Democracy, art and education: connecting the three via a performative view of subjectivity

Jane McDonnell
University of Exeter, UK

Jane McDonnell
282 Rectory Road
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE8 4RP

Jm300@exeter.ac.uk

Introduction

This paper constructs a network of theoretical connections amongst democracy, art and education to offer new suggestions for how artistic contexts can be approached as relevant sites for democratic education, both in terms of research and practice. It offers an alternative to the instrumentalist perspectives which have characterised discussions of democratic education as well as discussions of the contributions of art and art education to politics. Accordingly, the paper rejects not only a narrow understanding of citizenship education as a means of preparing young people for their future participation in a democracy (Advisory report on citizenship, 1998:16) but also the equally narrow characterisation of the arts – and their application in educational settings – as tools for achieving political ends such as social and economic cohesion (Kinder & Harland, 2004; Karkou & Glasman, 2004). Such instrumentalist understandings of citizenship have been criticised from a variety of perspectives (Osler & Starkey, 2004; Faulks, 2002; Biesta & Lawy, 2006) as have such approaches to art, education and politics (Buckingham & Jones, 2001; Hall & Thompson 2007; Brighton, 2003)

Aware of these critiques, and in a departure from instrumentalist approaches, this paper turns to philosophical discussions of democracy, art and education to explore an alternative understanding of the connections between them. The development of this alternative is based on Mouffe's political theory, the contributions of Rancière to the philosophy of politics and aesthetics and Biesta's educational philosophy, specifically his concept of democratic learning. The paper is divided into four parts. Firstly, an examination of the political philosophy of Mouffe and Rancière is used to reconstruct an understanding of democracy not as a form of government or society (as it is often conceived) but as an active and disruptive movement that is embodied in a specific understanding of political action. In the second section, Rancière's discussions of politics and aesthetics are employed to explore the relationship between artistic practices and this active and disruptive understanding of democracy. The third section details Biesta's understanding of democratic learning as a reflective education based on the opportunities for democratic action encountered in people's everyday lives. The fourth section discusses the role of subjectivity in each of the philosophical arguments presented in the paper to offer an alternative understanding of the connections between democracy, art and education. The paper concludes with some tentative suggestions as to how this understanding might impact on research and practice in art and democratic education. Specifically, I will argue that the contributions of Mouffe, Rancière and Biesta offer a way of constructing the connections between democracy, art and education at the philosophical level which rests on a performative or action based understanding of subjectivity. Finally, I will suggest that this alternative understanding of the connections between the three fields

has implications for research and practice in that it allows us to conceive of democratic learning as a reflective process based on instances of political and democratic subjectivity, which, because they have an aesthetic dimension, imply a significant connection with artistic practices.

Conflict and contingency at the heart of politics – democracy as an active movement

The argument for an alternative conception of the relationship between democracy, art and education advanced in this paper rests on an understanding of democracy as a fluid, dynamic movement, rather than a static form of society or government as it is often understood in mainstream political theory. Mouffe's insistence on conflict and dissensus at the heart of politics allows us to begin to construct such an understanding by highlighting the contingency of the foundations upon which democracy rests. For Mouffe, the inevitability of conflict over very different projects for the government of a community necessitates its positive inclusion within a democratic framework. Indeed, she advocates, 'the creation of a vibrant, "agonistic" public sphere of contestation, where different hegemonic political projects can be confronted' (2005: 3). Mouffe stresses that this contestation should include dissensus over the interpretation of the very concepts of liberty and equality that are central to democracy (2005:121). However, Mouffe also insists that while the interpretations of liberty and equality are many and may vary legitimately from one cultural context to another (2005: 126), a commitment to these values remains essential to any practice of democratic politics. In her defence of a variety of legitimate conceptions of liberty and equality then, Mouffe hints at the contingency at the heart of democratic politics. But in her characterisation of these concepts as 'ethico-political' (2005: 121), she retains for them a sense of universality and stability.

This ambiguity may be explained by the fact that Mouffe is arguing for an 'agonistic' politics (2005: 3) and thus needs to set some ground rules for what would be acceptable within this politics. These ground rules take the form of a commitment to the values of liberty and equality, however various their interpretations. Mouffe claims that such a commitment is qualitatively different from the commitment of liberals to these values, who see in them a universal, rational morality; 'I claim that the drawing of a frontier between the legitimate and the illegitimate is always a political decision, and that it should therefore always remain open to contestation.' (2005: 121). For Mouffe then, liberty and equality are not the universal and unchanging foundations of democracy that form the basis of liberal politics but are themselves subject to challenge and reinterpretation. In this way, Mouffe draws borders around the practice of politics, but because these borders are *political*, rather than moral or universal, they are also unstable and volatile, always subject to contestation and

renegotiation. The question of how and where this contestation can take place remains complicated in Mouffe's work by that fact that a commitment to both liberty and equality are seen as a prerequisite for any involvement in the political sphere. Rancière allows us to address this question more openly by shifting our perspective on democracy from the practices that occur within the established political sphere to those that challenge it from without.

As with Mouffe, conflict and dissensus are central to Rancière's understanding of democracy but he frames this dissensus in a way that allows for a more radical interpretation of the contingency and instability of democracy. In *Hatred of Democracy* (Rancière 2006), he offers a critique of the hatred that democracy has inspired since its inception in ancient Greece. Here, Rancière describes democracy as the breaking of the link between an entitlement to govern and the 'natural' differences present in society. In contrast to a logic which bases a person's suitability to govern on the 'natural' attributes of birth, wealth or ability, the logic of democracy insists upon the entitlement of anyone and everyone to share in the government of a community. The hatred and fear that the appearance of this egalitarian logic inspired is beautifully captured in a reference to Plato, who denounces democracy as the regime that,

> 'overturns all the relations that structure human society: its governors have the demeanour of the governed and the governed the demeanour of governors; women are the equals of men ; fathers accustom themselves to treating their sons as equals; the foreigner and the immigrant are the equals of citizens; the schoolmaster fears and flatters the pupils who, in turn, make fun of him; the young are the equals of the old and the old imitate the young; even the beasts are free and the horses and asses, conscious of their dignity, knock over anyone who does not yield to them in the street.' (Rancière, 2006: 36)

Rancière points out that the assimilation of the equality between animals and humans, and between sons and fathers, to the equality between governors and governed demonstrates how Plato is keen to represent the governmental relation as natural. According to such logic, the entitlement of some to rule over others is as natural and given as the rule of fathers over their sons and masters over their animals (2006:38). It is this logic of a 'natural' government based on social differences that democracy disrupts. Rancière claims that democracy continues to confront this logic of 'natural' government because the original democratic rupture opened up a public sphere, 'which is a sphere

of encounters and conflicts between the two opposed logics of police and politics, of the natural government of social competences and the government of anyone and everyone.' (2006:55). Rancière here writes of the conflict between democracy and the 'natural government of social competences' in a way that appears to use the terms synonymously with 'politics' and 'police' which feature both here and in his other works. Rancière applies a very specific meaning to these words, the distinction of which from their general use in English is not always apparent. An analysis of these terms and their relationship to the concepts of democracy and the 'natural' government of social competences allows us to reconstruct some of the most important elements in Rancière's philosophy.

We could say that for Rancière, democracy is the logic of equality embodied in the practice of politics and that the 'natural government of social competences' which democracy confronts is the logic of inequality embodied in the police order. The police order rests on the idea that there is only one, pure principle of government, i.e. the principle of inequality based on differences within society, which determine who is entitled to govern and who is not. In this way it denies and suppresses the existence of equality which would contaminate its pure logic of government (2006: 48). The police order is an all encompassing distribution of the places within a community based on an inegalitarian logic in which some are destined for participation in the public sphere of government while others are relegated to the private sphere of domesticity or reproduction. One obvious example of this is the exclusion of women from public life based on a 'natural' distinction, which dictates that their proper place is in the private sphere of the home (Rancière, 2006: 56).

Politics, by contrast, is the practice that reveals, by affirming the reality of equality, that there is never a single, pure principle of government (Rancière, 2006:48). Politics achieves this by playing on the contradictions between public and private identities, between real equalities and real inequalities. In this way it generates, via a process of subjectification, supplementary, political subjects which exist in the interval between public and private identities. Politics therefore stages a dissensus over the very distribution between these two spheres that the police order delimits and maintains (Rancière, 2006:61). Indeed the very thing that makes these actions, and the subjects they generate, political is the fact that they bring into play a conflict over the distribution of places within a community upon which the logic of government rests. Rancière refers to the example of Rosa Parks' refusal to give up a seat on a bus and the boycott which followed it as part of the civil rights movement in the United States of America to illustrate how this process occurs;

> The young black woman of Montgomery, Alabama, who, one day in December 1955, decided to remain in her seat on the bus, which was not hers, in this way decided that she had, as a citizen of the United States, the rights she did not have as an inhabitant of a state that banned the use of such seats to individuals with one-sixteenth or more parts of 'non-Caucasian' blood. And the Blacks of Montgomery who, a propos of this conflict between a private person and a transportation company, decided to boycott the company, really acted politically, *staging the double relation of exclusion and inclusion inscribed in the duality of the human being and the citizen*.' (Rancière 2006: 57, my emphasis).

The crucial point here is that for Rancière, the political subject cannot be reduced either to the equal citizen with rights enshrined in law, nor to the unequal human being stripped bare of those rights in daily experience. For Rancière, it is not a case of a real inequality being concealed behind a façade of equality, as a Marxist reading might conclude (2006: 58). Rather, the political subject is supplementary to these two identities and only becomes subject through the political action of staging the contradiction between them. For Rancière, politics is always about creating something new out of the tensions between two opposites which can never be reduced to the real and the imaginary, the true and the false. Democracy is not therefore a simple revolution of equality over inequality but, by taking equality seriously it stages the contradiction between the two in new and inventive ways (Rancière, 2006: 61). Finally, politics and its generation of new political subjects leave traces in a reconfigured distribution of places between the public and the private sphere. In the case above, the trace of this political action can be seen in the inclusion of African Americans in the public sphere of government. But, as political action demonstrates, the police order is contingent and its distribution of places will always be subject to the conflict between the egalitarian logic of democracy and the inegalitarian logic of a government of social competences (Rancière, 2006: 55). The victories and defeats that leave their traces in the distribution of the community as a result of this conflict are never definitive.

Three important points need to be drawn from this argument. The first is that for Rancière, politics is the activity which generates political subjects and makes political subjectivity possible. Rancière therefore holds a particular view of subjectivity that might be described as performative in that the political subject only exists, only becomes subject, through engaging in political action. Secondly, democracy is inseparable from this process, indeed we might say that the egalitarian logic of democracy is embodied in political action. For this reason democracy is a process of action

and movement, or as Rancière puts it, democracy has at its heart, 'the movement which ceaselessly disrupts the distribution of the public and private, the political and the social' (2006: 62). Finally, this disruptive movement is practiced through a political action which is necessarily playful, inventive and dramatic. Rancière uses the metaphor of theatre, arguing that political action 'stages' the dissensus between two opposing logics and that 'the democratic process is a process of perpetual bringing into play, of invention of forms of subjectivities' (2006:62).

Both Mouffe and Rancière help us to move beyond dominant understandings of western democracy whilst retaining some of its most familiar elements. While Mouffe insists on a commitment to liberty and equality, for Rancière it is equality which characterises the logic of democracy as it is embodied in political action. Both however, offer ways of thinking about democracy that help us to move beyond the static, institutional understanding implicit when we speak of 'democratic nations', 'democratic societies' or even simply 'democracies'. Instead, they allow us to see democracy as an unstable and volatile element which deals in disruption and conflict rather than stability and consensus. It is this understanding of democracy which is taken up in the next section to examine its connection with artistic practices, via an exploration of Rancière's view of the intimate relationship between politics and aesthetics.

Art and democracy - displacing the distribution of the sensible

In *The Politics of Aesthetics,* Rancière (2004) provides a response to current thinking in art and aesthetics which also offers an alternative way of thinking through the relationship between art and democracy. Central to Rancière's understanding of the relationship between politics and aesthetics is his concept of 'the distribution of the sensible' (2004: 12), which is the distribution of places, spaces, times and activities within a community. It establishes who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do, and the time and space in which that activity is performed (Rancière 2004: 13). This distribution is both aesthetic and political because it involves the visibility and audibility of places and practices that make up the community. Rancière expresses this connection most clearly perhaps in his claim that, 'Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time' (2004: 13). There are of course different ways in which the distribution of the sensible can be arranged and Rancière argues that these different ways of distributing the sensible have lent themselves to different political regimes over time (2004: 19).

To explain how artistic practices are related to these changing ways of distributing the sensible, Rancière introduces the idea of Artistic regimes, which represent the dominant ways of thinking about artistic practices, the forms of thought that make them visible and ways of relating the two, that have operated through western history (Rancière 2004: 20). He identifies three regimes; the ethical regime of images (exemplified by Plato's distinction between true images and simulacra), the representative regime of the arts (elaborated by Aristotle in *The Poetics*) and the aesthetic regime of art (which took hold from the 18th century onwards via a variety of practices and discourses). Because the relationship between art and politics is different in each regime, ways of structuring the arts lend themselves to different political regimes at different times. He uses the example of the theatre to demonstrate this, showing that the stage went from being a democratic site of disunity and disruption in the ethical regime to an analogy for the hierarchical rule of monarchs in the representative regime (Rancière 2004: 17-8).

Because they were judged on their origins and purposes, images in the ethical regime were always 'ethical' and political because they either supported or jeopardised the ethos of the community and its distribution (Rancière 2004: 20-1). In contrast, the representative regime elaborated by Arisotle gave the arts a special place and separated them from the socio-political order. It did this via a dual logic of *poesis* (separating the arts from other spheres of life based on the arrangement of actions in a poetic schema) and *mimesis* (the internal, hierarchical organisation of the arts including rules about the suitability of genres and art forms to different subject matter) (Rancière 2004: 21-2). The 'aesthetic revolution' broke down the poetic logic of the representative regime by mixing the materials of the arts and non-art together. It broke down the mimetic logic by using all sorts of genres and media for all sorts of subject matter. This resulted in the emergence of the idea of 'art' in the singular, because the mimetic principle of distinguishing between the arts no longer obtained. Paradoxically, this singular idea of 'art' also has no basis on which to establish its singularity, having done away with the principle of poesis which separated it from other spheres of life. In the aesthetic regime of art therefore, 'art' is paradoxically singular and yet automatically political (Rancière 2004: 23).

The 'aesthetic revolution' is a crucial event in Rancière's thought because it describes the process by which the very idea of art, and the contemporary discourses and practices that surround it, were established. The 'aesthetic revolution' coincides historically with many of the events that characterise the onset of what is often described as 'modernity'. Rancière introduces his own terminology because he feels that the term 'modernity' (and the discourses of modernism and

postmodernism that depend upon it) obscures the complexity of the shifts in practices and ideas that the term aims to define (2004: 10). Perhaps the crucial difference between Rancière's concept of an aesthetic regime of art and the idea of modernity is one of determination. Whereas the concept of modernity implies a definitive break with the past, and its correlates of modernism and postmodernism offer teleological responses to the direction of art in the wake of this rupture, the aesthetic regime of art implies a historically contingent rearrangement of the ways of relating art practices, other practices and the ideas that make them visible.

One of the key elements in Rancière's understanding of how politics and art practices relate to each other today is his genealogy of fiction and specifically his understanding of fiction in the aesthetic regime. Rancière argues that Aristotle's elaboration of the representative regime in *The Poetics* freed the arts from the constraints of history (which had to obey the empirical disorder of events) *and* from the charge of dissimulation levelled at mimesis by Plato. He did so by giving the arts their own proper logic, separate from the logic of facts, which was a poetic logic of *fiction* (2004: 35). The aesthetic regime broke down this opposition so that the logics of these once separate spheres of fiction and fact became merged. This break with the poetic logic of fiction meant not only a revocation of the separation of the arts from other spheres of life but also of the rules which governed the arrangement of actions in order to tell a story (Rancière 2004: 37). As a result, storytelling in both history and art now operate on the same logic of fiction. Rancière refers to 19th century literature as one of the crucial sites in which this shift occurred, describing how literature became a 'symptomatology of society' (2004: 33), whose logic was taken up by the new 'sciences' of the social world, including history. This new logic favoured descriptive detail of everyday objects over narrative and the lives of ordinary people over the actions of monarchs and generals, thus dismantling the poetic and mimetic principles of the representative regime.

Rancière claims that as a result in this shift in ideas and practices, both politics and art in the aesthetic regime construct 'fictions' that contribute to the formation of political subjectivity. Rancière illustrates this by referring to the perception - specific to the aesthetic age - that anyone and everyone can be involved in the making of history. In other words, the logic of storytelling shared by art and history has created a certain kind of political subjectivity; 'the "logic of stories" and the ability to act as historical agents go together' (39). Importantly, in terms of democracy, Rancière sees this logic as disruptive rather than unifying in that it involves the disincorporation from imaginary communities rather than incorporation within them; 'The channels for political subjectivization are not those of imaginary identification but those of "literary" disincorporation'

(2004: 40). According to Rancière then, in the current, aesthetic regime, artistic practices and political practices are related because they share the same materials and logics. In the representative regime, the arts were kept apart from other spheres of life and thus their relationship with politics was merely analogous. By contrast, in the aesthetic regime, artistic practices become truly political, creating new forms of subjectivity which can disrupt and reconfigure the distribution of spaces, times, places and activities within a community. It is this ability to displace and reconfigure the distribution of the sensible via a process of subjectification that is the political quality of artistic practices in the aesthetic regime. When they do this in a way that disrupts and displaces a distribution based on a 'natural' logic of inequality, they share a common logic and purpose with democracy.

Democracy and education – democratic learning

In *Beyond Learning,* Biesta (2006) argues that the question of human subjectivity has been central to education but in a new approach to democratic learning moves away from the instrumentalist and individualist conceptions of democracy and subjectivity that have dominated the modern educational project. Instead he proposes a democratic education founded on an action-based understanding of subjectivity. Biesta argues that the instrumentalist and individualist approaches to subjectivity found in modern education result from the influence of Kant's philosophy. Particularly influential has been Kant's definition of education as the only means through which to produce rational individuals capable of exercising independent judgement within democratic states. On such a view, subjectivity and the way in which the human subject is conceived becomes an integral part of our understanding of the aims and processes of education. Moreover, it presents education as a deeply individualistic and instrumentalist endeavour (Biesta, 2006: 33-6).

Biesta acknowledges a turn towards more social understandings of human subjectivity in the twentieth century through the work of philosophers and sociologists such as Dewey, Mead, Wittgenstein and Habermas. In such work, the approach to subjectivity might be described as inter subjective in that social interaction is seen as integral to the way in which human subjects develop. However, Biesta argues that such approaches remain concerned with the attempt to qualify the essence of humanity and with the question of how human subjects are produced (Biesta, 2006: 34-7). He finds in Dewey's more inter subjective understanding of democracy and education an approach that remains instrumentalist and somewhat individualist in its focus on the production of democratic subjects, albeit through social and experiential means (Biesta, 2006: 127-32). Elsewhere, Biesta describes these kind of approaches to democratic education as psychological

because their aim is to 'generate the democratic person' (in press: 1). What Biesta suggests as an alternative to such psychological approaches is a political approach to democratic subjectivity, support for which he finds in the work of Arendt.

Biesta finds in Arendt's philosophy a political approach which conceives of subjectivity not as an attribute of individuals but rather as a condition of human existence. Biesta explains that for Arendt, humans are active beings and the pinnacle of human action is public, political action because this is the activity that offers the freedom to create something new and thus 'come into the world' (in press: 5). This action is itself only possible because of a certain kind of political existence. Biesta describes the condition of this political existence as 'being-together-in-plurality' (in press: 5) which crucially involves the possibility of acting and having ones actions taken up in unexpected ways by other people. If one's actions are not taken up, or if the way in which one's actions will be taken up is known before acting, then this does not represent action in the true Arendtian sense of making a new beginning or 'coming into the world' (Biesta in press: 5). Arendt's view implies that human subjectivity is deeply political because it is always bound up with the plurality and unpredictability of having to exist with other people. It is also performative in that the process of coming into the world, or of becoming subject, exists only in and through action itself. (Biesta in press: 6).

In terms of the potential of such an understanding of subjectivity to education, Biesta sees this in a democratic education which instead of attempting to produce democratic subjects, concerns itself with supporting the opportunities for democratic subjectivity that students experience in all aspects of their life. Allowing people to reflect on and learn from those opportunities - as well as from the times when such subjectivity has not been possible - becomes an important role for this new understanding of democratic education. Biesta claims, 'while this [view of subjectivity] suggests that we cannot learn *for* political existence, this does not mean that we cannot learn *from* it' (in press: 17).

Discussion – the role of subjectivity in connecting democracy, art and education

Subjectivity plays a crucial role in the understanding of democracy presented in this paper. It is also significant in the connections between both politics and aesthetics and democracy and education that have been outlined. For this reason, subjectivity can provide a philosophical framework on which to construct a view of the relationship between democracy, art and education, which does not rely on the instrumentalist approach that has often been the lens through which the three are viewed together. The network of connections I outline below is a tentative effort to

construct such a relationship.

From the discussion of Rancière's political philosophy in this paper, we can conclude that politics in his view is a process of subjectification in which political subjects come into being through acting politically. I have argued that, based on Rancière's work, democracy can be seen as the active, disruptive movement that is embodied in the practice of politics and that for Rancière, this political action has a creative, playful and dramatic dimension which can be expressed in artistic metaphors. Furthermore, in Rancière's view, politics and aesthetics enjoy an intimate relationship and he is able to write of a 'distribution of the sensible' which delineates the possibilities for a variety of practices, including artistic practices, within any community. This distribution is both political and aesthetic because it has to do with what is visible, audible and possible within the arrangement of places, spaces and activities that makes up a community. For Rancière, contemporary artistic practices work with the same material as political articulations and share with those articulations a certain logic. When this logic contributes to the formation of political subjects which disrupt and displace the distribution of spaces and occupations in a society based on a 'natural' logic of government, they may be described as democratic. In this way, political subjectivity unites art and democracy in Rancière's philosophy.

Rancière's understanding of political action as a process of subjectification may be described as a performative or action based view of subjectivity in that the subject of the action is constituted in, and only in, the action itself. A similar view of subjectivity is also central to Biesta's view of democratic subjectivity and therefore of democratic learning. Biesta has commented on the relevance of this specific understanding of subjectivity in Rancière's work to his own educational philosophy (Biesta, 2007). Following Arendt, Biesta's view of democratic subjectivity as a quality of human existence experienced (or not experienced) in everyday contexts and of democratic learning as (at least in part) a reflection on such opportunities (or the lack of them) is supported by Rancière's understanding of democracy and politics. Finally, if democracy is embodied in the action that generates political subjectivity and if reflection upon opportunities for such subjectivity is seen as a crucial part of democratic learning, then the aesthetic dimension of this process of political subjectification means that artistic practices can be taken seriously as a site in which opportunities for democratic learning may occur. It is in this way that I want to suggest the three fields of democracy, art and education can be connected at a philosophical level.

Conclusion – implications for research and practice

While I have shown that it is possible to consider artistic practices as an important site of democratic learning based on very specific understanding of the relationship between democracy, art and education, it cannot be assumed that the arts are *necessarily* a generator of opportunities for democratic or political subjectivity and that such opportunities are happening in artistic contexts all the time. Indeed, Rancière argues that politics, by its very nature, only happens rarely or sporadically, leaving its trace behind in the reconfigured police order it disrupts (Biesta, 2007). With these cautions in mind, I want to suggest some possible ways in which the perspective constructed in this paper could be relevant to practice in art and in democratic education as well as to research approaches in these areas.

In the area of art practice, it is possible to suggest that engaging in art practices can involve the kinds of opportunities for political and democratic subjectivity that support democratic learning. Through experimenting in the arts, young people may encounter opportunities to become politically and democratically subject through artistic practice. While the occurrence of such a process must be seen as unusual, it is nevertheless a possibility. Much more common might be the experience of engaging as an audience with art work in which the traces of political subjectivity might be perceived. Responding to and reflecting on such work could be a significant experience of becoming aware of democratic and political subjectivity. A third possibility is that through working with artists in an artistic environment, young people witness and experience first hand the kinds of experimental artistic activities and approaches to work that could lead to political action and thus generate political subjectivity. In terms of education, reflection on experiences of engaging in artistic practices and working in artistic contexts could form an important part of democratic learning.

Viewing the connections between art, democracy and education in this light also has implications for research. Investigation into the democratic learning that follows from the everyday experiences of young people could involve a close look at the aesthetic dimension those experiences and how they relate to the possibility (or impossibility) of democratic subjectivity. Exploring the role of this aesthetic dimension in people's overall learning about democracy and their place in the political fabric would be an important aspect of research into democratic learning based on the kind of understanding of the relationship between art, democracy and education advanced in this paper. To put it in terms taken from the philosophers whose work this paper employs, given the centrality of subjectivity to democratic learning, the aesthetic dimension of people's experiences of subjectivity both in art and beyond may be seen as a significant part of their education within a distribution of

the sensible that is both given and yet always open to the creative and re constitutive disruption of democracy. Such processes merit investigation in the context of research into democratic learning thus understood.

References

Advisory Group on Citizenship. (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools*. London: QCA publications.

Biesta, G.J.J. (in press) How to exist politically and learn from it: Hannah Arendt and the problem of democratic education. *Teachers College Record*

Biesta, G.J.J. (2007) “Don't count me in.” Democracy, education and the question of inclusion. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 27, 18-31.*

Biesta, G.J.J. (2006) *Beyond Learning: Democratic education for a human future.* CO: Paradigm.

Biesta, G.J.J. and Lawy, R. (2006) From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: Overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 36,* 63-79.

Brighton, A. (2003) Save Our Souls. *Museums Journal, 103,* 18-19.

Buckingham and Jones (2001) New Labour's cultural turn: Some tensions in contemporary educational and cultural policy. *Journal of Educational Policy, 16,* 1-14.

Faulks, K. (2006) Rethinking citizenship education in England. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 1,* 123-140.

Hall, C. and Thomson, P. (2007) Creative partnerships? Cultural policy and inclusive arts practice in one primary school. *British Educational Research Journal, 33,* 315-329.

Kinder and Harland (2004) The arts and social inclusion: what's the evidence? *Social Inclusion, 19,* 52-56.

Mouffe, C. (2005) *On The Political.* Oxford: Routledge

Osler, A. and Starkey, H. (2003) Learning for cosmopolitan citizenship: Theoretical debates and young people's experiences. *Educational Review, 55,* 243-254.

Rancière, J. (2004) *The Politics of Aesthetics.* London: Continuum

Rancière, J. (2006) *Hatred of Democracy.* London: Verso