thinking helps generate concepts that help see music worlds  
 as extensive educational spaces that have the capacity to embody creative, rhizom-  
 atic movement. This is crucial so that a multiplicity of reference points and means  
 of expression can be actioned in a diminished arts-informed educational landscape.

A pedagogy of improvisation gives educators and students an opportunity to  
 work more flexibly and relationally than those who seek to comply first and fore-  
 most with the performative expectations of a commodified education. It seeks for  
 and affirms new connections of difference and surprise. This pedagogy allows for  
 new spaces or 'middle ground' to be opened up and sustained, recognising that the  
 educational space is indeed a political space where opportunities are reterritorialised  
 or denied. Because of the historical bond that ties improvisation to techniques of  
 aesthetic and ethical power, such as the African American experience alluded to, the  
 activity of improvisation plays a special pragmatic role; it is a tool that can be used  
 to decode the domineering power of the individual author and coloniser.

What is markedly different from the present-day educational milieu is that a  
 pedagogy of improvisation affirms the flexible and messy circumstances of educa-  
 tional work and the need to develop a sensitivity to different forms of connected-  
 ness. In a world where education processes like to be packaged and formulaic (at  
 least as they are presented as an accountable teacher-client service) this

ves.

Figure 8. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 6, Lines, (p. 59)

ings us back to the educational task. As described by Biesta  
ers 'making the grown-up existence of another human being  
possible' (p.7). For Biesta, the concept of existence refers to  
ore specifically: 'it is the question of human *subject-ness* or of  
"of being-subject" (p.8). As regards 'grown-up-ness', he writes:  
cknowledges the alterity and integrity of what and who is  
resents his reflection on this theme in a number of ways, and  
on the first one, summarised as: 'the subject is subject!' Based  
losophical analysis, I seek to augment and further elaborate  
put, my argument runs as follows: the subject is subject(ed)

es: 'The main insight I wish to highlight about the existence  
ar existence as subject is that, to a large degree, our subject-  
n hands' (p.10). This can even mean that it is not at all in our  
this aspect of what it means to exist as a subject, Biesta finds  
annah Arendt (1906–1975) particularly helpful. Arendt (1958)  
acting person is a subject in a dual sense, namely in the sense  
an action, and in the sense of being literally subject to the  
action. The latter depends entirely on how others respond to  
This line of thought brings Biesta to the idea of 'the subject is

f the subject being subject to another (and the other), but the  
her elaboration. The early work by Merleau-Ponty taught us  
dy a subject, a 'body-subject'. In his later work, this evolves into  
corporeity'. At the most fundamental level of our existence, we  
al subjects that enter into relations with others and the other.  
plies: the primary fact is that of the relationship 'between',  
subjects. In other words: what we find first is intersubjectivity.  
eau-Ponty first understood this in terms of our bodies, so we  
intercorporeity'. This means that, contrary to the still fairly stan-  
osophy, not just the individual (self, or 'I') and the mind matter,  
tionships ('we') and the body as well. Applied to education, it  
ould focus more on strengthening the relationships, on develop-  
skills, and on engaging in all sorts of bodily activity. Too much  
ual development on the path to grown-up-ness may be detri-  
g the mutual interconnectedness that is already given with and

mentum with the group, as the various dancers swarm across the stage in perma-  
nent interaction. An important goal for education is to make this dynamic tension  
a substantial aspect of the child's learning and development activities.

Regarding the relationship between bodies, Lyotard's view resembles that of  
Nancy. He also focuses on the dynamic relationship between the individual and the  
group; but for Lyotard, 'intercorporeity' not only involves the sharing of our mate-  
rial bodies, but also and at the same time, the sharing of felt corporeality. Learning  
to share feelings is therefore at least as important in education and child-rearing as  
cognitive learning. And this is certainly not just a matter of talking about it – per-  
haps not at all a matter of talking about it, as it should be part and parcel of 'physical  
education'.

The philosophical concept that I introduce here by way of conclusion is to  
understand intercorporeity in the art of dance as: *bodily connectedness in motion*, in  
material and affective respects. This concept is relevant to the educational task in  
practice. It is in any case an argument in favour of giving the art of dance a more  
prominent role in education. And if we take a broader view, it is a recommendation  
to offer more physical education. I do not mean a few hours of gymnastics a week  
as a separate curriculum component, but physical education in a wider sense, as a  
counterbalance to the dominance of learning 'cerebral' skills at school. What mat-  
ters is to dance and move together, in a non-competitive way. To talk less and to do  
more, to feel and to experience more, together. The development of mind and body,  
of one's subjectivity and intersubjectivity, should go hand in hand. Because: the  
subject is subject(ed) – to intercorporeity, which is to *bodily connectedness in motion*.

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Figure 9. A "moment of exhilaration" in chapter 7, de Vos, (p. 69)

Margaret Somerville

the type of conditions most favoured. We learned what happens if floods or drought hit the area, what the grub needed for survival and how animals and birds fed on the grub itself. In addition, we were told how we were connected to us.

(*Immiboagurramilbun*, 2003)

... through their everyday life of being-in-the world, but this is an ongoing story with deep ancestral meanings told in layers that grew older. The lake was always a place of story and reproduction; 'it wasn't only a place to supply us with food, it was this place that you had'. They were told about the different parts of the lake that had happened there during its creation. Some deep parts of the lake they could never go there. The knowledge about the lake and its creation was told in story. Chrissiejoy tells these oral stories and she uses a language through which to convey the ineffable meanings of the ancient

... are almost beyond my memory. I grew up knowing the story of the lake that I was told as a very, very small child. When you first hear the creation of the lake and Kurreeh and how all that connects to the story, it was just simply that this huge animal was, you know, he stays away from the water holes because, 'look out Kurreeh!' It was a story to keep you safe and then later on it gets deeper and deeper. The same story but it just gets more detailed. As a tiny, tiny child you can't even understand really that it was Kurreeh that created the lake. You know about he swallowed people and if you went too close to the water, he might be still there, he might get you. Later on you hear about the creation story and then further on than that you get to know that they killed him, and how he is now called upon as the spirit

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through Mulgury. All the forms of life, Mulgury, materialise in the Niddeerie which embodies past, present and future. Through Mulgury, Niddeerie can be understood as the coming into being of all the forms of life, and of tracings, mark making, language and ideas, taking form simultaneously with Country. The creation of the world is the same process in which thinking through Country is materialised in Immiboagurramilbun's paintings, or the black marks on a white page, tracings through which we can come to know.

### Conclusion(s)

The current Australian curriculum works from Western assumptions about knowledge and being that determine in advance what knowledge is and what the students can become due to its teachings (Biesta, 2017). In contrast, this chapter has positioned the Aboriginal practice of thinking through Country as a radical break from the Western mindset, instead placing the intricate and complicated processes of working with arts-based Aboriginal practices as being primary in understanding what knowledge is and how to work with it. In this context, the combined and entwined Aboriginal forces of painting, singing, dancing, story-telling, craft-making, ritual and belief work together to introduce a new metaphysical framework into the educative frame. The example of the onto-epistemological research narrative above, shows us some of the elaboration possible when enunciating such a framework through poetry, dance and song.

It is interesting that the English intellectual, Whitehead, offers a framework for working with and including this type of practice in the curriculum, without having ever come to Australia or having sought to understand the Aboriginal mind in any way. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) flat ontology was influenced and designed to work with different cultures and histories, by deliberately destabilising the hegemony and prominence of modern Western thought. Whitehead was interested in the potential of science, and in seeing this potential functioning

Figure 10. A "moment of exhilaration" in chapter 8, Cole and Somerville, (p. 81)



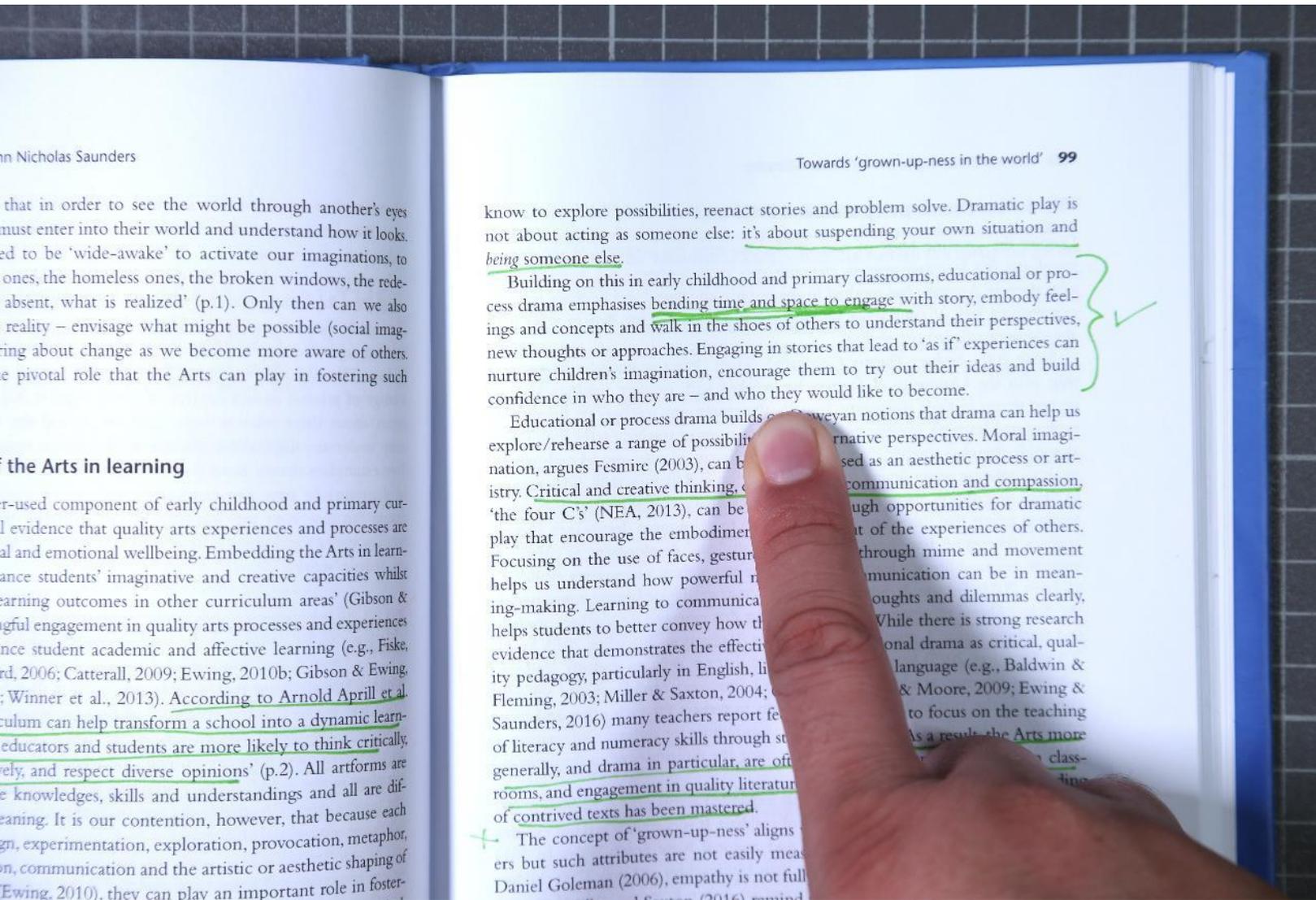


Figure 12. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 10, Ewing and Saunders, (p. 99)

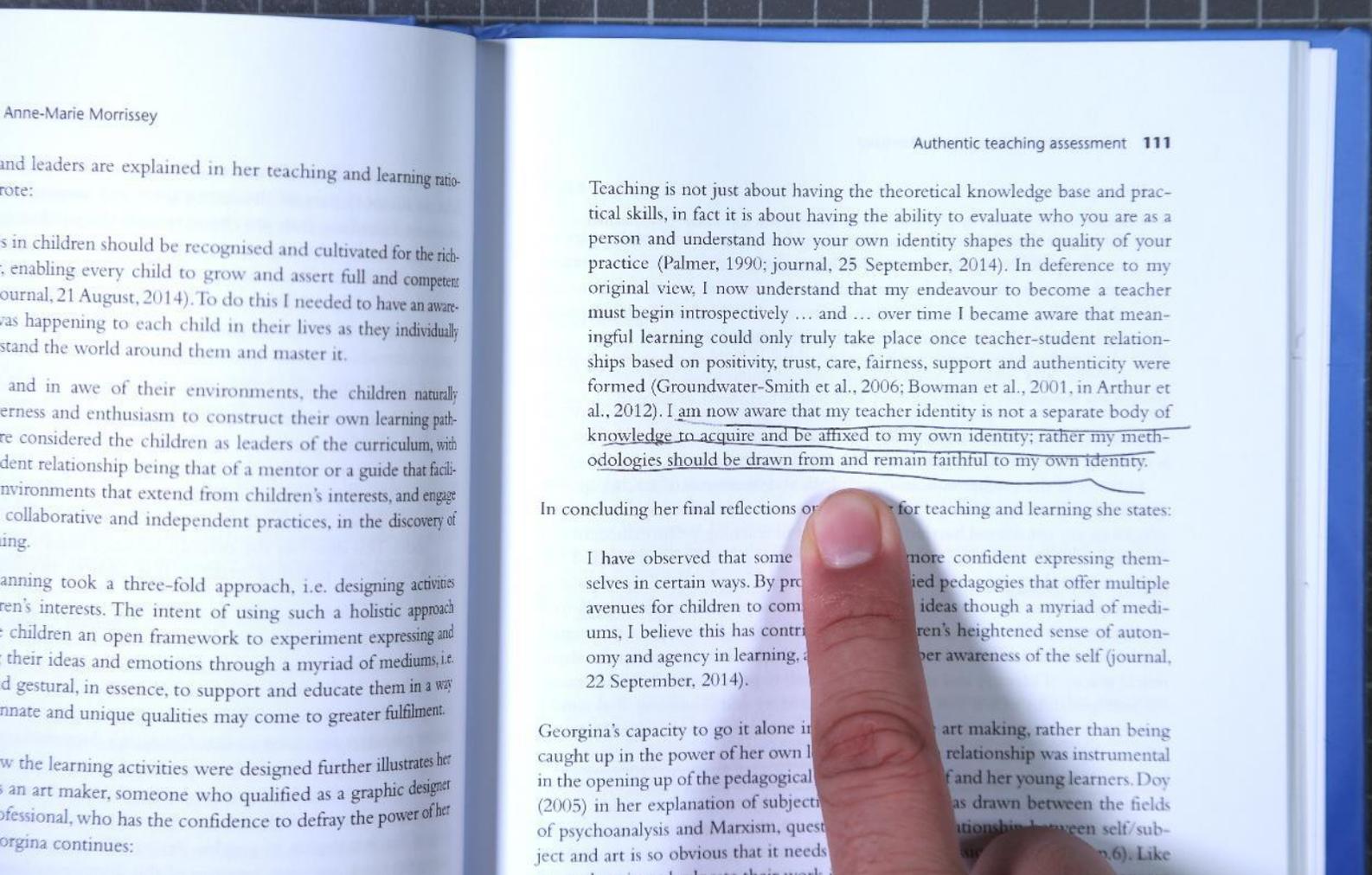


Figure 13. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 11, Moss and Morrissey, (p. 111)

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it is capable of short-circuiting linear time and all-too-human modes of thinking. In this way, becoming-imperceptible takes on the double, or compossible operation of both affirmation—affirming that something else is possible—and destruction, where we might “learn to hate the world” in order to fend off the “here and now” so as to think the difference of the world (Culp, 2016, p.24).

### Coda: unthought futures

As outlined above, we are now facing a plethora of challenges in relation to the degradation of our planet, to which there has been inadequate, if any, political, economic, and by extension, educational response. Instead, we are witnessing a reconstitution of conventional reference points and new and ever-more violent articulations of power in the face of continuous failures in social, political, and economic realms. As evidenced by recent American political events, such responses, or lack thereof, have re-ignited a powerful, if illusory, reliance upon past images of thought that are somehow reconstituted as the ideal. Likewise, in the field of education, postures defined by adaptation, maintenance, and ultimately survival mirror our worldly anxieties and disconnections. Symptoms of this anxiety are growing in both frequency and impact: growing job precarity, ever-increasing focus on quantity over quality, and the slippery corporatization of educational domains position schools among the many institutions that work to produce and maintain visions of the future undergirded by the world as it is given, that is, a world defined by the limited purview of the past-present. At the same time, however, there remains a pressure to position education as that holy space of possibility, a space where hope is born and optimism prevails. This comforting narrative, however, does not adequately address the real, material conditions of our contemporary existence, thus leaving us with very little in which to believe.

In order to address this worldly precarity and the found loss of belief it has enabled, the educational task must be capable of generating new and unthought images of the future, which in turn might provide relief for how pedagogical life might go. As education schools in the

educational thought—short-circuiting the sensori-motor expectation that the world will repeat in the image of the present—new conditions for believing that something ‘else,’ or something for thought and action beyond the human-all-too-human, might be possible.

### Note

- 1 Similarly, in films such as *Edge of Tomorrow* (2014) and *Source Code* (2011), characters plunge their characters into video game or digital time, but by what we might think of as the historical existence—the Anthropocene—where the human is co-constituted by the limits it has itself created (Wark, 2014).

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Figure 14. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 12, Beier and Wallin, (p. 124)

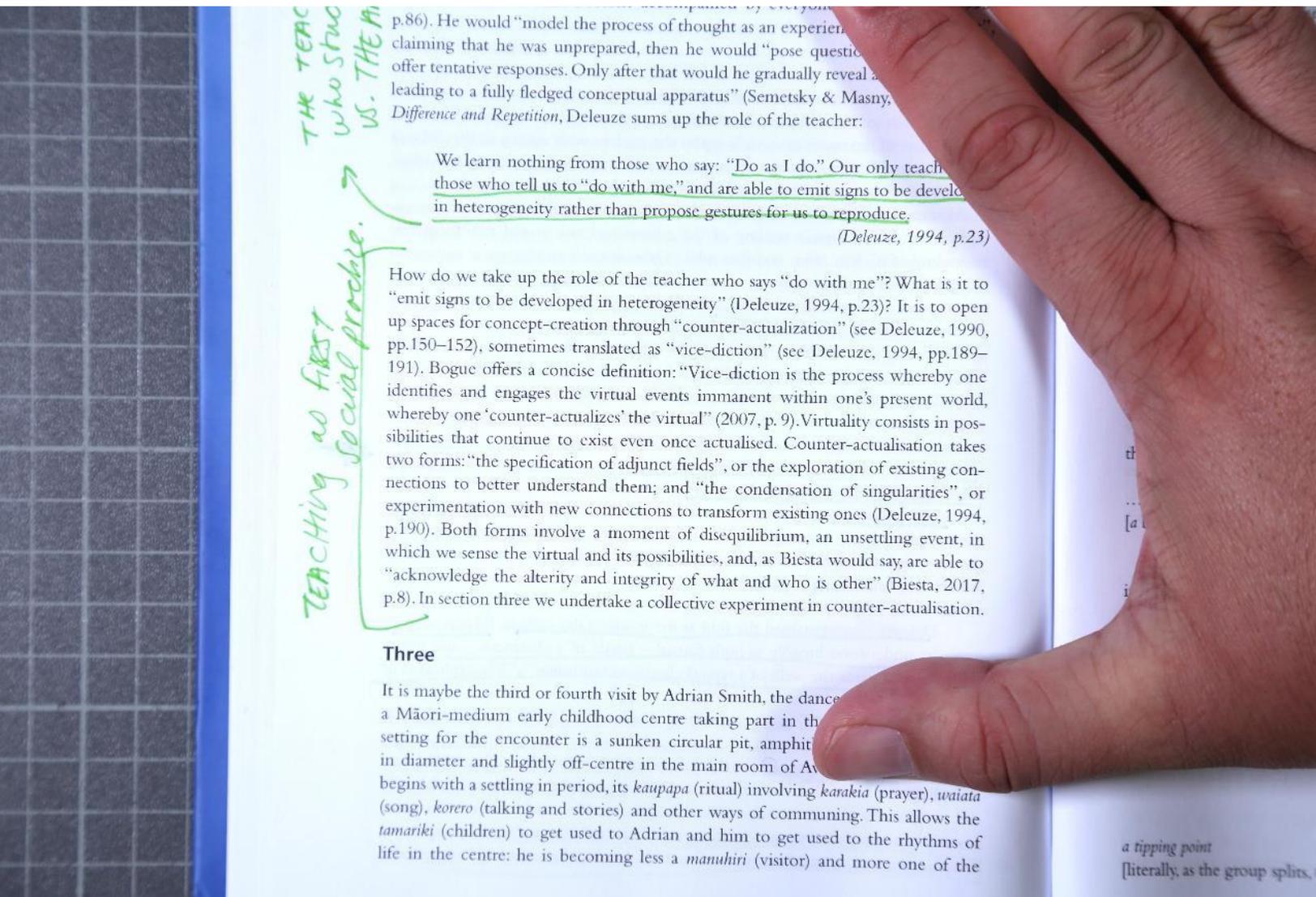


Figure 15. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 13, Roder and Sturm, (p. 130)

regurgitating what Dewey and Nietzsche said, I would indeed not come out clearly on one formula or another. As a pragmatist approach open, where plasticity and disposition offered a way to grasp what life throws at them. This emerged from his approach to survival is not sourced in brutal power, but in a disposition to adapt and those exploratory and experimental skills by which we take and unlearn the ways of survival as a form of creativity (see Dewey 2014).

parallels with Nietzsche's appreciation of Schopenhauer and how he appreciated the contingent nature of life. Through the example of art, Nietzsche urges us to take ownership of adaptability and survival. The idea of autonomy which he calls a will to power, with power underlying to assert one's freedom and intelligence creatively.

#### Would unlearning look like pedagogically?

By unlearning implies that students first accept the notion of art, as they embrace accident as an opportunity to break into the world. Unlearning is crucial in how representation takes an artistic form. Students unlearn what they come with into the studio—that is, the image of things and what they should be—so that they would then be in front of them. The crucial point of unlearning is how this *imitation* (which is very different from *imitation*) allows students to create what they see, so that reality becomes something they *make*. Unlearning presents us with a paradox. It directs us to two opposite directions that of the pedagogy of unlearning in art. This makes another case for the arts. It advocates for the arts in schools.

One could also argue that the case for art as unlearning must move beyond a pedagogical dimension. From art's intrinsic dimension—what we call art's immanence—unlearning makes a case for a distinction between art and education. Thus, while it makes a case for art in schools, the case for art's roots for art's autonomy, often taking the opposite direction.

autonomy so it could function in a heteronomous world—which is where we go back to make a case for unlearning as a case for art education.

**GB:** There are two other concepts that are important in your thinking as well: the notions of weakness and reality. Again, can you explain what these concepts are about and what their relationship to the idea of unlearning is?

**JB:** I would begin with the triangulation of reality and weakness with illusion. This requires an arts perspective where many (including myself) often refer to art as a "making." The identification of art with making follows on from the notion of *poiesis* (in Ancient Greek, to make, produce) that gave us *poiesis*, artistic poetry. A number of art theorists and arts educators still insist on emphasizing the process of art making. They argue that to regard a work of art as an end-product would ignore aspects of learning, development, and creativity. Yet to identify art with making is not immune from backfiring on instrumentalist grounds. When art is entered into the realms of learning, development, and creativity, there is a good chance of reducing it to *process* as a measurable instrument.

As I have argued in *Art's Way Out* (Baldacchino, 2012, p.89), art cannot be misconstrued as an act of learning. This equivalence would essentialize art and learning as constructs of a foundational reality. More so, it upholds reality as a ground, as an *a priori* foundation, sustaining the myth that without a strong reality, there would be no meaning in the world.

Far from being equivalent to learning, art should be understood from where the ground gives way to a horizon, as Latour and Woolgar has put it. On this horizon, we engage with the infinite diversity of what the arts give. Through art's hermeneutic power, we engage with the world interpretively. This in turn provides us with an approach to what we call a *weak reality*—that is, a reality that recedes in the background, a multiplicity of possibilities that make it.

Reality and illusion come in this triangulation. We need to recognize the paradox; more precisely, to recognize art's *poiesis*, art signification, conditions that both confront but also run away from each other. This is how art works. This inherent plurality of disposition allows art to engage in the dialectic between what is external and internal.

In the arts, we talk about beauty. Though beauty never meets beauty strolling down the main street, one comes across beautiful weather, highlighted alongside beautiful things and beautiful people in response to beautiful objects. This is where

Figure 16. A "moment of exhilaration" in chapter 14, Baldacchino and Biesta, (p. 139)

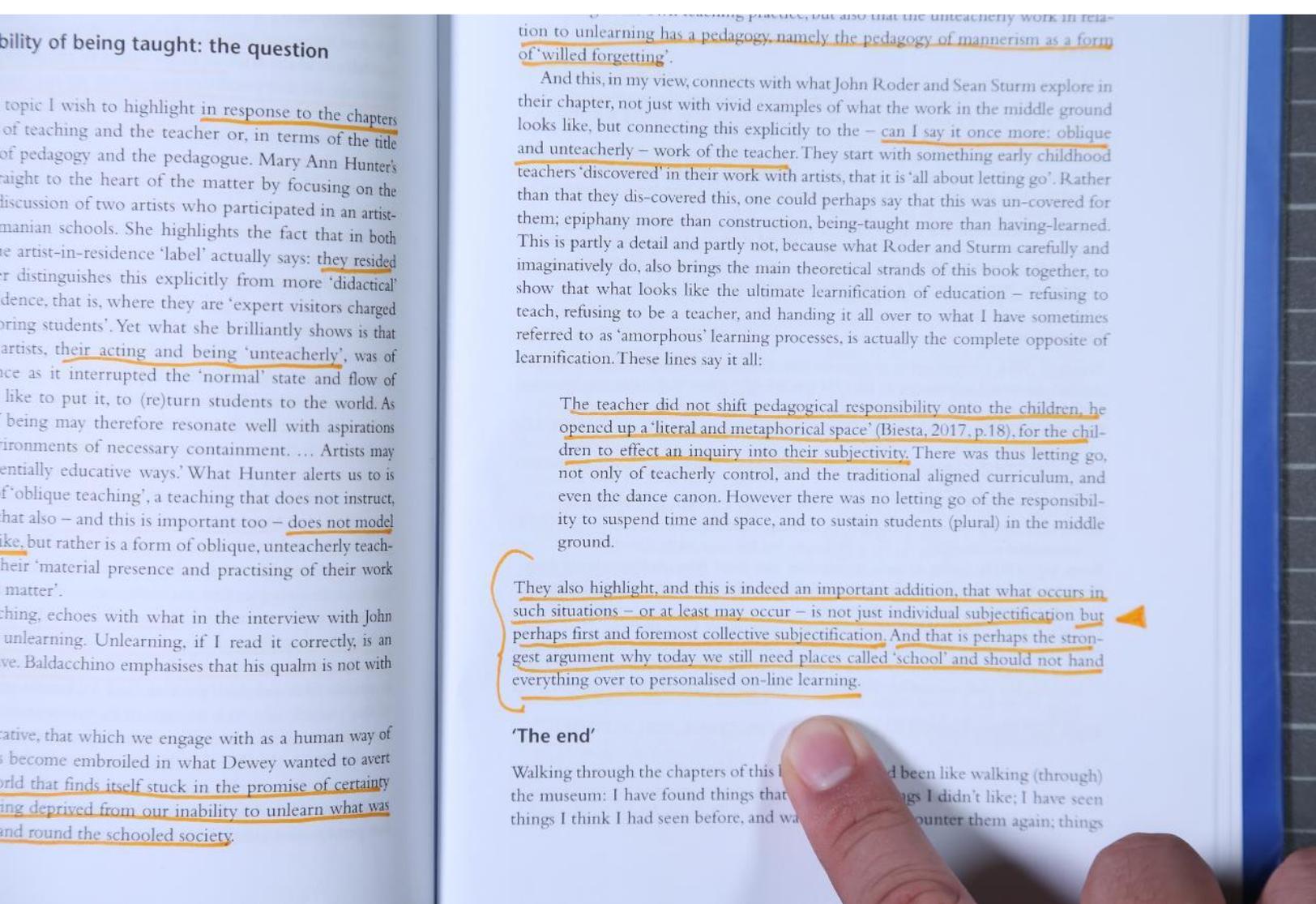


Figure 17. A “moment of exhilaration” in chapter 15, Biesta, (p. 155)

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