



Teaching visual art as an approach to moral education

An autoethnographic account of my research project

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

November 2025

School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Teaching visual art as an approach to moral education

An autoethnographic account of my research project

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Supervisors

Dr. Atli Harðarson
Dr. Ólafur Páll Jónsson

Doctoral committee

Dr. Atli Harðarson
Dr. Ólafur Páll Jónsson
Dr. Anette Göthlund

November 2025

School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

**Að kenna myndlist sem nálgun
við siðferðislega menntun**

Sjálfsævisöguleg rýni á rannsóknaverkefni mitt

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

Ritgerð til doktorsgráðu

Leiðbeinendur

Dr. Atli Harðarson
Dr. Ólafur Páll Jónsson

Doktorsnefnd

Dr. Atli Harðarson
Dr. Ólafur Páll Jónsson
Dr. Anette Göthlund

Nóvember 2025

Menntavísindasvið

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Thesis for a doctoral degree at the University of Iceland. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

© Ingimar Ólafsson Waage 2025

ISBN 978-9935-9753-7-9

ORCID: 0000-0002-1867-9520

Reykjavik, Iceland 2025

Ágrip

Í þessari doktorsritgerð sem samsett er af fimm ritrýndum greinum auk kápu segir höfundur frá íhlutunarrannsókn sem hann skipulagði og undirbjó. Íhlutunin var síðan framkvæmd í samstarfi við þrjá myndmenntakennara í myndlistartímum í grunnskóla á höfuðborgarsvæðinu. Í rannsókninni beindi höfundur sjónum sínum að því hvaða tækifæri fælust í því að efla siðferðilega menntun í gegnum listsköpun út frá völdum dygðum og samræður um myndlist. Höfundur sótti fræðilegar undirstöður í dygðasiðfræði Aristótelesar og samtímahugmyndir reistar á henni, einkum svonefndan ný-Aristotelisma (e. Neo-Aristotelism) og mannkostamenntun (e. Aristotelian Character Education). Ennfremur notfærði höfundur sér mennta- og listheimspeki John Dewey, kenningar Rudolf Arnheim um samspil skynjunar og hugsunar, skrif Susanne Langer um tengsl lista við hið innra líf og tilfinningar auk hugmynda Maxine Greene um hlutverk lista og ímyndunarafls í menntun og hlutverk kennara í því samhengi.

Verufræðileg undirstaða rannsóknarinnar er pragmatísk og notaði höfundur blandaða rannsóknaaðferð sem fólst m.a. í viðtölum við rýnihópa, þemagreiningu á textum nemenda, athugun á listaverkum þeirra auk starfendarannsóknar þar sem höfundur leitaðist við að ígrunda allt rannsóknafæri með heildrænum hætti. Í verkinu fléttast því saman tvær ólíkar víddir, annars vegar umfjöllun um hlutverk og tækifæri sem myndlistarkennsla felur í sér fyrir siðferðilega menntun og hins vegar autoethnografísk stúdía höfundar þar sem hann segir frá þroskaferli sínu sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi sem reynir að átta sig á margbrotnu hlutverki sínu—ekki síst með hliðsjón af gildi menntarannsóknar og stöðu kennara í því samhengi.

Í upphafi rannsóknarferlisins hugðist höfundur skoða hvað myndmenntakennsla gæti haft fram að færa fyrir eflingu siðferðisþroska, einkum hvað varðar svokallað dygðalæsi (e. virtue literacy), en það er hugsmíð sem var þróuð af Jubilee Centre rannsóknamiðstöðinni við Háskólann í Birmingham á Englandi. Höfundur lagði upp með það markmið að rannsóknin myndi leiða til þróunar nýrra aðferða og námsefnis fyrir siðferðilega menntun þar sem listir, einkum þó sjónlistir, myndu gegna lykilhlutverki. Íhlutunin, sem stóð í átta vikur, fólst í því að vinna að skapandi verkefnum í myndmenntatímum þar sem megin áherslan var á dygðir á borð við hugrekki og vináttu auk þess sem nemendur tóku reglulega þátt í heimspekilegum samræðum um valin listaverk sem höfundur áleit að hefðu siðferðilegan undirtón eða inntak.

Fyrir og eftir íhlutunina voru lögð könnunarpróf fyrir nemendahópinn auk samanburðarhóps sem ekki tók þátt í íhlutuninni. Niðurstöður tölfræðilegrar greiningar á þeim gögnum sem safnað var með könnunarprófunum sýndu að áhrif af íhlutuninni á siðferðilegan orðaforða nemenda voru ekki tölfræðilega marktæk en sú niðurstaða var í

mótsögn við áhrifarík listaverk nemenda og skriflegar hugleiðingar þeirra um listaverk sem bentu til innihaldsríkrar ígrundunar og þælinga. Þessi þáttur myndar hina fyrri vídd rannsóknarinnar. Sú niðurstaða leiddi til þess að höfundi varð æ betur ljóst að hann sjálfur sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi væri órjúfanlegur hluti rannsóknarferlisins, ekki væri hægt að aðgreina hina lífrænu heild mannlegra samskipta í skólastofunni frá tæknilegum hliðum skólastarfs sem felast í námsefni, kennsluaðferðum, íhlutunum og námsmati. Til að skilja hlutverk sitt betur í því samhengi hóf höfundur að vinna að starfendarannsókn til þess að varpa betur ljósi á þau tengsl og myndar sá þáttur verksins hina seinni vídd rannsóknarinnar.

Helstu niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar leiða í ljós mikilvægi þess að nemendum gefist tækifæri til að ígrunda listaverk og ræða hugmyndir sínar og tilfinningar í tengslum við þau og eigið líf. Niðurstöðurnar sýna ennfreður ríkulega hæfni nemenda á grunnskólaaldri til að glíma við flóknar siðferðilegar spurningar og tjá hugrenningar sínar um þær þrátt fyrir að hafa ekki þróað að fullu vald sitt á tungumálinu. Leiða má getum að því að ígrundun um listaverk og þátttaka í umræðum um þau geti verið mikilvæg viðbót við hefðbundið námsefni í grunnskólum. Niðurstöðurnar leiða einnig í ljós mikilvægi kennarans sem er í lykilstöðu til þess að skapa aðstæður og traust í skólastofunni og þannig mótað farveg fyrir innihaldsríkt nám. Á hinn bóginn sýna niðurstöðurnar einnig að fyrir sakir rótgróinna hefða og væntinga um inntak og efnistöð í myndmenntakennslu eru líkur á að kennarar þurfi að takast á við áskoranir sem þó er unnt að mæta með þolinmæði, ígrundun, umhyggju og virðingu.

Lykilorð:

Kennsla, listsköpun, dygdasiðfræði, mannkostamenntun, myndlist

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation, composed of five peer-reviewed articles along with a Kappa, details an intervention study designed by the author and carried out in collaboration with three visual arts teachers during art classes at an elementary school in the capital area of Iceland. The research focused on exploring the potential for enhancing moral education through discussions about visual art and art-making, based on selected virtues. The theoretical foundation is rooted in Aristotle's virtue ethics and its modern adaptations, particularly Neo-Aristotelianism and Aristotelian Character Education. The author also draws on John Dewey's educational and aesthetic philosophy, Rudolf Arnheim's theories on the interaction of perception and thinking, Susanne Langer's writings on art and inner life, and Maxine Greene's views on the role of art and imagination in education and the teacher's role within that context.

The ontological basis of the study is pragmatic, and the author employed a mixed-methods research approach, including focus group interviews, thematic analysis of student texts, observation of their artworks, and action research, wherein the author holistically reflected on the research process. The work weaves together two distinct dimensions: an exploration of the role and potential of visual arts education in fostering moral development, and an autoethnographic study of the author's own development as an artist, teacher, and researcher, particularly in light of the value of educational research and the role of the teacher.

At the outset, the author intended to investigate how visual arts education might contribute to moral development, especially in terms of what is called "virtue literacy"—a construct developed by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham in the UK. The research aimed to develop new methods and educational materials for moral education where the arts, especially visual arts, would play a central role. The intervention, lasting eight weeks, involved creative projects in art classes that emphasised virtues such as courage and friendship. Students also regularly engaged in philosophical discussions about selected artworks that the author believed contained moral undertones or content.

Before and after the intervention, questionnaires were administered to both the participating students and a control group. Statistical analysis of the survey data indicated that the intervention did not have a statistically significant effect on students' moral vocabulary. However, this finding contrasted with impressive student artworks and their written reflections, which indicated meaningful contemplation and insights. This constitutes the first dimension of the study. This outcome led the author to recognise more clearly his own inseparable role as artist, teacher, and researcher,

highlighting that the organic whole of human interaction in the classroom cannot be detached from the technical aspects of curriculum, teaching methods, interventions, and assessment. To better understand his role in this context, the author undertook an action research project, forming the second dimension of the study.

The main findings of the research underscore the importance of giving students opportunities to reflect on artworks and discuss their thoughts and emotions in relation to those works and their own lives. The results also show that elementary school students can grapple with complex moral questions and articulate their thoughts about them, even if they have not fully developed linguistic mastery. It can be inferred that reflection on artworks and participation in discussions about them may be a valuable complement to traditional curriculum content in elementary education. Furthermore, the results highlight the crucial role of the teacher in creating a safe and trusting classroom environment that enables meaningful learning. On the other hand, the findings also indicate that due to traditions and expectations about the content and focus of visual arts education, teachers might expect to face challenges, though these can be met with patience, reflection, care, and respect.

Keywords:

Teaching, artistic creativity, virtue ethics, moral education, visual art

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those who provided me with assistance and support during this project. Firstly, I am grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Atli Harðarson and Dr. Ólafur Páll Jónsson, who helped me to see the deeper dimensions of the philosophy of education, the importance of rational thinking in relation to schooling, and the necessity for students to grow and flourish on their own terms. I would also like to thank Dr. Anette Göthlund, professor at Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, for her important encouragement and helpful suggestions. Furthermore, I owe special thanks to Dr. Kristján Kristjánsson, professor at the University of Birmingham, for his invaluable support and encouragement over the years, without which the idea I had been nurturing would never have reached the stage of realisation.

I am also profoundly grateful to the many individuals who contributed directly or indirectly to the project, including principal and colleagues at Garðaskóli who participated in various ways: Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, Heiða Lind Sigurðardóttir, Herborg Eðvaldsdóttir, Magnús Dagur Sævarsson, and Kristján Hrafn Guðmundsson. I also extend heartfelt thanks to my students at Garðaskóli throughout the years.

Last but not least, I want to thank my wife, Aðalheiður Matthíasdóttir, for her endless support, patience, understanding, and encouragement. Without her, this work would never have come to life.

Table of contents

Ágrip	iii
Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Pragmatism	1
1.2 Embarking on a learning journey	2
1.2.1 The first dimension: Educational truths through real-world experiments	3
1.2.2 The second dimension: Making sense of my situation	5
1.2.3 Action research	5
1.2.3.1 Focusing on ethical values: Aristotelian Action Research	6
1.2.4 Telling the story: Autoethnography	9
1.3 The structure and rationale of the present work	10
2 Making sense of practice and theory	11
2.1 The artist	11
2.1.1 The visual arts	14
2.1.2 Visual thinking and the treacherous arts	15
2.1.3 Meaning-making and various forms of languages	20
2.2 The teacher	23
2.2.1 Challenging the “Grammar of Schooling”	27
2.2.2 Education in or through the arts: An eternal conflict?	28
2.2.3 Creative artist or creative teacher?	28
2.2.4 Philosophical dialogue about art	31
2.2.5 New horizons	37
2.3 The researcher	38
2.3.1 Doing a scientific experiment in a classroom setting	44
2.3.2 The Laxdæla Saga Project (LSP)	46
2.3.3 Preparing for my intervention: A methodological insight	48

2.3.4	Getting ready to conduct the intervention	50
2.3.5	High-stakes: Conducting the intervention.....	51
2.3.6	Pupils' paintings.....	52
2.3.7	Wrapping up the intervention	58
2.3.8	Results of the quantitative part.....	58
2.3.9	Measuring virtue	59
3	The Articles.....	63
3.1	Article 1: Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun.....	63
3.2	Article 2: The Visual Arts in Contemporary Education: Exploring How Artworks Can Promote Moral Deliberation.....	64
3.3	Article 3: Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland.....	65
3.4	Article 4: Horft um öxl: Listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi rýnir í eigin vegferð og þroskaferil í námi og starfi	67
3.5	Article 5: Moral education through dialogue on artworks	68
4	What have I learned?.....	71
4.1	Concluding remarks	74
	Bibliography	75
	Paper I.....	83
	Paper II.....	103
	Paper III.....	125
	Paper IV.....	151
	Paper V.....	167
	Appendices	189

Table of figures

Figure 1: The boat I used to fetch old memories from the river of time.	8
Figure 2: A painting from 2003 displaying the volcano Hekla.	13
Figure 3: French baguettes	14
Figure 4: French baguettes	14
Figure 5: Me in the Pompidou art centre in Paris in 2016.	19
Figure 6: Me in the studio at a weekend or evening	25
Figure 7: A 10th grade student working on a bust	29
Figure 8: A philosophical discussion about “beauty” in art.	32
Figure 9: The concept of “friendship” analysed in a class.	35
Figure 10: A pupil’s artistic expression of courage.....	54
Figure 11: A pupil’s artistic expression of friendship.	55
Figure 12: A pupil’s artistic expression of friendship.	56
Figure 13: A pupil’s artistic expression of courage.	57

1 Introduction

In this dissertation, I describe the results of my research project and explain why I became interested in pursuing a PhD as a visual artist, teacher, and researcher. I discuss what I have learned from working on my project and reflect on the challenges, disappointments, and delights I encountered. As someone who is both agnostic and sceptical, I have always recognised the limits of my knowledge. Because of this, I was immediately attracted to pragmatism when I began studying philosophy. For these reasons, and due to the pluralistic nature of my research project, the pragmatic ontological paradigm was the most natural approach for me to use in my research, as my work encompasses different dimensions that require equally distinct approaches. Pragmatism is also a key philosophy in my professional life as an artist, educator, theorist, and academic leader. In this introductory chapter, I will discuss the structure and methodology of my research.

1.1 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition that traces its roots to numerous philosophers from various periods. William James (2010, p. 36) attributes the coining of the term to Charles Sanders Peirce (1878) in his essay "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," where he emphasised the practicality of our conceptions of an object or its effects as a defining aspect of the principle of pragmatism. James acknowledged that pragmatic thought had been developing over the ages and dedicated his book, *Pragmatism: A New Name to Some Old Ways of Thinking*, to "John Stuart Mill: From whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind and whom my fancy likes to picture as our leader were he alive today" (James, 2010, p. 4). Later in the book, James highlights the omnipresence of pragmatism among earlier philosophers:

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means. Shadworth Hodgson keeps insisting that realities are only what they are 'known-as.' But these forerunners of pragmatism used it in fragments: they were preluders only. Not until our time has it generalized itself, become conscious of a universal mission, pretended to a conquering destiny. (James, 2010, p. 39)

In addition to Charles Sanders Peirce and William James, later philosophers who have significantly contributed to pragmatism include John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, W. V. O. Quine, Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, and, to some extent, Hilary Putnam, Donald Davidson (Cherryholmes, 1992, p. 13), and Philip Kitcher, to name a few. Creswell (2013, p. 28) describes pragmatism as an interpretative framework that focuses “on the consequences of the research—the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry—rather than antecedent conditions” regarding “applications — ‘what works’ — and solution to problems.” Creswell (2013, p. 28) cites Cherryholmes (1992) and Murphy & Murphy (1990) for outlining the basic ideas of pragmatism, including the belief that there is not one reality or system, allowing researchers to choose the “methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.” In the eyes of pragmatists, the world is not an absolute unity; therefore, they advocate for multiple data collection and analysis approaches. Pragmatists avoid the mind/body dualism that questions whether reality is independent of the mind but focus on the “what” and the “how” of research, acknowledging “that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts” (Creswell, 2013, p. 28). Instead, pragmatists seek a middle ground, recognising the existence of external reality alongside individual minds and personal experiences, acknowledging that we can never have a complete understanding of reality due to our physical and mental limitations. Hence, we can never account for the whole truth since the truth is too great for each mind (White, 2010, p. 1).

1.2 Embarking on a learning journey

When I began working on my PhD research ten years ago, my aims were quite different from what turned out to be the final outcome. In *Pragmatism and Educational Research*, Gert Biesta and Nicholas Burbules (2003, p. 2) wrote:

Some argue, for example, that educational research should provide educators with educational techniques. On this account, the task of educators becomes one of implementing general educational “truths” that are produced elsewhere. Others maintain that educational research provides different interpretations of educational reality. Practitioners can use these interpretations to understand and make sense of the educational situations they are in.

Reflecting on the two different approaches presented here by Biesta and Burbules, I see that when I embarked on my research odyssey, I followed the first strategy: aiming to develop educational “truths” that might be implemented elsewhere as evidence-based general approaches. However, through my work on the research project, my approach has expanded and now also includes the second strategy as I try to make sense of my situation regarding my educational practice and research. Therefore, this dissertation has **two dimensions** that I weave together.

1.2.1 The first dimension: Educational truths through real-world experiments

The *first dimension* describes how I embarked, at the outset, on my research expedition in which I aimed to evaluate how the visual arts in elementary education could promote moral education—or, to be specific, *Aristotelian character education* (hereafter referred to as ACE). This first dimension aligns with Biesta and Burbules’s (2003, p. 2) account of *educational techniques*, which I repeat here:

Some argue, for example, that educational research should provide educators with educational techniques. On this account, the task of educators becomes one of implementing general educational “truths” that are produced elsewhere.

My endeavour was originally inspired by the research of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham (hereafter referred to as JCCV): The Knightly Virtues Research Project (hereafter referred to as KVP)—and an Icelandic adaptation of that research, the Laxdæla Saga Research Project (hereafter referred to as LSP), which my PhD supervisors conducted among other researchers. Building on the research philosophy behind these two projects, I developed an original intervention in visual arts classes in the elementary school where, at that time, I had been teaching for 20 years. My research project consisted of a mixed methodology: an experimental trial that entails pre- and post-tests and an intervention programme, interviews with participants, and an inspection of portfolios created during the intervention. Experimental trials are considered appropriate in evaluating projects in educational contexts (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 12). Mixed methods is a concept that describes the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. While quantitative methods are traditionally considered more “scientific” because of their inherent objectivity and broad, universal perspective, using qualitative methods allows for a more particular view, considering the subjectivity of lived experiences and individual perspectives (Lichtman, 2010, pp. 7–12). Furthermore, Arthur et al. (2014, p. 12) emphasised that using “mixed method approaches to research into character education can help to deliver robust data and therefore, any conclusions drawn can be said to have more validity.”

While the intervention will be described in further detail in Chapter 2, I outline here the main structure of the research project. The intervention I designed involved 161 students (8 classes) in 8th grade (ages 13–14) at Garðaskóli in Garðabær, a town with 14,500 residents in the capital region of Iceland (Reykjavik and its surrounding towns). Garðaskóli is an upper-elementary school serving grades 8 to 10, with a total of 530 pupils, and the intervention took place in the

visual arts classes. Traditionally, only half of each class participates in the visual arts each semester: the first half in the autumn semester and the second half in the spring semester. For convenience, these groups are usually divided alphabetically, resulting in random groups. While half of the students participated in the intervention project, the other half acted as a control group. Before the intervention, the whole cohort took a specifically designed pre-test. After the initial pre-test, half of the students participated in an 8-week intervention programme incorporating art, creativity, deliberation, and moral reflection. Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to the entire group, aiming to analyse the effects of the intervention. In addition to the pre- and post-tests, I inspected participants' portfolios and conducted focus-group interviews with both participating students and teachers. The pre- and post-tests, along with the overall structure of the project, were adapted from the Knightly Virtues Project (KVP) (Arthur et al., 2014) and the Laxdæla Saga Project (LSP) (Jónsson et al., 2019). The project was implemented by a team of four visual art teachers: me, Heiða Lind Sigurðardóttir, Herborg Eðvaldsdóttir, and Magnús Dagur Sævarsson. The published articles 2 and 3 account for this first dimension based on the collected data, while articles 1 and 5 address this dimension mostly from a theoretical perspective.

While it may appear straightforward to undertake such a research project, especially given the solid research frameworks of the KVP and LSP studies I relied on, conducting the research reveals only part of the picture. Through developing and implementing the intervention, which involved creating lesson plans, instructing my colleagues on their use, teaching according to them, designing pre- and post-tests, and generating a specific evaluation tool tailored for visual arts to assess these tests and determine whether I could measure students' progress after participating in the intervention—I realised that due to the complex internal and external factors that influence students' learning, behaviour, or attitudes it is challenging for such an intervention to yield compelling results. These challenges, along with the fact that the quantitative part of my research project did not yield statistically significant results regarding progress in pupils' use of moral vocabulary prompted me to rethink the entire project, thus revealing a second dimension. While the absence of statistically significant results of the quantitative part was somewhat disappointing, the qualitative component provided valuable insights into the opportunities that visual art can offer in moral education, which enabled me to expand my research and professional development further. The results have been published in peer-reviewed outlets and have opened doors for additional opportunities, which I present in the fifth article of this dissertation.

1.2.2 The second dimension: Making sense of my situation

In the second dimension of this dissertation, I describe how my teaching practice at an upper elementary school in Iceland prompted me to reflect on the aims of education in general and visual arts education in particular. I also explore how my attitudes and experiences have influenced my teaching and work with young people, as well as my role as a teacher educator and researcher.

As I have already mentioned, it dawned on me while working on the research that there was more to it than simply developing an intervention and measuring its outcomes. I asked myself: What is the meaning of such an enterprise? At that time, I was reflecting on the statistical significance of the results—or the lack thereof—of the quantitative analysis I conducted. I felt I was struggling to make sense of my research and feared my PhD project might end as an incomplete endeavour. At some point, I realised that I was too focused on the quantitative aspects, as results demonstrating statistical significance are commonly regarded as the “jewel in the crown.” Even though I had published a thematic analysis of the participants’ textual responses in the pre- and post-tests, I was overly preoccupied with my perceived “failure”, which probably stemmed from my awareness of not achieving my original objectives, especially given the considerable energy I devoted to developing the quantitative component.

1.2.3 Action research

During this challenging time, I enrolled in a course on *action research* at the School of Education at the University of Iceland. During the course, I realised that finding personal meaning in my research, particularly regarding “who I am”, could give me a new perspective. The action research course was impactful for several reasons. Firstly, exceptional teachers encouraged us to approach our research with poetic insights through various creative methods (Waage, 2023b). Secondly, I was fortunate to have discussions with fellow students facing their own unique challenges in research and teaching. While the caring and creative attitudes of the instructors fostered an environment for innovative and critical thinking, the practical methodological approach to action research proved most effective, including traditional creativity through art materials, found objects, crafting, and building.

Dutch philosopher Wouter Sanderse (2016, citing Zeichner, 1993, p. 200) wrote that action research is the systematic inquiry by “practitioners about their own practices.” While educational research is essential for school development, implementing innovations and progressive practices is often initiated from above, outside the teachers’ domain, without considering the diversity of values and beliefs held by the teachers who are ultimately expected to implement these projects.

Consequently, a gap exists between academic theory and concrete classroom practices (Sanderse, 2016). For these reasons, employing action research within classrooms fosters reflective teaching, thereby grounding educational development more significantly in the personal initiatives of teachers, where practical experience and knowledge from the field of study stand as fundamental elements of such research design. The structure of an action research program typically consists of seven steps. The first step involves formulating an initial problem that the practitioner encounters in their practice and selecting a focus. The second step entails clarifying theories and identifying the theoretical background, beliefs, and values. The third step includes identifying the research questions based on the first two steps. The fourth step is data collection, which also involves using triangulation, a process that enables the researcher to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. In the fifth step, the data is analysed, and the results can be utilised to develop a theory for further improvements. Steps six and seven involve reporting the results and taking informed actions (Sagor, 2000).

1.2.3.1 Focusing on ethical values: Aristotelian Action Research

The revival of Aristotelian ideas regarding virtue and character in education during the 1980s led to considering practical wisdom as a significant concept in education (Sanderse, 2016). Aristotelian action research promotes the notion of practical wisdom as “the kind of reflection that enables teachers to translate ethical values into concrete forms of action” (Sanderse, 2016, p. 451). Norwegian philosopher and action researcher Olav Eikeland argued that Aristotle himself was an action researcher because he thought from “inside human practices” (Eikeland, 2008, pp. 28–31, cited in Sanderse, 2016, p. 452). This aligns with teachers’ practices: before systematic reflection, teachers observe their field for some time, gathering anecdotal evidence through discussions with colleagues and students, as well as by examining results and students’ work (Sanderse, 2016).

Considering the anecdotal evidence I present in the second chapter of this present dissertation and article 4, I can see that the description above aligns with my role as a teacher in my project, which involves helping students reflect on the presented artworks and their own works. This entails raising questions about understanding moral concepts and virtues, how they manifest in life, how they are represented in artworks, and to what extent we can learn something new about them. In this process, the teacher’s values and beliefs, such as the readiness to critically, openly, and honestly discuss moral issues with students, position the teacher as an active moral agent. Therefore, the teacher is exemplary, both in critical thinking, and by avoiding judgmental opinions. Citing Aristotle, Marvin W. Berkowitz and Melinda C. Bier (2005, p. ii) state: “All adults involved with children either help or thwart

children’s growth and development, whether we like it, intend it, or not.” They then continue:

The inescapable fact is this: as adults involved intimately with children, educators cannot avoid “doing” character education. Either intentionally or unintentionally, teachers shape the formation of character in students—simply by association—through positive or negative example. Character education is thus not optional in the school—it is inevitable, and therefore merits intentional focus and priority status in the school. (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, p. ii)

Norwegian philosopher Sten M. Wivestad (2013, p. 515, see also Wivestad, 2023) wrote in a similar manner when he wrote about an online database of artworks¹ that was designed for those interested in using artworks to promote moral deliberation:

Both in formal situations (as school teachers, football trainers, etc.) and in many, often unpredictable informal situations (both inside and outside institutions)—adults come close to children. Whether we intend it or not, we continually give them examples of what it is to live as a human being, and thereby we have a pedagogical responsibility.

The concept of practical wisdom is central to Olav Eikeland’s rendering of Aristotelian action research. Wouter Sanderse (2016, p. 454, citing Eikeland, 2008, p. 459) argues that Aristotelian action research, like practical wisdom, consists of two dimensions: a practical dimension involving deliberative activity that reflects on what should be done in each situation, and a theoretical dimension that focuses on reflecting on past actions. Regarding the significance of Aristotle for action research, Eikeland (2006, p. 9) noted that Aristotle’s philosophy could be thought of as both “a result and an example of action research” through his “practical philosophy”, which aimed at improving individuals and communities by cultivating “virtue or excellence.”

Ultimately, along with a group of participants from the action research course, I presented my work at the annual conference of the School of Education at the University of Iceland in September 2023. Furthermore, I developed my writings from the course into a peer-reviewed article that serves as the fourth article of this PhD dissertation (Waage, 2023b). Moreover, my teachers in the course contributed a chapter to a peer-reviewed book on action research, utilising the stories of the

¹ <https://oppbyggeligeeksempler.no>

students who participated, including mine, as resources (see Gísladóttir et al., forthcoming).

Reflecting on this period, I realise that the open-ended, creative methods introduced in the course helped me regain my focus. An even more critical aspect was recognising the importance of teachers regularly reflecting on their work, writing diaries, and collecting data, such as photos, files, and lesson plans—everything that can provide a holistic view of the teacher and his work. Clearly, most action researchers embark on their research with a predefined plan, as is often the case. Although I did not create such a plan during the course of my project, this methodological approach allowed me to look back and utilise the materials I had gathered throughout my professional life and research. Going through the action research process in the course helped me view my PhD journey differently and realise that I needed to contextualise my professional life with my research project.

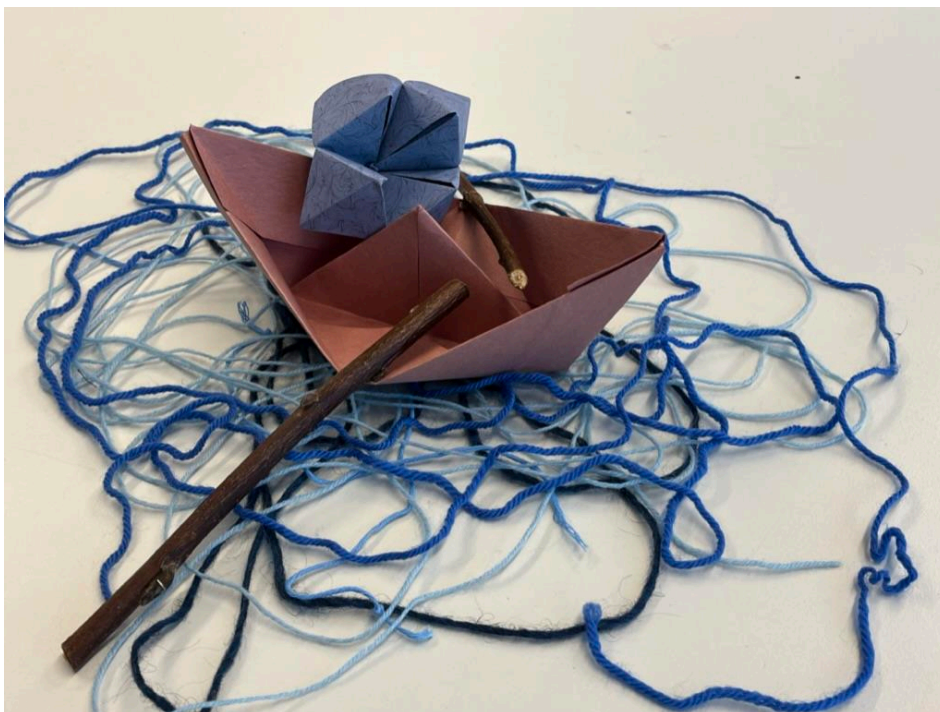


Figure 1: The boat I used to fetch old memories from the river of time. Making a physical association with my attempts to recollect past experiences was helpful in bringing back significant events and thoughts that I could use for making sense of my work.

1.2.4 Telling the story: Autoethnography

The methods I used in the action research course inspired me to write an autoethnographic account in which I tried to reflect on significant aspects of my professional life, which covers more than 30 years. When I started to write a “memoir,” recollections of my experiences began to appear. These accounts became textual data that I used for the fourth article of this PhD dissertation. In this present *Kappa*, I have expanded upon the fourth article, going deeper into elements relevant to the intervention.

Therefore, the second dimension of this dissertation is autoethnographic in nature, reflecting my experiences as an artist and art teacher in an elementary school during the initial years of the research, and later as a teacher educator and researcher. Consequently, my professional life is closely intertwined with the present research project. Adams et al. (2017, p. 1) describe autoethnography as a research method

that uses personal experience (“auto”) to describe and interpret (“graphy”) cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices (“ethno”). Autoethnographers believe that personal experience is infused with political/cultural norms and expectations, and they engage in rigorous self-reflection—typically referred to as “reflexivity”—in order to identify and interrogate the intersections between the self and social life.

Hence, the aim of the autoethnographic approach is to guide those in the process of better understanding the meaning of their labour (Adams et al., 2017; Bochner & Ellis, 2006, p. 111). In *The Ethnographic I*, Carolyn Ellis (2004, p. 333) describes the autoethnographer as someone who materialises “emotional, visual, and other sensory images about” the autoethnographer’s experiences of other people in real situations. Ellis continues: “Then I delve into my memory, putting myself back in the scene that took place, letting the events replay in my mind and emotions.” Approaching my research project with this kind of method finally made me see the “big picture.” However, while this present dissertation should not be understood as a pure autoethnographic account or as pure action research, these methods and approaches helped me understand it all. This expansion of my focus allowed me to think differently about my project, educational research in general, and, not least, my work as a teacher educator within the Department of Art Education at the Iceland University of the Arts. Hence, in the second dimension, I address my shift of focus along the lines of the second position Biesta and Burbules (2003, p. 2) proposed, which I cited above and repeat here:

Others maintain that educational research provides different interpretations of educational reality. Practitioners can use these interpretations to understand and make sense of the educational situations they are in.

Therefore, while I believe that my research contributes to knowledge about the relationship between the visual arts and moral education, it is also a personal learning journey. Both aspects are detailed in this *Kappa*.

1.3 The structure and rationale of the present work

My research utilises an empirical, multimethod approach to address three overarching research questions: 1) What is the relationship between visual arts education and moral education? 2) How and in what ways can teachers connect education in the arts with moral education? 3) In what ways does my experience as an artist and educator shape my understanding of educational research?

This dissertation is article-based and contains five articles, of which four have been published in peer-reviewed outlets while the fifth is awaiting publication. Two were written in Icelandic, and the three others in English. To some extent, I perceive the first article, published in an Icelandic peer-reviewed outlet in 2018, as a “warm-up” or a “first attempt” to make sense of my thinking about the visual arts and moral education. The fifth and last article, which is partly built upon the first one, is under review and has passed the first round with minor revisions. This fifth article is an invited chapter in a peer-reviewed book, *Nordic Perspectives on Moral and Citizenship Education*, published later this year (2025) by Brill. The volume is edited by Kirsi Tirri at the University of Helsinki in Finland.

I begin this *Kappa* part of the dissertation with an autoethnographic account describing how I have developed professionally as an artist, teacher and researcher. Writing my autobiographic narrative was an essential and helpful way to find meaning in the research project. This approach aligns with *Autoethnography* (Bochner & Ellis, 2006; Adams et al., 2017; Ellis, 2004) and *action research* (Sagor, 2000; Whitehead, 2015; Gísladóttir et al., forthcoming). The development of my PhD research project and my theoretical reflections are woven into the autobiographical narrative and progressively become a central theme in Chapter 2. After that, I provide the readers with a short chapter summarising each article. Before presenting the articles, I finish with a chapter on what I have learned from doing this PhD research. The articles are then presented, ordered by publication dates. The dissertation is concluded with appendices.

2 Making sense of practice and theory

In this chapter, I weave together an autobiographical narrative in the spirit of autoethnography and action research along with theoretical elements essential for understanding the results of my research project and my PhD journey.

2.1 The artist

I trace the roots of this PhD dissertation to more than 30 years ago, while I was pursuing my art education in the late eighties and early nineties. I aspired to become a visual artist and graduated from the Department of Painting at *Iceland College of Arts and Crafts*² in my mid-twenties. As I was dedicated to becoming a painter, I sought further education in the arts, so I enrolled in *École Nationale des Beaux-Arts* in Lyon, France. I lived there for three years, which allowed me to do various artistic experiments and advance my artistic beliefs, which developed further when I settled back in Iceland.

As a visual artist, I consider myself established in the tradition of painting that can be classified as Naturalistic, even Romantic (examples of my paintings can be accessed on my website: www.ingimarwaage.is). Early on, I was fascinated by J. M. W. Turner, Claude Lorrain, Caspar David Friedrich, Francesco Goya, and many of the Impressionists, such as Claude Monet—to name a few. The allure of these painters was rooted in my passion for nature, light, and even painters' craftsmanship and skills, elements that Aristotle (1985) referred to as *technē*. My enthusiasm for mountaineering and hiking, geology, geography, and cartography also inspired me to express my interest in nature through art. In my youth, I entertained the idea of pursuing studies in geology, but I reckoned that my “not-so-impressive” mathematical skills could be an obstacle. However, as I had always been interested in logic and spatial geometry, I further explored the philosophical, mathematical, and metaphysical dimensions of art during my studies in France. Inspired by Douglas R. Hofstadter's (1980) famous book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An*

² In 1999, the *Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts* merged with *Icelandic Drama School* and, partly, with *Reykjavík College of Music* into the *Iceland University of the Arts* (named *Iceland Academy of the Arts* until 2018), where I am today the Dean of Department of Arts Education (see further in Júlíusdóttir, 2009, pp. 116–118).

Eternal Golden Braid,³ I started to work on projects of a mathematical nature: the optical relationship between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects (trompe l'oeil, optical illusions) and the association between objective reality and subjective experiences. I became fascinated by everything paradoxical or illusional. The artworks by M. C. Escher are probably the best-known examples of this kind of art (see Hofstadter (1980) for his extensive rendering of the mathematical nature of Escher's work), and delved into Magritte's oeuvre and other artists exploring similar visual/cognitive ideas, such as the Op-art movement (see, e.g., Bridged Riley, Victor Vasarely, and Eyborg Guðmundsdóttir), metaphysical and surrealist art (Giorgio De Chirico, Max Ernst, René Magritte), and contemporary incarnations of similar ideas in Iceland (Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson and Sigtryggur Bjarni Baldvinsson).

After I resettled in Iceland, I exhibited in Reykjavik several times and began to revisit my interest in nature, landscapes, and light and explored how experiences in nature can profoundly affect us on physical, psychological, and even spiritual levels. During these first years I was working as a mountain-guide in twelve- to fifteen-days hiking and trekking adventures during the summers and found endless inspirations in nature. Today, I am still on the same track regarding my artistic activities—and this PhD dissertation shows that education and personal growth is a life-long project. However, my interest in “intellectual/cognitive” art, metaphysics, paradoxes, and thinking processes eventually found an outlet through philosophical dialogue with children and young people; a teaching approach that transformed my attitude to teaching and eventually guided me into studying the philosophy of education. I will go deeper into this in Chapter 2.2.

³ It was a friend of mine, a nuclear physicist, who introduced me to Hofstadter's work. I am grateful for all the deep and thought-provoking conversations I have had through the years with Björgvin Hjörvarsson, a distinguished professor of nuclear physics at Uppsala University in Sweden.



Figure 2: A painting from 2003 displaying the volcano Hekla seen from north-east. A good example of my interest in naturalistic and romantic painting. Historically, Hekla is considered the most notorious volcano in Iceland. However, its significant presence in the landscape tempts the onlooker and hiker with its mysterious powers where beauty and hazard create a fascinating fatal attraction



Figure 3: French baguettes



Figure 4: These two paintings (Fig 3 & 4) of French baguettes from my time in Lyon display my allure for metaphysical art. I was intrigued with the idea of how the world contained itself infinitely: As above, so below.

2.1.1 The visual arts

As far as I can remember, the visual arts have fascinated me. The arts have been a central human activity in every corner of the world, and yet have no apparent practical purpose that could serve for survival, such as making weapons or shelters. In fact, the arts are so ubiquitous in human cultures that pinpointing a unified practical purpose seems almost impossible. However, the presumed uselessness of the arts is perhaps their greatest quality because the arts allow us to participate in a mystery that has proven to be a fertile ground for imagination, reflection on the past, and prediction of the future. These are open-ended skills that are—after all—undeniably crucial for survival in an ever-changing world. Still, accounts that try to rationalise—or denounce—the arts might be as old as civilisation itself. While Plato

(2007) warned about the dangers of the arts in *The Republic*, Aristotle (1988, 1961) pointed to the opportunities the arts provided. In “Plato and Aristotle on the ends of music,” French musicologist Mary Schoen-Nazzaro (1978, p. 271) outlined the multifaceted psychological and educational benefits of music recognised by the ancient Greek philosophers. She argued that Plato assigned “four distinctive ends to music: moving the emotions, giving pleasure, disposing toward moral goodness and disposing toward moral virtue.” Furthermore, she contended that Aristotle also saw “music as having four ends: imitating emotion, giving pleasure, disposing toward moral virtue, and giving intellectual enjoyment.” While the central focus in my dissertation is on the visual arts, and not music, I argue in this chapter that the specified ends Schoen-Nazzaro outlined are interchangeable with other art forms such as the visual arts.

Some of the greatest cultural curiosities today are prehistoric cave paintings and figurines, dating as far back as 35.000 years. Some authors consider them a manifestation of heightening consciousness and awakening of the self (Cupchik, 2016). Others view them as part of magic rituals where envisioning hunting through realistic paintings was believed to bolster the courage of the hunter, build trust within the group, or help the hunters visualise common goals (Janson & Janson, 1977). While many of these ideas are unsupported speculations, we can at least argue that ice-age art displays an early human ability to organise thinking and consequent expression in a structured fashion and displaying the emergence of enhanced abilities to shape the environment intelligently, an approach which American philosopher Susanne Langer (1957) considered a prime feature of the arts. The notion of the arts as transforming consciousness is still a central idea today (Eisner, 2002), and the sense perception provided or enhanced through the arts is considered to be a key to knowledge, where observation leads us from specific instances to broad principles through inductive reasoning (Aristotle, 2016, 1985).

2.1.2 Visual thinking and the treacherous arts

While the general idea of the connection between sense experience and thinking is compelling, it must be discussed in more detail. For that objective, I turn to Rudolf Arnheim, who is well-known for his contribution to visual culture. He was an art and film theorist who wrote extensively about the importance of perception for thinking (Arnheim, 1969). At the outset, the name of Rudolf Arnheim was familiar to me. I had browsed through his works during the early phases of my doctoral studies. At first sight, I felt I had good footing in his theory on visual literacy and pictorial composition through my rigorous training in the visual arts and my own artistic work in the studio. Back in the day, my teachers used the same concepts he used while teaching drawing and painting, be it drawing nudes or painting still-life: balance,

weight, movement, tension, centre, etc. However, when I began to read Arnheim's work in depth, I recognised its importance for my research, especially in trying to understand the interconnection between aesthetic experiences, cognitive processes and reasoning.

As a Gestalt psychologist, Rudolf Arnheim (1969) argued in *Visual Thinking* that the brain would have no material to work with without sensory input. Similarly, without processing in the brain, sensory information would be of little use, and therefore, according to Arnheim, the mind had two separate functions: 1) gather information and 2) process accordingly. Separating these functions as distinctive elements can be reasonable theoretically, but Arnheim doubted that it would make sense in practice. In line with his teachers and forerunners of Gestalt Theory who argued that the whole is larger than the sum of its parts (Arnheim, 1974), he suggested we should think of these processes from a holistic point of view instead of breaking cognitive functions into distinct, unconnected sequences. In *Visual thinking*, he wrote that

the collaboration of perceiving and thinking in cognition would be incomprehensible if such a division existed ... that only because perception gathers types of things, that is, concepts, can perceptual material be used for thought; and inversely, that unless the stuff of the senses remains present the mind has nothing to think with. (Arnheim, 1969, p. 1)

The idea of the inferiority of the senses is an old refrain that has been repeated throughout the ages. Arnheim (1969) wrote that the mistrust of the senses and the materialistic world can be traced back to religious mythology in the Old Testament (as in the Hebrew parable of the golden calf) and has continued from the ancient Greeks to the present. For the Pythagoreans in ancient Greece, the contrast between a psychological phenomenon and physical reality seems to have been a metaphysical problem as they saw a difference between "the realm of the heavens and existence on earth." While the predictable mathematical perfection of the movements of the heavenly bodies was contrasted with "the disorderly setting of unpredictable changes" in the terrestrial world of the mortals, the pre-Socratic worldview, however, made a distinction "between the wise and unwise use" of "sensory experiences" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 6). However, an apparent difference between perception and thought seemed to prevail. Arnheim traced this persistence to Parmenides, who asserted that movement was impossible, contrary to everybody's experiences, suggesting that perception was illusory and misleading, and that we should distinguish between reason and perception (Arnheim, 1969). Back then, as it is today, it was easy to find examples of visual illusions that prompt

us to question the relationship between perception and reality—such as the refraction of light in different liquids, the mirage over a desert or the sea, different positions of onlookers regarding an object, to name a few examples (Arnheim, 1969)—not to mention the recent developments of virtual and augmented reality. The persisting human fascination with optical illusions has been a fruitful subject for artists of all eras. Consider, for example, the newly discovered “trompe l’oeil” frescos in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum that have been preserved miraculously since the devastating eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. Consider also the paintings of Victor Vasarely and M. C. Escher.

Arnheim (1969, p. 6) wrote that during the period of the ancient Greeks, “perception and reasoning were established as antagonists, in need of each other but different from each other in principle” and he suggested that Democritus coined the problem clearly when he “distinguished the ‘dark’ cognition of the senses with the ‘bright’ or genuine cognition by reasoning.” Therefore, the purported unreliability of the senses provided the Sophists, for example, with a basis to support their philosophical scepticism, which resulted in the notion that “the chaotic variety of the terrestrial world could now be attributed to subjective misreading” (Arnheim, 1969, p. 5). Discussing these matters without an account of Plato and Aristotle is impossible. In *The Republic*, Plato (2007) considered the arts subversive of knowledge, truth, and morality in the ideal state. His judgment of the arts is based on his theory of Forms (or Ideas), according to which reality reflects substantive but non-physical Ideas or Forms. Plato maintained that true knowledge could only be obtained through rational deliberation, and not through sense experience or imagination. This procedure is exemplified in Plato’s *Meno*, in which Socrates leads a young slave to mathematical understanding through a guided dialogue (Plato, 1980). Socrates attributed the young man’s comprehension to his recollection of past life, i.e., to “the soul, being immortal and having been born many times” (Arnheim, 1969, p. 7, citing Plato’s *Meno*), suggesting the invisible and ethereal nature of knowledge, which was only visible to the mind and not the senses. In contrast to this structured procedure of acquiring knowledge, the arts presented a distorted reality, which could convey rhetorical and false opinions about the world. Similarly, Plato’s allegory of the cave demonstrates how easily one can be disillusioned by the senses. In the allegory, the cave represents the earthly and materialistic world in which the deception of the senses governs its inhabitants, while the Sun outside of the cave represents the purity of thought, the soul and the truth (Arnheim, 1969, p. 7, see also, Plato, 2007). Plato thought that if the tangible world were a copy of an idea, then an artwork would be a copy of a copy—an empty imitation.

While the importance of the senses was widely accepted, the senses had a lower status as compared to the mind which was seen as a higher ground of existence (Arnheim, 1969).

Even Alexander Baumgarten (1954), who originally coined the term “aesthetics,” thought of perception as inferior to cognition because of its lack of “distinctness” (Arnheim, 1969, p. 2). This notion implies the chaotic nature of the senses as contrasted to the orderly and logical nature of the intellect. In addition to these epistemological perspectives, the fine arts (painting and sculpture) were historically excluded from the *Liberal Arts* since they required the “labour and craftsmanship” of the *mechanical* arts. The Liberal Arts constituted the only subjects “worthy of being practised by a free man” (Arnheim, 1969, p. 2). Their central focus was on language (grammar, dialectic and rhetoric; referred to as Trivium) and mathematics (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music; referred to as Quadrivium) (see, e.g., Dyer, 2007). The respect for music, as music is an art form, could be surprising in this context. Still, when reflecting on how Plato perceived music as an inspiration for heroes through the “mathematical order and harmony of the cosmos,” which music rests upon and was “located beyond the reach of the senses”, such a position seems reasonable (see also Schoen-Nazzaro, 1978). In contrast to the ethereal beauty and harmony of music, the fine arts—especially painting—“strengthened man’s dependence on illusory images” (Arnheim, 1969, p. 2). The relationship between images and language has been a fruitful subject for many artists, take, for instance, René Magritte’s rendering of the paradoxical problem that arises when ‘image meets language’ in one of his most famous paintings: “La trahison des images” (e. The treachery of images), which depicts a smoker’s pipe with the sentence “Ceci n’est pas une pipe” (e. This is not a pipe) written below the form of the pipe, generating confusion as the onlooker tries to make sense of the contradicting messages (Waage, forthcoming).



Figure 5: At last I had the opportunity on my fiftieth birthday to see Magritte's great work at the Pompidou art centre in Paris in 2016.

For me as an artist and art teacher, the status of the visual arts as a marginal subject plays a substantial part of my professional life. While the world around us is filled with an ever-growing presence of visual imagery (Hailey et al., 2015), the visual arts as a school subject keep fighting for their existence in a world that demands more and more efficient productivity along with a central focus on usefulness (Biesta, 2018; Kitcher, 2022). In his day, Arnheim was keenly aware of this situation. He argued that the neglect of the visual arts had its roots in the fact that they "are based on perception, and perception is disdained because it is not assumed to involve thought." Instead of "more aesthetics or ... esoteric manuals of art education," he argued for the need of "a convincing case made for visual thinking ... to heal in practice the unwholesome split which cripples the training of reasoning power" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 3).

While I was working on the last drafts of this manuscript, I stumbled upon a fresh research article in *Nature Communications*, which I understand as a neuro-scientific elaboration on Arnheim's theory on visual thinking. According to Henderson et al. (2025), visual representations in the visual cortex modulate adaptively to support dynamic behaviour. This means our purposes influence what we see (see also

Currin, 2025). This suggests that our preconceptions and objectives also influence what we see in artworks. Therefore, we may consider encounters with artworks as dynamic, two-way processes. At the time of this writing, I wonder if this doesn't give art an even more important educational value.

2.1.3 Meaning-making and various forms of languages

While the fundamental dualistic notion of the senses being subordinate to the mind has prevailed, the story is not that simple. In modern discourse, it is quite common to refer to different art forms as "alternative" languages (Martin, 2016; Finke et al., 2023). This stance implies the omnipotence of language as a primal faculty of human cognition, suggesting that the products of the different senses can be 'translated' to the 'standard' linguistic form of human thought and expression. However, this view has been challenged many times by various theorists (see, e.g., Dewey, 2005; Langer, 1957; Eisner, 2002; Kress, 2010) who propose, rather, that meaning-making is a significantly more complex affair than the conventional emphasis on language suggests. In *Truth and Method*, German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979) emphasises that all understanding is mediated through language (*Sprachlichkeit*). However, he extends this idea to the arts, arguing that artworks have a structure akin to language because the arts communicate meaning, invite interpretation, and engage the viewer in a dialogue. Without going too far into the philosophical complexities of the "linguistic turn" as defined by Finke et al. (2023, p. 2), I want to keep my discussion on an immediate and practical level that helps us understand the relationship between perception and verbal language.

Still, the notion of the multi-dimensional model of meaning-making is not about denigrating language; on the contrary, it is about enriching human thought and communication. In the opening chapter of *Art and Visual Perception*, Rudolf Arnheim (1974, p. 1) wrote:

We have neglected the gift of comprehending things through our senses. Concept is divorced from percept, and thought moves around abstractions. Our eyes have been reduced to instruments with which to identify and to measure; hence we suffer a paucity of ideas that can be expressed in images and an incapacity to discover meaning in what we see. Naturally we feel lost in the presence of objects that make sense only to undiluted vision, and we seek refuge in the more familiar medium of words.

Arnheim (1974, p. 1) maintained that our "inborn capacity to understand through the eyes has been put to sleep and must be reawakened." As a remedy to this

unfortunate situation, Arnheim suggests the use of “pencils, brushes, chisels and perhaps cameras,” and gives, therefore, the arts and crafts an important role for human development, cognition and existence (see, also, Eisner, 2002; Dewey, 2005; Langer; 1957). The position of the arts as an alternative language and thinking structure has made their relationship to “proper” language complex: How and to what extent can verbal language express what is conveyed through these “alternative” methods of expression? The inability of some visual artists to describe their art verbally is well known—being a visual artist myself, I have the temerity to write this unapologetically. Instead of giving a discourse about their work, they say that the artworks “speak for themselves” or they simply leave it to the onlooker to interpret and find meaning in the artworks in question. This resistance to building bridges between these different forms of human expression often appears in the fact that many art teachers and artists have warned against using language in relation to visual arts, as they believe that visual elements cannot be effectively communicated through verbal language. Therefore, experiencing a Rembrandt painting, or any other aesthetic experience, is not reducible to explanation or description because “there is no such thing as the full representation of an individual instance” (Arnheim, 1974, p. 2). Susanne Langer (1957, p. 7) writes in a similar manner when she maintains that “a person’s inner life” is filled with feelings that often are beyond the reach of language, built on personal experiences and how the world appears and feels. Because of their obscurity, these feelings are often nameless as “it is hard to form an idea of anything that has no name. It has no handle for the mind,” leading people to “believe that feeling is a formless affair” (Langer, 1957, p. 7). Furthermore, Susanne Langer (1957, p. 8) argued that the arts could reach further than language: Presenting “the nature and patterns of sensitive and emotional life—is done by works of art. Such works are expressive forms, and what they express is the nature of human feeling.”

Susanne Langer and Rudolf Arnheim are not alone in their rendering of the importance of the arts for human cognition. American philosopher Mark Johnson (2007, p. 218) points out that John Dewey claimed that “meaning-making in art is the exemplary or even paradigmatic case of all human meaning-making.” In addition, Johnson (2007, p. 218) writes that “much of art makes meaning without words or linguistic symbols,” reminding us “that meaning is not the exclusive purview of language. Indeed, *linguistic meaning is parasitic* [emphasis added] on the primordial structures and processes of embodied interaction, quality, and feeling.”

Johnson writes here against the conventional Cartesian dualism that postulates that the mind operates separately from the body. Johnson (2007, p. 1) argues that the “mind” and the “body are not two things, but rather aspects of one organic process

so that all our meaning, thought, and language emerge from the aesthetic dimensions of this embodied activity." He maintained that by overemphasising the value of language for meaning, we are undermining the equally important dimensions of human cognition. Johnson (2007, p. 2) insists that the "mind/body dualism is so deeply embedded in our philosophical and religious traditions, in our shared conceptual systems, and in our language that it can seem to be an inescapable fact about human nature." Delving deeper in the *problematic* mind/body dualism, Johnson (2007, p. 4) wrote: "All our acts of perception are directed to or at what is experienced and away from the body doing the perceiving." Johnson (2007, p. 5) observed that

all our acts of seeing are directed toward and focused on what we see. Our intentionality seems to be directed 'out there' into the world. The mechanisms of our visions are not, and cannot be, the focus of our awareness and attention.

Therefore, the senses are the "highway of communication" with the outside world; hence, we regard them as such, and we take them for granted, even to the extent that we are no longer aware of their inner functions and existence. However, this "unawareness" of the senses can be challenged spectacularly through art. Back in 1992, I had the opportunity to visit James Turrell's installation *The Wait* during the Biennale de Lyon.⁴ Visiting the installation required visitors to enter a completely dark space that allowed for only two visitors at a time. There was quite a waiting line, understandably. It took fifteen minutes for the session to run, and I was required to sit still on a chair in the dark. By my side was another visitor. Sitting there in complete darkness and silence was a strange experience as I had no clue whatsoever what I was going to see, hear or feel, I just had to **wait**. After several minutes, I began to perceive a **very** faint circle of light on the wall at the other end of what seemed to be a very large room. It was so faint that I wondered if this was some kind of hallucination created by my mind to compensate for the lack of visual stimulus. Unexpectedly, at the same time, the visitor in the other seat asked me quietly if I was seeing something: "Est-ce que vous voyez quelque chose?" and I realised I was not alone in "hallucinating." The circle of light became progressively brighter to the extent that I could perceive the details in the room. At that moment, somebody came and instructed us to leave the installation. For me, this was a transforming experience: ***I had been perceiving my own perception***. Although we are used to how our eyes adjust to different light conditions every day, we do

⁴ <https://www.navigart.fr/mac-lyon/artwork/james-turrell-the-wait-80000000000380>

not make special notice of that adjustment: it is so ubiquitous that it seldom registers in our consciousness. Turrell plays with this ability of ours by having the light too faint for us to see when we enter the room from daylight conditions, resulting in us perceiving a bright circle of light when our vision has adjusted to the conditions. This idea of making onlookers aware of their perception and environment is central to much of Turrell's work (Wolff, 1985).

Despite a certain "hostility" among many theorists to the role of verbal language regarding the arts, Arnheim suggested that notwithstanding these challenges our efforts to develop verbal language for a better accommodation of the visual experience would nevertheless be a step in the right direction, and might eventually simultaneously develop our thinking and perception, as one informs the other and vice versa. To clarify his position, Arnheim (1974, pp. 2–3) wrote:

It often happens that we see and feel certain qualities in a work of art but cannot express them in words. The reason of our failure is not that we use language, but that we have not yet succeeded in casting those perceived qualities into suitable categories. Language cannot do the job directly because there is no direct avenue for sensory contact with reality; it serves only to name what we have seen or heard or thought. By no means is it an alien medium, unsuitable for perceptual things; on the contrary, it refers to nothing but perceptual experiences. These experiences, however, must be coded by perceptual analysis before they can be named. Fortunately, perceptual analysis is very subtle and can go far. It sharpens our vision for the task of penetrating a work of art to the limits of the ultimately impenetrable.

Here, Arnheim hints at the importance of finding ways to connect visual perception to language, benefiting both these faculties without making one of them redundant. His emphasis on "perceived qualities," "categories," "codefication," and "naming" suggests that there exists a pathway to reconcile the fundamental differences between these dimensions of human cognition. And, as I will discuss later in this dissertation, this position is crucial for educational purposes.

2.2 The teacher

My dream of becoming a full-time artist after my studies in France did not materialise as I had hoped. Instead, by sheer luck, I was invited to take on a temporary replacement job teaching visual arts at an upper-elementary school (grades 8–10, pupils aged 13–15). This "temporary" teaching position became eventually the longest time I've spent at the same job: 25 years.

My application for that teaching position has a backstory: Shortly after I moved back home to Iceland, I began giving drawing lessons at a local art school in my hometown of Hafnarfjörður. During these first months as an art teacher in the art school, I discovered that I enjoyed teaching. I found joy in instructing my students in drawing still-life, figures, and all kinds of objects and natural scenes. While providing individual instruction by correcting drawings, pointing out unbalanced compositions and postures, and encouraging my students to observe the subject closely—investigating forms, lines, and shadows meticulously—I realised that I was simultaneously honing my own skills by observing differently and enhancing my understanding of my own challenges in drawing. As I have always enjoyed drawing, teaching drawing was, therefore, equally satisfying for me. When reading Arnheim for this dissertation, I recognised that I also used the same terms he had employed, which I inherited from the teachers who taught me in art school: weight, balance, movement, etc. Much later, I realised my teaching experiences aligned with Dewey's ideas (Dewey, 1938; 1990; Jackson, 1998). I was learning *with* my students: investigating problems in art through their eyes. When this local art school was on the verge of closing down a few months later, I took the initiative with a group of fellow artists and friends to restart it. We managed to keep the school running for two and a half years.

As I had become a father shortly after I moved home from France, a strong and growing responsibility to support my small family directed me to choose the financial security of becoming a teacher instead of pursuing only the uncertainty of an artistic career. I sought to expand my teaching practice as my newly discovered interest in teaching had taken hold on me and thought that my aspirations in painting could be realised in the evenings and on weekends. What a naïve idea!



Figure 6: Me in the studio at a weekend or evening

After seeing an advertisement for a replacement teacher in the visual arts in Garðaskóli in Garðabær,⁵ an established upper-elementary school with pupils aged 13–15 (in some contexts, this school level is referred to as lower-secondary), I gave the principal a phone call. He invited me to meet him for an interview. I visited the facilities, met with the teacher I was supposedly going to replace and some other people who later became my colleagues. I was intrigued by the atmosphere and decided that I would love to work there. Two days later, I got a phone call from the principal, who offered me a replacement job for half a year. While I lacked formal teaching qualifications when my professional teaching career began, my teaching experience from the local art school in Hafnarfjörður helped me through the first months. At that time, not having qualifications as a teacher wasn't considered a significant issue, as there was a constant demand for teachers—and that demand still exists. In the case of not finding a qualified teacher, principals were allowed to hire any applicant they thought that could do the job. Obviously, being educated in the visual arts was a prerequisite. On the legislative level, it was, however, recommended that those who intended to make teaching a professional career should seek the appropriate education, as principals were obliged to advertise every year for qualified teachers. Therefore, not having a qualification meant that I

⁵ I am very proud of having had the opportunity to work in this school.

could only have the position temporarily—if a qualified teacher would apply, I would automatically lose the position.

And so began my teaching practice in compulsory education: In the early hours of a cold morning in early January 1995, I found myself in a classroom with a group of sleepy adolescents looking indifferently at me, the young aspiring artist. Since I was a replacement teacher, I had been provided with complete lesson plans. As a newcomer and novice, I thought the most straightforward way would be to follow those—although I could do whatever I wanted, as Icelandic art teachers have ample room to use any approach they see fit. I thought these lesson plans were well-designed pedagogically and artistically. Various aspects of the lesson plans were based on the book *Emphasis Art: A Qualitative Art Program for Elementary and Middle Schools* (Wachowiak, 1993). For many art teachers, that book serves as a practical guide for teachers who want to follow the *Discipline-based Arts Education* (DBAE) curriculum, a concept once supported by the *Getty Education Institute for the Arts* in Los Angeles (Dobbs, 1998), and extensively promoted by Elliot Eisner (2002), but which seems to have lost its appeal as a specific approach.⁶ The purpose of DBAE was to integrate learning experiences from four distinct disciplines of art study: art criticism, aesthetics, art history and art production (Sevigny, 1987). The spirit of the DBAE approach has been prevalent in Icelandic schools (see, e.g., Júlíusdóttir, 2009; Thayer, 2016) as its approach responds to the consensus that education in the visual arts should benefit children in several different ways (see Bamford, 2009, pp. 67–69). The construct of *education through the arts* emphasises employing the arts to foster intellectual, emotional, and social development. While DBAE focuses on education *in* the arts, it supports this broader aim by fostering critical thinking, emotional intelligence, creativity, interdisciplinary learning, and cultural awareness. By connecting art to broader contexts, DBAE enriches students' overall education and personal growth, aligning with the principles of *education through the arts*. This can be compared with practices that focus solely on objectives more appropriate to professional artists in (say) emphasising techniques that advance artistic skills for a professional artistic or technical career (see, e.g., Whitford, 1923).

⁶ The reasons for diminished support for DBAE deserve further discussion, although there is little room for that here. Was it due to a general dwindling support for the arts in a competitive school system, or simply because another framework had appeared on the scene: *Teaching for Artistic Behaviour* (TAB)?

2.2.1 Challenging the “Grammar of Schooling”

Becoming a full-time teacher in an elementary school was a radical change from the liberty of the artist’s studio. Following a strict schedule of six to eight 40-minute lessons every day and every week during the whole school year is not easy, with new classes entering the classroom three to four times each day.⁷ Although the weekdays had different structures and the groups were diverse, the rigid framework of the school system soon took over. Tyack & Tobin (1994) and Tyack & Cuban (1995) have described this framework as the “grammar of schooling.” Within such a framework, teachers’ ideas and aspirations seem to subside as the teachers eventually almost always adjust to the underlying—often hidden—framework. Despite having been generally a successful pupil myself—apart from minor challenges in mathematics—my doubts about the school system started to emerge after several years as a teacher in Garðaskóli. Modern teachers’ skepticism about the educational system seems to be, anyway, almost a truism. When reflecting on school systems, especially from the outside, they appear rigid and inflexible—to be sure, this is true to some extent (see Greene, 1973, p. 181, on teachers’ dilemmas when serving their institutional duties on one hand and their duties to support students’ liberty and independence on the other). Complaints about education are often directed towards those who have the power to change the schools from above, ameliorate the school system through changes in legislation or by fine-tuning the emphasis on different subjects, adding some extra-curricular activities, or simply removing “undesirable” objects from the classroom like smartphones and tablets. For instance, at the time of this writing (2024–2025), there is a (sometimes) heated debate in Iceland about the decline in PISA results compared to other European countries and results from previous years. Although the PISA results and the general evaluation of young people’s academic achievement are not within the scope of this dissertation, the present discussion in Iceland shows how people want to seek simple remedies through making systemic adjustments. For instance, various circles within Icelandic society demand the revival of standardised tests at the end of elementary school. They believe that having better means to compare schools and evaluate teaching practices will promote better education. Thinking of this, I wonder if reinforcing the “grammar of schooling” would benefit education. According to this, and my research (Waage, 2023a), a general belief in the framework of the school system seems to have a good foothold in Iceland. Educational historians David Tyack and Larry Cuban (1995; see also Tyack & Tobin,

⁷ At that time, the visual arts lesson consisted of bundles of 2x40 minutes. A **very** long day would, therefore, comprise five such bundles, although three to four such bundles were more common.

1994) have written extensively about efforts in school reform. In *Tinkering Towards Utopia*, they describe how educational reform efforts fail, even after successful periods of progressive experiments that subside gradually as time goes by. So, for us, especially those who are working actively in the field of teacher education, these questions are very important.

2.2.2 Education in or through the arts: An eternal conflict?

After a decade in teaching, the question of meaningful content, ethics and moral education progressively became a considerable part of my reflection regarding education. As Rudolf Arnheim (1969) outlined, visual perception is a core element in human cognition and, therefore, is not subservient to other processes, be it cognitive or sensual. For me, this meant that visual perception is not reserved for a domain-specific field; rather, visual perception concerns everything that matters for human life. However, the visual arts in education in elementary or secondary schools have historically focused on technical elements rather than content or meaning. In an exhaustive report on the status of arts education in Iceland, Anne Bamford (2009) discussed the results of focus group interviews conducted in 2008–2009, in which she found that Icelandic teachers had contrasting views regarding the aims of arts education. In her results, she made references to her interlocutors' perceived difference between *education in art* and *education through art*. While many Icelandic art teachers were more concerned with education in the arts—a priority that I think of as technical or materialistic—others emphasised “more integrated arts learning” (Bamford, 2009, p. 69). The technical emphasis in the Icelandic curriculum guides from 1977 to 1999/2007, as contrasted with the emphasis on integrated arts learning, was not just a feature of the preceding curriculum guides for elementary schools in Iceland; it was also equally present in my earlier art education at the *Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts*. The training I received in painting was, first and foremost, formalistic and was mainly influenced by my teachers, who had been, at least some of them, among the forerunners of the abstract movement in the late sixties to the early eighties in the art scene in Iceland. At that time, in line with the “art for art’s sake” paradigm (see, e.g., Carroll, 2010, p. 249), content or messages in art were considered irrelevant at best and detrimental at worst.

2.2.3 Creative artist or creative teacher?

The dualistic distinction between education *in or through* the arts is problematic for me. Thinking of Dewey’s (1938) warning against an “either-or” philosophy, I asked myself: What was the meaning of this distinction? Would it be possible to educate children both *through the arts* and *in the arts* simultaneously? For me, however, in

the early years of my teaching career, the DBAE approach was somewhat different from my own “artistic-career-oriented” mindset, as I felt that artistic practice was the “real thing” (painting, exhibiting, selling). Subconsciously, I seem to have believed that teaching the arts in an elementary school was “less serious,” mainly to earn a living until artistic success arrives. Although my interest in teaching, at that time, was quietly taking the front seat without me realising that until later, I reckoned that the creative nature of teaching was radically different from being a creative artist.

In line with my education as an artist, and my preoccupation with *education in the arts* during the first decade of my teaching time in Garðaskóli, I invited pupils to work on still-life drawings and to study forms, lines, colours, and values as I gave them a regular introduction to selected masters; i.e., I tried to make art a significant part of their lives.



Figure 7: A 10th grade student working on a bust of their favourite musician in 2009. The likeness to John Lennon is impressive. In hindsight, this project—which I repeated several times—was very ambitious and took several weeks to accomplish each time and required a lot of resources. While I introduced the conventional methods used by portrait artists—that aimed at making plaster casts for further casting—these busts were fired in a kiln. Although my students had varying skills in creating their busts, understandably, each and every bust became a wonderful artwork in its own right

My presupposition, that with the presence of great art, or simply by doing art, pupils would become “civilised”, exemplified a truism that the fine arts would conjure the better side of ourselves, a notion put forward inter alia by the German poet and philosopher Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), who argued eloquently in the atmosphere of “Sturm und Drang”⁸ that the arts would create man as a civilised being. In *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, published originally in 1795, Schiller (1967) argued in *Letter 11* for the significance of beauty in human development and the harmonious convergence of sensual and rational impulses:

From this there proceed two contrary challenges to man, the two fundamental laws of his sensuo-rational nature. The first insists upon absolute reality: he is to turn everything which is mere form into world, and make all his potentialities fully manifest. The second insists upon absolute formality: he is to destroy everything in himself which is mere world, and bring harmony into all his changes. In other words, he is to externalize all that is within him, and give form to all that is outside him. Both these tasks, conceived in their highest fulfilment, lead us back to that concept of Godhead from which I started. (Schiller, 1967, p. 77)

Further on, Schiller posited in *Letter 13* that aesthetic education served as a pathway to personal and societal liberation, achievable through the refinement of human sensibilities and the promotion of unity:

To watch over these, and secure for each of these two drives its proper frontiers, is the task of culture, which is therefore, in duty bound to do justice to both drives equally: not simply to maintain the rational against the sensuous, but the sensuous against the rational too. Hence its business is twofold: first, to preserve the life of Sense against the encroachment of Freedom; and second, to secure the Personality against the forces of Sensation. The former it achieves by developing our capacity for feeling, the latter by developing our capacity for reason. (Schiller, 1967, pp. 85–87)

In *Letter 14*, Schiller introduced the “play impulse” concept as an element that seeks to harmonise sensuality and rationality. He argued that the “play impulse” is

⁸ Sturm und Drang is a movement that embraced emotionality and individuality during the Romantic period. The movement contrasted the emphasis of the Enlightenment on rationality, universality and empiricism.

connected to art through beauty, as beauty in art appeals to both our sensory faculties and our rational mind, leading to the development of moral and civic virtue. Consequently, according to Schiller, aesthetic education could construct a more just and unified society, fostering human flourishing by cultivating empathy and nurturing shared values (Schiller, 1967).

While Schiller's convincing rendering of the importance of art and aesthetics for human society, Maxine Greene (2000, p. 125) insisted in her book *Releasing the Imagination* that: "simply being in the presence of art forms is **not** [emphasis added] sufficient to occasion an aesthetic experience or to change a life." Instead, she emphasised active participation and meaningful experiences:

It is my conviction that informed engagements with the several arts is the most likely mode of releasing our students' (or any person's) imaginative capacity and giving it play. However, this will not, cannot, happen automatically or "naturally". We have all witnessed tourists' surface contacts with paintings as these mere sightseers hasten through museums. Without spending reflective time, without tutoring in or exposure to or dialogue about the arts, people merely seek the right labels, seek out the works by the artists they have heard they should see. (Greene, 2000, p. 125)

In line with the title of Greene's book, *Releasing the Imagination*, her insight allowed me to see that I had to release myself from the preconceptions I had carried with me: that art needed an exchange with the audience. Art needed dialogue with us, we needed dialogue with art, and, even more importantly, we needed dialogue with other people about all this.

2.2.4 Philosophical dialogue about art

In the spirit of Maxine Greene, who argued for active dialogical engagement with the arts, I searched for deeper meaning in my teaching. My long-standing and persisting attraction to philosophy found a foothold in 2007 when my friend and colleague, the philosophy teacher Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir, invited me to visit her philosophy class. In the years before, I had felt an underlying unease germinating within me: a feeling that something was not quite right in how I was teaching the visual arts. However, I was unable to give that feeling a name, a notion that Susanne Langer (1957, p. 7) described in her short book with ten philosophical lectures, *Problems of Art* and which I have quoted earlier in this Kappa.

In the philosophy lessons with Brynhildur, I found a potential outlet through which I thought I could address my questions and develop further as a teacher. My visits to

Brynhildur's classes and further conversations with her inspired me profoundly. I decided to integrate philosophy into art classes as I felt my "technical", and somewhat old-school studio-artist-oriented emphasis was inadequate. Brynhildur opened my eyes to the potential of philosophy as a teaching method—using critical thinking as an instrument in interaction with students—and as a discipline in its own right.

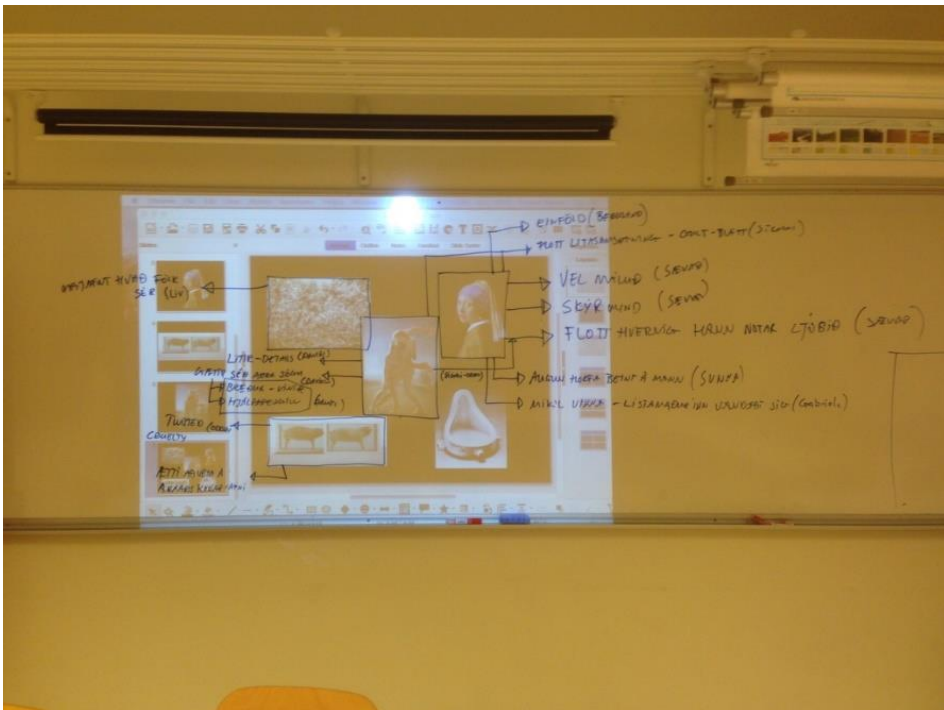


Figure 8: A philosophical discussion about “beauty” in art. I used slides to show a selection of artworks to my students. Each slide carried one artwork so that my pupils could inspect them properly. Then I presented them all together in one slide and asked them to comment on the artworks from the perspective of what beauty in art would entail. I then wrote their comments on the whiteboard for further scrutiny and discussions.

After having had many inspiring discussions with her about philosophy in education and the P4C concept in 2007–2008, Brynhildur invited me to replace her while she took a maternity leave. I was both excited and terrified. I was excited because I knew that accepting it would allow me to develop further as an art teacher, and even develop later on a career in teaching philosophy. I was terrified because I was not educated in philosophy—apart from what I had studied during my education in the visual arts and what I had read occasionally—and I had no experience in facilitating philosophical inquiry. Although Brynhildur provided substantive and wonderful materials and lesson plans, I wanted to expand my knowledge. I took lessons in Matthew Lipman’s methods, participated in a seminar with Catherine M. McCall and attended several transformative workshops on philosophical dialogue with Oscar Brenifier in France.⁹ Replacing Brynhildur during her maternity leave was undoubtedly one of the most significant events in my professional life. When she returned from the maternity leave, she took an administrative position and I continued as a philosophy teacher along with my duties as a visual arts teacher. So both my wishes were fulfilled: developing further as an art teacher and becoming a philosophy teacher. I even participated in the resurrection of the *Association of Philosophy Teachers*, and sat on its board for several years. My professional collaboration with Brynhildur developed further, and we authored teaching material for critical thinking¹⁰ and published, with a group of philosophy friends, an online resource for teachers who wish to use philosophical approaches in their teaching.¹¹

These encounters with philosophy as a method and subject, encouraged me to do experiments in my visual arts classes. My aim was to help my pupils to regard the arts as a worthwhile task in itself and to deepen their moral reflection on art projects. Instead of delivering top-down facts about artworks, I asked my pupils open questions such as “What is happening in this painting?” (see, e.g., Housen, 2002, 2007; Hailey et al., 2015 on Visual Thinking Strategies: VTS). I chose Magritte’s 1937 surrealist painting, *Not to be Reproduced*¹², for these first experiments. Magritte is renowned for his paradoxical depiction of surreal scenes and moments, leaving little room for definitive answers. At first, I noticed my students seemed slow to react, which I later came to appreciate as crucial “thinking time” which is an essential element in education, often undervalued. However, as I continued to provide my students with time and space for contemplation, they

⁹ <http://www.pratiques-philosophiques.fr/en/xwelcomex/>

¹⁰ <https://mms.is/namsefni/hvad-heldur-thu-um-gagnryna-hugsun-rafbok> and <https://mms.is/namsefni/hvad-heldur-thu-um-gagnryna-hugsun-kennsluleidbeiningar>

¹¹ <https://verkefnabanki.wordpress.com>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not_to_Be_Reproduced

shared insightful and enlightening perspectives on the moral significance of the arts. Before long, my students consistently offered their “theories” in every class where I encouraged reflection on the painting: “Could it be that he has done something wrong and that he cannot look himself in the eyes?” asked one pupil. Another added thoughtfully: “He must be ashamed of himself!”. A third pupil elaborated: “Maybe he doesn’t want to confront the truth?” while the fourth continued: “He has turned his back on himself because he feels he has betrayed his principles” (Waage, 2017). My pupils’ comments and ideas might lead us to reflect on what actions or thoughts might trigger feelings of shame (Waage, forthcoming). However, going into deeply personal matters depends on the context and audience. It can be risky for a teacher to ask his students directly about an emotion such as shame. However, a young woman, Laufey Björnsdóttir (2024), whose master’s thesis at the Iceland University of the Arts I recently supervised, did exactly that. She wrote her thesis about her pupils’ ideas of shame and their artistic expression regarding that emotion. She approached the topic from their personal perspective, and her work shows how the arts and creativity can open up pathways for those who are interested in reaching the depths of the human soul. However, while Björnsdóttir is a trained visual artist, she also has a background in developmental therapy, which gives her an advantage in working with sensitive issues with children. Ordinary teachers might not be as well equipped as Björnsdóttir. In some aspects, I can see her approach being somewhat aligned with art-therapy, which is a highly specialised discipline aiming at using art and creativity for working with vulnerable people and those with emotional and existential challenges (see, e.g., Oddsdóttir et al., 2023). For the unsuspecting or untrained teacher in these matters, I would rather recommend inviting pupils to approach moral issues through their imagination, as artworks can serve as a proxy or a substitute to discuss sensitive situations without becoming too personalised. American philosopher Noël Carroll (2003) argued that because of the great diversity of artworks, their educational value could be found in a variety of sources that are elicited through a shared humanity and collective experiences. In that respect, we can think of pupils’ imagination playing a crucial role because imagination allows for *expanding reality*; we can envision imagination as a *transaction* from a static and immobile condition to an active and moving state (Dewey, 2005; Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Biesta & Burbules, 2003). In a similar spirit, Keith Oatley (1999) wrote that in the case of literature, which I obviously categorise within the arts, fiction could be two times as true as facts. He justifies his stance by emphasising the capacity of humans to imagine through simulation or imitation—in an Aristotelian spirit—which allows an audience “to experience emotions—their own emotions—and understand aspects of them that are obscure, in relation to the contexts in which the emotions arise” (Oatley, 1999, p. 101).

instruction and choice of topics. Thinking about the classroom as a laboratory is a central notion in Dewey's educational writings. While we are used to thinking of "laboratories" in the context of the "major sciences" (Jackson, 1990, p. xvii), Dewey thought of his elementary school at the University of Chicago as a

laboratory in which the student of education sees theories and ideas demonstrated, tested, criticized, enforced, and the evolution of new truths. We want the school in its relation to the University to be a working model of a unified education. (Dewey, 1990, p. 93)

While it is exciting to think about the school and the classroom as laboratory in which new truths are discovered in collaboration between students and teachers—like I have experienced myself in my teaching—such endeavours require special and favourable conditions such as those Dewey's Laboratory school enjoyed in its heyday: small groups, dedicated parents, and committed teachers (Jackson, 1990). As I understand Dewey's concept, the analogy to laboratory is about affording "a demonstration of the feasibility of the principle and of the methods which make it feasible" (Jackson, 1990; p. xxv; Dewey, 1990, p. 94). Rather than producing immutable truths, I see the notion of the laboratory as a description of an organic and transactional dimension in which theory and practice become interrelated (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Dewey's (1990) emphasis on general principles—rather than established evidence-based methods—demonstrates his recognition that the idea of a perfect pedagogical method is unrealistic due to the complexity of human nature, society, and knowledge. And from my point of view, this puts the teacher in the front seat as he is well placed to identify individual differences and organise his lessons accordingly. Furthermore, building a community of inquiry within the classroom with a focus on dialogue, creativity and deliberation is good place to start.

After the seminars in philosophy, I mentioned above, and with the enthusiasm my experiments ignited in me, there was no turning back. After all these experiences and reflections, I decided in 2009 to enrol in a master's program at the School of Education at the University of Iceland. Part of this decision was the hunch that to become a better art teacher, I needed to distance myself from being an art teacher—an idea that seemed to be counterintuitive at the outset, but which made sense later on. I needed to expand my horizons and enrich my experiences before I could come back "home" to the visual arts, which had always been my main priority. In my quest for a more open, creative, and democratic education, I conducted quantitative research on teachers' attitudes to democracy based on the Deweyan principle under the supervision of Prof. Kristján Kristjánsson and Prof. Amalía Björnsdóttir. After I finished my master's thesis in 2012, I published two

peer-reviewed articles with my supervisors as co-authors and realised that scientific research could be a new channel for my creative nature (Waage et al., 2013, 2015).

2.2.5 New horizons

I continuously worked in Garðaskóli for 25 years until 2020. I had the fortune of taking a sabbatical year 2011–2012, which I spent pursuing the aforementioned master's degree in *Philosophy and Sociology of Education* at the University of Iceland. While I was quite a thriving visual arts teacher, my questions regarding my teaching approach became more pressing. Working on this PhD project has led me to rethink my perspective. A flourishing human society usually adheres to a system or a structure that minimises the energy spent on maintaining itself. This pragmatic tendency may be attributed to laziness, the need to minimise struggles, or the preservation of energy. By following tried and tested procedures, we are spending minimal efforts, ultimately allowing us to use the remaining energy for other necessary things. In his book, *The Concept of Motivation*, British educational philosopher R. S. Peters (1960) attributes this tendency to the fact that “*Man is a rule-following animal* [emphasis in original]. The actions of humans are not simply directed toward ends; they also conform to social standards and conventions, and unlike a calculating machine he acts because of knowledge of rules and objectives” (Peters, 1960, p. 5). I realised that I might be barking up the wrong tree by focusing too much on the educational system, not to mention that changing the system would be impossible for me. Hence, I should focus on myself as a teacher and educator in teacher education and my opportunities to inspire prospective teachers to become thoughtful, compassionate, and adventurous in their work. My belief is that the central factor of pupils' flourishing is not found within the system itself but rather in the quality of teachers' approaches and attitudes. My experience taught me that while being a teacher in the elementary school system, I could still explore new ideas and do experiments like the one central to this PhD dissertation. The system, which consists of human beings trying to do their best in doing their job according to their beliefs, was flexible enough. Therefore, I wonder if the perceived rigidity of the school system is more of an illusion than a reality. I can imagine myself pulling the iron bars of the educational structure: instead of being inflexible, the imagined iron bars give in like rubber bands. When released, they resettle and retake the form of iron bars. Teachers have, therefore, as much liberty to develop professionally as they like and as reason allows. In fact, professional development is highly regarded in the teaching profession, and teachers are actively encouraged to develop their faculties. Reflecting on my time as an elementary school teacher, I am grateful for always having had supportive and

open-minded principals. I felt respected and trusted, and had great colleagues. The framework aside, the pupils were another challenge—in a positive way—only through my pupils could I better understand my approaches, teaching methods, and myself as a teacher.

2.3 The researcher

While working on the M.Ed. thesis mentioned above, I developed a much broader interest in education than before. Instead of focusing on teaching only the visual arts, I became more interested in the general aims of education and their value from various perspectives, e.g., the value of education for society, for democracy and equity, the value of education for individual growth, and how the inherent value of various school subjects can appeal to different students (see, e.g. Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In short, my vision changed from focusing solely on my prior belief in “education in the arts” to a more integrative and holistic view by adding the “education through the arts” paradigm (Bamford, 2009) to my professional theory. Working with one should not exclude the other.

During my master’s studies, I took courses in ethics that led me to consider the value of ethics in education. Throughout my studies, I became acutely aware of how modern theoretical discourse on ethics led to a comparison between the three main ethical theories: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to enter that debate, I want to address the “alleged inability” of virtue ethics to provide guidance for actions (Snow, 2017, p. 322), as contrasted with utilitarianism and deontology. Asking how to reach a goal without a clear plan seems reasonable; however, instead of seeing this as a problem, I value the flexibility and organic nature of virtue ethics as beneficial. Rather than providing a list of prescribed actions for every scenario, Aristotle (1985) contended that developing virtues gives a virtuous person the skills necessary to evaluate situations and react appropriately. As I matured as a philosophy teacher, I realised that the most interesting dialogues concerned questions of a moral nature. I felt that a virtue ethical approach could have a deeper educational value than other approaches, be it deontological or utilitarian, because virtue ethics requires us to think independently, take different positions into account, and, not least, ask ourselves what kind of persons we want to be.

The inquiry into how to lead a good life is reasonable and logical, as my current actions and thoughts will influence my future perceptions of life. The question of what a good life consists of has persisted for centuries. Socrates (Plato, 2007) insisted that if individuals knew what was good, they would want to act accordingly (Arthur et al., 2006, p. 5). Building upon his teacher, Plato, Aristotle (1985),

developed his virtue theory in which he maintained that virtues comprised various components, the most salient one perhaps being the emotional component qua motivator of action, i.e. moving us to act virtuously. As a teacher, this reflects my deeply rooted will to become a teacher who communicates something more than the contents of the curriculum. However, when reading that Aristotle maintained that virtuous actions would result from virtues that the individual has developed and habituated, I immediately thought of teachers' freedom to cultivate and embed these virtues and wondered whether modern school systems would be conducive to that. To be sure, there can be proper actions without virtue—it is easy to be honest under surveillance—and our actions can be guided by duty or personal advantages, but virtuous individuals would know what was good and want the good, and possess the abilities to act accordingly (Arthur et al., 2006; Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; Carr & Harrison, 2015).

As we age, our reflections on life evolve from those of our younger selves. A young man typically looks forward; every action aims to achieve future goals. This mindset can be characterised as unidirectional. I recognise this clearly when recalling the artistic ambitions I mentioned earlier. However, being an adult in my late fifties, I have the privilege of having a broader, bi-directional perspective as I reflect on the past while preparing for the future. I suspect that later, my perspective may again become uni-directional as I contemplate the past—when the future shrinks, inevitably, into weeks or months. The more I reflect on Aristotle's ethics, the more his ideas speak to me. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (1985) claims that happiness is the ultimate good, articulating the core concern of Aristotelian virtue ethics: How can one live a good life? (Aristotle, 1985; Hursthouse, 1987). Aristotle used to describe human flourishing and explain what the good life is like with concepts such as *eudaimonia* (happiness or flourishing), *arête* (excellence or virtue) and *phronesis* (practical or moral wisdom) (Hursthouse, 1999; Hursthouse & Pettigrove, 2023). Aristotle (1985) maintained that *eudaimonia* is an independent and objectively desirable goal of human life, although *eudaimonia* is not conceptually separate from *arête* and *phronesis*, which are constitutive of *eudaimonia*. In education, the concept of excellence (*arête*) seems to be, in general, a central driving force, as most educational objectives strive to help people reach their highest potential, aiming for excellence in all areas of existence.

This rendering of virtue ethics displays how the interconnectedness—or entanglement—of these concepts presents difficulties in education. Hence, flourishing is never a stand-alone construct; there is always an involvement of other conditions, which often are outside the reach of teachers or parents, as we can never fully control the conditions our students or children live in. Adding to the complexity is the nature of, e.g. *phronesis*, as Aristotle (1985, p. 161) considered it

impossible for the young to develop phronesis until reaching adulthood because of their lack of experience (Harðarson, 2019, p. 2). While I can invite my pupils to a collective reflection about an artwork, there is little I can do to ensure true reflection; I can only hope that a transformation comes about later on. I see this as the beauty of teaching; everything we have is faith in humanity, which is already an admirable position. Ultimately, faith in goodness might be the only thing we pass on to our students.

Having developed an interest in ethics, and especially virtue ethics, I started to think about how I could synthesise visual arts education and moral education in such a way that I could develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between these two elements and hopefully develop approaches or methods that other teachers could build upon. The idea of pursuing a doctoral degree started germinating within me, and my initial research question was: "What is the moral value of visual arts education?" At that time, I had no idea how to approach this question. I had, however, been following Prof. Kristján Kristjánsson's research and writings about virtue ethics, character education, and human flourishing. He supervised my master's thesis, and his educational vision has inspired me. In 2012, while I was writing the last pages of my M.Ed. thesis, Prof. Kristjánsson was appointed the deputy director of a newly founded research centre, *The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues*, at the University of Birmingham (<https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk>). The Jubilee Centre was initially funded by the John Templeton Foundation, which provided funding for research. On the Jubilee Centre's website, it is stated that:

The Jubilee Centre is a pioneering interdisciplinary research centre focussing on character, virtues and values in the interest of human flourishing. Founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur, the Centre is a leading informant in the UK and internationally on character education policy and practice. The Centre works with various audiences including schools, teachers, young people, parents, policy makers and fellow researchers. (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2024)

During a meeting with Kristjánsson, I shared with him my ruminations about the moral value of the visual arts, and he encouraged me to investigate this largely unexplored topic. A few weeks later, I unexpectedly received a book in the mail with a greeting note from Prof. Kristjánsson: *Educating Character through Stories* by the philosophers David Carr and Tom Harrison (2015). This was my first introduction to the Jubilee Centre's *Knightly Virtues Programme* (KVP) research project, which aimed to investigate the value of stories for character education.

After reading the book, I felt that I might be on the right track in my quest to find meaningful aims in education that reached beyond the instrumentalism that had been an undertone throughout my teaching career—an undertone that I had nevertheless started to challenge through the philosophical experiments I had been doing for several years.

The KVP research project was developed as an attempt to respond to contemporary concerns about the general aims of education and a growing consensus in Britain that the contribution of the virtues to good character might be one part of the solution to modern challenges (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 5). With the aims of helping to solve such challenges and for a better understanding of the value of moral education within schools, the Jubilee Centre set out to develop a programme based on classic literature designed for children aged 9–11. The importance of literature and stories in that respect has always been recognised by teachers and theorists (Carr & Harrison, 2015). Professor Karen E. Bohlin (2014b, p. 4; see also Bohlin, 2005, 2014a) discussed in the *Foreword* of the KVP research report the importance of stories for humans to understand themselves and others better, as stories have been a central element in human societies for millennia.

In their book, David Carr and Tom Harrison (2015, p. 129) discussed issues regarding developing and implementing educational novelties. They defined two main challenges when doing experiments similar to the KVP, and both were meaningful for me as a teacher and researcher. The former challenge, or problem, is the **pedagogical problem** (1): Which methods or approaches are reasonable to teach the stories of the KVP in an ordinary classroom? Carr and Harrison (2015, p. 129) ponder that while using classical literature in education is a common and well-known task, locating the focus of moral education as a specific purpose of teaching literature might pose a challenge. Reflecting on my research experiences, these challenges presented themselves clearly, as discussed in my third article (Waage, 2023a) in regard to the role of the visual arts as a school subject, especially in light of the emphasis on “education in the arts” as contrasted with “education through the arts” (see Bamford, 2009). The pedagogical problem also presented itself in choosing materials and methods used when attempting to bring ethics into the spotlight. To address that challenge, Carr and Harrison (2015) endorsed using a *journal*, a central object in the KVP experiment that allowed pupils to do homework, which additionally invited parents’ involvement in their children’s learning. While the journal served as a glossary and a quick guide to the virtues and related terms, it also allowed an individualised approach in which students were encouraged to use their creative imagination to use different modes of expression, which was, therefore, conducive to allowing pupils to work at their own pace with an appropriate personalisation of the journal. Giving students this personal headspace

was thought to foster pupils' capacities for moral reason and deliberation, helping them to realise that developing virtues "is not simply a matter of social conformity or doing what others tell one to do, but of serious and responsible reflection on what is morally right or wrong—not least in morally conflicted circumstances" (Carr & Harrison, 2015, p. 131). In my research project, I replaced the concept of the *journal* used in the KVP with the artworks created by pupils during the intervention. Although a personal journal or diary is not directly interchangeable with painting a piece of artwork, the mental and emotional efforts may be of a similar nature, especially considering visual thinking (Arnheim, 1969, 1974).

However, there is more to this than choosing suitable materials and methods. According to Carr and Harrison (2015), the second challenge to moral education is the **curriculum problem** (2): How can teachers or researchers fit a programme in the spirit of KVP into the existing structures of curriculum and subjects? Education has historically been structured around core and foundational subjects, and still is. While this varies between countries, such a structure provides a framework that is often difficult to change (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Implementing non-standard educational programmes is challenging. Extracurricular activities such as the KVP might disrupt official requirements and constraints informed by the more pragmatic priorities of essential skills and examination-focused learning. In general, little time or space is reserved for the formal development of character or virtue, which are often presented as long-range aims or happy by-products of education without corresponding methods or materials. While this applies to schools in the UK, it seems to me that the situation is similar in Iceland. Although the moral dimension of education is addressed in the Icelandic curriculum guide (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014), there are no guidelines for how teachers should work with these matters. While finding time in a busy school day is always challenging, Carr & Harrison (2015, p. 136) reckon there is ample room for such interventions in younger grades. Although teachers are under constant pressure to teach core skills, Carr and Harrison (2015) reported that the participating teachers in the KV programme regretted not having more time to spend on the project (Carr & Harrison, 2015, pp. 136–137). It is possible to extend the idea of giving room in the younger grades for moral deliberation in arts classes because the arts are not always subjected to the same level of grading as the core-subjects. For this reason, some authors contend, the arts have been marginalised in education.

Educating Character through Stories was inspiring reading, and I found excitement growing inside me. Having met with Prof. Ólafur Páll Jónsson at the School of Education at the University of Iceland on several occasions and being conscious of his knowledge, open mind and creative attitude, I introduced my ruminations to him. He suggested that I should also discuss my ideas with Prof. Atli Harðarson,

whom I also knew as an outstanding educational thinker. After their encouragement and with their collaboration, I wrote a research proposal, which was accepted in the summer of 2015, and my doctoral journey started formally. At that time, I was a full-time teacher in Garðaskóli, a position I left in 2020. Along with my duties in Garðaskóli, I had been a part-time lecturer at Iceland University of the Arts since 2013, and occasionally at the University of Iceland. Hoping to be able to focus on my research, I applied for a doctoral student grant at the Icelandic Centre for Research. Although I had favourable and helpful comments from the reviewers, and even if I almost made it through the eye of the needle, my application was rejected. I decided, however, to continue without funding, but I admit that being obliged to teach full-time along with my doctoral research has been quite frustrating at times and demanding. I realised later, however, that being professionally active during my studies impacted how I perceive and understand educational research. Discovering the complex interactions between my three different roles—artist, teacher, and researcher—helped me understand that educational research can seldom be done only by neutral and unbiased white-gown scientists observing the classroom through the school windows, an approach I sometimes refer to as the “aquarium attitude” or the “fish-tank attitude.” The observer on the outside is simply inherently unable to understand to a full extent what happens inside social phenomena. A similar idea is expressed as the “fly on the wall” who “dispassionately observes events unfolding around” (Poulos, 2021, p. 7). Here, Christopher Poulos (2021), a professor of communication studies, is referring, *inter alia*, to the groundbreaking work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz when in 1958 he visited Bali in Indonesia accompanied by his wife. There he experienced the paradigm shift that happens when the people in the village he intended to observe embraced him and his wife after they showed the community solidarity against the suffocating regulations that the state had imposed on the communities at that time. Geertz’s account of the research is vividly encapsulated in his famous essay: “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight.” Geertz’s (1972) essay is available online and is an engaging and exciting read for those who intend to do research with human subjects. It is generally thought that Geertz’s essay had a transformative effect on ethnography as the researcher himself became gradually a part of the research. Today, it is also generally accepted within the field of anthropology—and educational studies—that the subjects to be observed are—quite obviously—aware of being observed and, therefore, act accordingly. For this reason, we can not fully understand the reasons behind people’s attitudes or actions (Ryle, 2009). For educational research, this is a major problem because we should never treat human beings only as objects. We must always be aware of how we, as researchers and teachers, affect the environment we enter. Gert Biesta (2022) discussed this idea extensively in his book *World Centred Education: A View for the Present*, in which

he discusses the necessity of moving from *learnification*—which focuses on the emphasis of learning, a notion he maintains resembles Freire’s banking concept (Biesta, 2022, p. 43)—to the notion of *subjectification* which describes our “freedom as human beings ... to act or to refrain from action” (Biesta, 2022, p. 45). Hence, the teacher’s—or the society’s—aims behind education may be incompatible with students’s aims or meaning. Few artists have encapsulated—for this context—the tension between the subject and the object as well as the American comic artist Gary Larson, the author of “The Far Side.” For copyright reasons, I cannot publish his work in this dissertation; it must suffice to enjoy it here: <https://anthropologizing.com/2011/06/20/anthropologists-anthropologists/>.

2.3.1 Doing a scientific experiment in a classroom setting

Although reading *Educating Character through Stories* (Carr & Harrison, 2015) motivated me to follow a similar approach, my emphasis on the visual arts instead of stories or literature brought a methodological challenge. How could I adjust the KVP research concept to my preferred emphasis on the visual arts?

While the book by David Carr and Tom Harrison (2015) gave a clear and concise account of the KVP and the central idea behind the concept, having access to Jubilee Centre research material and results was crucial for developing my research project. I visited the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham for a few days in spring 2016 and interviewed some of its researchers: Prof. Kristján Kristjánsson, Prof. David Carr, Prof. Liz Gulliford, Prof. Tom Harrison, and Matt Bawden. After the visit to the Jubilee Centre, I understood better the educational dynamics that were the driving force behind the research centre, and I witnessed the commitment and enthusiasm that fuelled all the valuable work done there. In addition, the researchers were helpful and willing to share their expertise. For instance, I got an “early-bird” access to the material used in the *Art and Design* section of another research project: *Teaching Character through Subjects*, which focused on how character education could be addressed in diverse school subjects (Harrison et al., 2016). I inspected the lesson plans for Art and Design, and while I thought they were impressive, I felt the approach to be somewhat too prescriptive with direct instructions—too top-down for my teaching philosophy, as I embrace students’ autonomy and creativity. My relationship with the Jubilee Centre has been ongoing. I presented my work at the *Educating Character through the Arts* conference held at the University of Birmingham in July 19–21, 2018; I also attended the Oriel conferences in 2019 (without presenting) and 2020, where I presented a paper (Waage, 2020).

In addition to various teaching materials and the *Framework for Character Education in Schools*, which describes the philosophical ideas behind the version of character education endorsed and developed by the Jubilee Centre, the centre has published its results in a series of substantive research reports which are freely available on the Jubilee Centre's website (<https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk>). In the research report of the *Knightly Virtues Research Project Report*, the team outlined the background of the project along with a detailed analysis of the quantitative part of the research in tandem with the interpretation based on the qualitative part, such as classroom observations, interviews with participants and inspection of pupils' journals. The authors of the report recognised that mixed research methods could provide the delivery of solid data that allowed for conclusions with significant validity (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 12). Following an extensive pilot study, the Jubilee Centre conducted an experimental trial from September 2013 to January 2014 in 49 classes across 29 schools in Britain that participated in the trial at the outset, with 1089 pupils participating. However, ten schools did not finish or were too late to send in the data, with 19 schools finishing the programme. Although the organisation and structure of the research project are outstanding, the high drop-out rate of schools, 34.5%, reflects the fundamental difficulty in doing empirical research in education. It would have been interesting to have insights into why these schools left the project or had problems finishing it.

The trial was based on a five-week intervention in which the material of the KVP was taught. Before and after the intervention, pre- and post-tests were administered in experimental and control schools. The experimental trial results showed that the experimental group generally improved in the tests as compared to the control group. However, these improvements were not statistically significant, except in results concerning the "impact of the KVP on the application of virtue concepts in personal, social and cultural contexts" (Arthur et al., 2014, p. 15). Additionally, the schools' communal structure—rural, semi-rural, or urban—significantly affected pupils' improvements, creating a marked difference in progress between schools in the countryside and those in cities. What explains that difference is not clear. However, pupils' improvement in using virtue concepts in personal, social, and cultural contexts is interesting. It makes me reflect on Dewey's theory of experience, which suggests that things of personal concern or those that touch upon our immediate environment seem to have more educational significance for students (Dewey, 1938). While the importance of meaning in education is paramount, it remains a challenge for teachers to provide educational opportunities that would be meaningful for all students. This leaves teachers in constant uncertainty, an uncomfortable position that Maxine Greene (1973) has encouraged teachers to embrace. However, as it appears, ample space is created through literature and the

arts for more students to find *meaning* in the teaching material, which seems to be confirmed in the KVP research. Overall, the main findings from the KVP research are

- Increased pupils' ability to apply virtue language and concepts in personal contexts by 24% with high statistical significance.
- Improved virtuous behaviour in certain pupils, as observed by parents, teachers and the participants themselves.
- Some evidence of increased pupils' knowledge and understanding of virtue language, which was seen by parents, teachers and pupils.
- Good response from male pupils to the themes of the stories, which has benefited both their literacy skills and character development.
- The programme provided opportunities for teachers and parents to address together serious questions of character and moral virtue.
- Teachers, parents and pupils like the design and content of the Knightly Virtues Programme and schools recognise the benefits of embedding it into their core curriculum.

(Arthur et al., 2014, p. 18)

2.3.2 The Laxdæla Saga Project (LSP)

In the wake of the KVP, my PhD supervisors, Atli Harðarson and Ólafur Páll Jónsson, along with philosopher Róbert Jack and PhD candidate and teacher Þóra Björg Sigurðardóttir developed an Icelandic adaption of it. Instead of using the literature classics that were familiar to a British audience, the team developed the *Laxdæla Saga Project* (LSP), which was based on one of the most significant Icelandic sagas and existed, conveniently, in an abridged form for upper elementary (lower secondary) schools (Jónsson et al., 2019). One part of the LSP research was adapting the KVP pre- and post-intervention tests to measure pupils' progress in using and understanding the vocabulary connected to virtues and vices. The work on the LSP is still ongoing as of 2025. Although the KVP research triggered interest in Iceland in investigating opportunities for moral education through literature and the arts, discussions about morals and ethics and the role of

the schools in that respect in Icelandic society were also quite fertile, especially after the financial crisis of 2008. At the political level, debates on the issue eventually led to a significant revision of the National Curriculum Guide 2011/2013 for all school levels (Jónsson et al., 2019; Waage et al., 2015).

The LSP followed the framework of the KVP research, albeit on a significantly smaller scale, with the participation of five classroom teachers who taught Icelandic in ninth and tenth grade (pupils aged 14–15) in three schools. The research team said that they avoided overwhelming the participating teachers: there were no requirements for structural changes such as revision of timetables or any other additional work (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 3). The research team expressed a preference for dialogical methods rather than the more conventional direct instructions, without “prescribing any particular teaching plan, methods or style” (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 3), as the emphasis was first and foremost on the content of the lessons. This approach is in line with my own teaching approach, where the content is thought of as a stimulus for thinking and deliberation.

The LSP research team employed a translation and adaptation of the KVP measurement tool to assess 54 boys and 52 girls in ninth and tenth grades before and after their studies on Laxdaela Saga. They aimed to determine whether students’ understanding of moral vocabulary improved and whether they became better at applying these moral terms to relevant situations in their lives and within fictional scenarios. A control group of 27 boys and 34 girls from a fourth school also underwent the same tests. Along with the quantitative test results, they gathered three types of qualitative data: (1) classroom visits with field reports, (2) two individual interviews with each of the five involved teachers, and (3) four focus group interviews with six to seven students each (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 4). This was quite similar to the approach I adopted in my (this) research project—with the crucial difference that I myself participated as a teacher during the intervention I developed, which allowed me, as an “inside man,” to understand better the educational dynamics and challenges involved when introducing moral education into an established school subject. I will discuss in Chapter 4 what I learned as an “inside man” during the intervention and in my subsequent efforts to make sense of it all.

Similar to the KVP research, the results of the LSP research displayed that statistically significant progress was limited to pupils’ understanding of the meaning of words associated with virtues and vices (Jónsson et al., 2019, pp. 8–9). A statistical analysis of the results confirmed that the progress between the first and second round of the tests could mainly be explained by the teaching, as “only a small part of the improvement is explained by taking the same kind of test again

since the *eta* value of the distribution is 0.13” (Jónsson et al., 2019, pp. 8–9). The research team concluded that while the tests were intended to measure three aspects: “(1) understanding of moral vocabulary, (2) competence in applying moral concepts, and (3) competence in arguing for a certain moral point of view” (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 10), only the first aspect delivered statistically significant improvements. The research team reflected on these results and concluded that measuring such a complex competence, simple tests like those used in the research project would be inadequate for that task. Additionally, they suggested that changes would only “be evident later in life” (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 11). These results were published after I conducted my own intervention.

2.3.3 Preparing for my intervention: A methodological insight

As I mentioned earlier, I expected that replicating the KVP and LSP projects would be challenging, as my emphasis on visual arts contrasts with the focus on literature. Instead of reading texts as in these projects, I invited participants to look at paintings, reflect on them, and respond in writing. To test the feasibility of using paintings instead of literature, I decided to pilot-test this first version with pupils of a similar age but in a different region. For this purpose, I contacted a friend who is a teacher and a programme director at an elementary school in Akureyri, the largest town outside of the capital area of Iceland. She guided me to the principal and eventually to the Directorate of Education in the Northeast region of Iceland. Upon receiving favourable responses, I prepared a letter of consent with detailed information for the children involved and their parents, booked a flight and administered the questionnaire in one session to the 32 pupils who had approved participation.

The structure of the pilot version of my questionnaire was similar to those in the KVP and LSP research, consisting of two questionnaires, A and B. I asked the same questions as in the KVP and LSP research, but instead of asking pupils to read texts, I asked them to look closely at paintings that I provided without any background information about the artworks. Each questionnaire included ten questions. As I administered the test myself, I had the opportunity to observe pupils’ reception of the questionnaires. Although I felt that the pupils regarded me as a stranger, the atmosphere was relaxed, and the pupils showed interest in responding to the questions. I noticed that before answering the questions, they looked closely at the photos of the paintings and scrutinised them, and I wondered if reflecting on artworks this way was new to the participants.

Concerning the results of the pilot test, I identified that a total absence of information about the artworks proved to be misguided on my part. Although an

image is supposed to tell more than a thousand words, context is often essential. There is more to an image than forms, lines, and colour; an image always conveys a story, a feeling or an idea, and the question of the context proved later on to be of significant importance as I believe artworks must resonate with the audience. However, as research into the effects of Visual Thinking Strategies (Housen, 2002; Yenawine, 2003, 2013) shows, the absence of obvious context might still trigger unexpected ideas and thoughts from an audience; reflecting on my pupils' responses to Magritte's painting *Not to be Reproduced* discussed earlier, I see that not having context can have invaluable opportunities. However, in the context of doing research into the value of paintings—or other visual artworks—for moral cognition, the choice of artworks and their contents needs to be specifically adapted to that objective. Therefore, I selected artworks with themes I considered to have a moral or ethical nature (see Article 3: Waage, 2023a, pp. 6–7). Being mindful of the importance of giving pupils the liberty to interpret the artworks, I decided that I had to find the middle ground and rethink some sections of the questionnaires (A & B) used in the intervention, one painting in each was accompanied by short background information for context while I invited participants to write a free-style reflection about the artwork using five guiding questions similar to methods used in creative writing processes. These questions were developed by a colleague, Kristján Hrafn Guðmundsson, an Icelandic teacher with a master's degree in literature, who at that time was teaching Icelandic in Garðaskóli. I showed him Edward Munch's painting, *The sick child* (1895–96), and he used the painting as a project for writing skills. He presented the painting to his pupils with several guiding questions:

- What is happening in the picture?
- Why are these people there? How are they related?
- What could have happened in their lives the last days, even minutes?
- What happens next in their lives? Explain why you think so.
- What emotions come to mind when you look at the image? Why?
- Take also the surroundings into account. Do they have an influence on what you say about the painting?

He was very intrigued by the qualities of the pupils' texts and showed them to me. I was equally fascinated, and with his permission I used his prompts in the questionnaires for my research project. I am deeply thankful for his poetic insights and input into my research project. That decision proved to be a blessing: my thematic analysis of the responses became the central object in the book chapter (see Waage, 2020), which constitutes the second article of this dissertation. Having more or less developed the pre-and post-test questionnaires, I had to finish developing the lesson plans that were to be used during the intervention. Although I felt that as I had been experimenting for several years I was not exactly inventing the wheel, I needed to make the structure and timeframe clear as my aim was to collect data systemically. In addition, I was going to involve three colleagues in the project as teachers.

Based on the KVP and LSP research projects, the intervention I developed was designed for visual arts classes and introduced critical thinking through discussions about artworks. For planning the intervention, I examined the lesson plans and resources from *Teaching Character Through Subjects* (Harrison et al., 2016). Based on that review, I created new lesson plans that emphasised pupils' artistic exploration because I aimed to motivate them to engage with moral deliberation in a personal way. The role of the teachers in this approach was to facilitate discussions about my pupils' artworks, pose dialogical and philosophical questions about courage and friendship, and encourage reflection on their paintings. Many theorists in arts education (e.g., Eisner, 2002; Dewey, 2005; Hetland et al., 2007) value artistic approaches that foster pupils' creative independence and provide space for experimentation and reflection. While I had used many elements of the intervention in previous years during experiments with my pupils, this was the first time I endeavoured to collect data systematically in my classes.

2.3.4 Getting ready to conduct the intervention

After preparing the questionnaires (see Appendices 1 & 2) and the lesson plans (see Appendix 3), I wrote to the parents of all the eighth-grade children in my school, providing a detailed description of the project and requesting informed consent from both parents and pupils (this letter is included in Appendix 4). Before proceeding, I ensured that my research was conducted according to the guidelines from the Icelandic Data Protection Authority. Furthermore, I requested a review from the University of Iceland's committee on ethical conduct in research, which acknowledged my research proposal (Appendix 5). In addition to general ethical concerns in research, the sensitive position of minors in educational studies requires attention and care. In this research project, I did not collect any sensitive

information, and I confirm that my methods are consistent with the ethical requirements laid out by Shamoo and Resnik (2015).

The supervising teachers of each of the eight classes in the 8th-grade cohort distributed the letters, collected the responses, and handed them to me. I generally received positive feedback. After gathering all the letters of consent (161) and refusals (10), I could proceed. Since the intervention was considered part of the visual arts curriculum for 8th graders, everyone was required to participate in the lessons. However, I only collected data from the 161 pupils who had consented to participation. The ten pupils who disapproved of participation were excluded from answering the pre- and post-tests, and I did not inspect their portfolios, although they participated actively in the lessons as the intervention was considered regular schoolwork. In total, 131 pupils completed both the pre- and post-tests. Pupils who did not complete both rounds, because of absence or sick leave, were excluded from the quantitative analysis. Each visual arts class, or experimental group, consisted of 10 to 12 participants. Pupils attending classes in textile crafts during the autumn served as a control group to evaluate the intervention and did not participate further in it. In Icelandic elementary schools, pupils in each grade attend one semester of visual arts in groups that are half the size of a class (usually divided by alphabetical order). In contrast, the other half attended textile crafts and vice versa during the second semester of the school year. Class sizes in Iceland vary from 22 to 27 pupils, depending on schools and municipalities.

2.3.5 High-stakes: Conducting the intervention

I administered the pre-test in late September 2018 with the assistance of the supervising teachers for each group. A week later, we proceeded to work on the research project with the pupils in the visual arts. I taught one group, while my three colleagues taught seven groups. They had been my colleagues for some time; two had been my students at *Iceland University of the Arts*, and the third had worked with me for several years (see further in Waage, 2023a, p. 8). We began to follow the lesson plans I designed (see Appendix 3 for the lesson plans), and we regularly discussed the project's progress. Since I had been conducting experiments for a few years, things were going as I expected. Once the intervention concluded in early December, I collected the paintings created and the texts written in the process. All of these had been placed in the pupils' portfolios. A week later, I administered the post-tests, ten week after the pupils responded to the pre-tests. Following permission from the pupils and their parents, I photographed every painting and text sheet related to the intervention in these portfolios and returned them promptly. Several weeks after the intervention I conducted a focus-group interview with a selection of the participants. One group consisted entirely of girls,

another of boys, and the third consisted of both girls and boys. I consciously omitted the pupils that had been in the class I had taught as much of my reflections were rooted in my correspondance with them.

Four years after the intervention took place, I had an invaluable focus group interview with my colleagues who had assisted me in doing the intervention. That interview is the foundation of article 3 in this dissertation, along with the focus group interviews with the pupils already mentioned (Waage, 2023a). Without the support of my colleagues, insights, and experiences, I doubt I could have completed this project.

2.3.6 Pupils' paintings

Initially, I felt somewhat disappointed with the quality of some of the artworks created in the lessons during the intervention. At first sight, it seemed that some pupils didn't take the project seriously and, therefore, didn't invest much effort into creating the paintings. However, upon further reflection, I realised my expectations were probably unrealistic, possibly because of all the effort I had put into developing the research project and the "high stakes" when doing such serious research as a PhD. I had "second thoughts" or reservations about my preparation and the lesson plans. If the artworks created in the years before were better using a similar approach than those produced during the intervention, what could have been different? Is it possible that my enthusiasm and open-minded approach could have contributed to the success I felt my prior experiments had had?

After having a "cold shower," I came to the conclusion that the variations in quality during the intervention matched those of any other art project I had been involved in as a visual arts teacher. Engaging in a research project might have subconsciously raised my expectations. Additionally, most of the paintings were created under the supervision of my colleagues rather than my own. This reminded me of how teachers can impact pupils in unexpected, and different, ways. Various factors, such as the dialogue with each pupil, the overall atmosphere of the group, and the teacher's beliefs and attitudes, always influence what happens inside the classroom. This adds to the complexity of education, and every teacher knows that it is difficult predicting how pupils will respond to school projects. By cultivating a more Stoic attitude towards pupils' artworks, I was able to approach the paintings with a more open mind, ultimately perceiving more than I could have otherwise. Also, this reminded me of how adults tend to interpret pupils' artwork from their own grown-up perspective. Our preconceptions get in the way and make us "blind" to what is really to be found or explored in pupils' artworks. This realisation came to me after the focus-group interviews I had with the pupils (see, Waage, 2023a).

Originally, I intended to write an article about pupils' understanding of the virtues reflected in their artworks. I conducted a thematic analysis of paintings that featured courage as a central concept to achieve this aim. I presented my analysis at the Jubilee Centre's Oriel conference in Oxford in early January 2020. The unpublished article, titled: "Flourishing as the Aim of Education: An Insight into the Value of Artworks for Moral Deliberation on Life's Challenges," can be accessed at the Jubilee's Centre website.¹³ In the end, I was not satisfied with my attempt to analyse pupils' paintings, as I had developed reservations about the value of such an analysis. Firstly, pupils' confidence in creating artworks varies, which impacts how they approach the project. It was, for example, revealed in the focus group interviews that some had difficulty coming up with ideas for developing their thoughts about the virtues and finding appropriate visual expressions. Another factor that I suspected might have influenced pupils' artworks was the inherently personal, even private, nature of the virtues. Some were probably not ready to share their personal experiences and thoughts. They are also concerned about how their peers would receive their artworks and ideas. Therefore, peer pressure can always influence such a project. Furthermore, declaring oneself as "courageous" might seem pretentious to some. Brave individuals do not brag about their courage. Humble people do not boast about their humility—and so on. If someone claims to be honest, we immediately become suspicious. Why does someone feel the need to declare their virtues?

However, many pupils created wonderful paintings that are original, imaginative, and moving. Instead of analysing these works from a top-down perspective—viewing pupils' work merely as objects for my purposes—I consider these paintings rather as material for bottom-up reflections and discussions, even as a personal and private exercise for pupils. Creating the artwork holds value in itself; simply going through the process of developing an idea based on a moral issue and expressing that idea in a visual form has an educational value in itself, even without a conversation about the contents of the painting. It is imperative to have the option of being discreet about private matters in school.

Here, I present a small collection of pupils' artworks to illustrate the richness, imagination, and dedication that can flourish through artistic creativity in schools.

¹³ https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Waage_Full.pdf



Figure 10: A pupil's artistic expression of courage. Is this small and "insignificant" human being trying to express her insignificance against an institutional structure? Does one have to possess courage to enter the transforming and sometimes overwhelming school buildings.

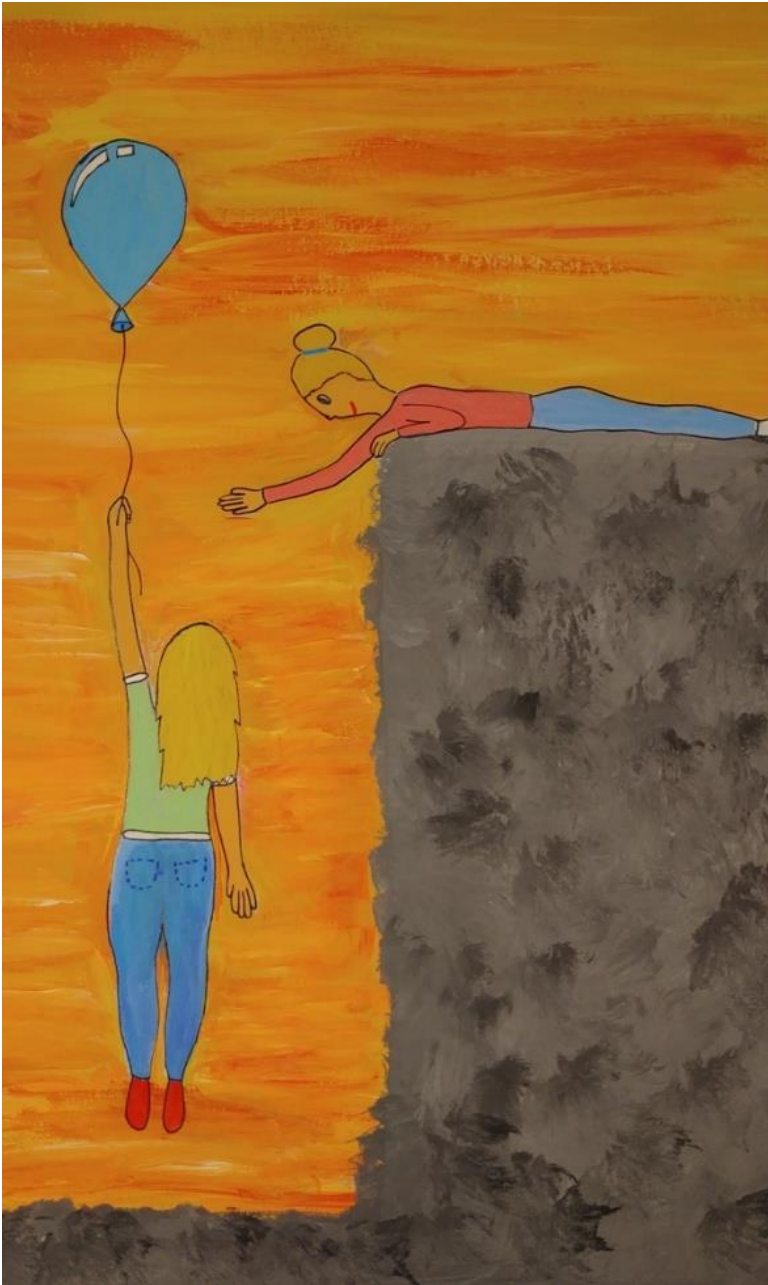


Figure 11: A pupil's artistic expression of friendship. Is this poetic painting about how friends help each other regardless of how realistic their friends' ideas are? Does this painting express the central notion of "I love you as my friend and I will always support you, no matter what"?



Figure 12: A pupil's artistic expression of friendship. This painting had an immediate warming effect on me: Two friends meeting happily on the road between their "territories," with flowers displaying care and love. However, upon further reflection and closer scrutiny, the girl on the left seems to be grabbing the girl on the right in a rather "possessive" fashion. Although the girl on the right seems to be pleased and happy, her body posture seems to display another idea; that she feels her private space being somewhat intruded upon. This led me to reflect on all the stories from my pupils throughout my career as a teacher about pushy and dominating friends. This uncertainty of interpretation adds significantly to the quality of this painting and its value for moral cognition.



Figure 13: A pupil's artistic expression of courage. This painting seems to display the stage fright experienced by every stage artist out there. Many actors tell stories about their stage fright, even though they have many decades of experience on stage. It seems that a "healthy dose" of stage fright is a driving force in many actors' and dancers' professional lives. However, looking at the "stage fright" of a thirteen-year-old child in such an illustrative and thoughtful manner is intriguing. The simplicity of the rendering and "staging" is rather mature. Consider for instance the empty chairs in the theatre and the empty wide white space that seems to wait to be filled with the dancer's talents in the center of the painting. Who does not connect to the idea of hiding behind the curtains? I see this painting as a good example of how many humans seem to experience stage fright and stress.

2.3.7 Wrapping up the intervention

After having collected all the pre-and-post-tests. I started to work on an evaluation tool. How could I evaluate the quality of my pupils' responses objectively? Following the example of the LSP research, I used the same method of evaluation for questions of a similar nature. These were questions regarding the understanding of vocabulary associated with virtues and vices. However, evaluating the quality of pupils' written responses to the artworks—with the aim of seeing if they had developed their capacities in understanding the artworks and expressing these accordingly in writing—was an unknown terrain. In addition to doing a quantitative analysis of the pre-and post-tests, I intended to do a qualitative analysis by using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse pupils' texts for a better understanding of how they interpreted the artworks. That method proved to be valuable for my research project. The results of that analysis were published in Article 2.

2.3.8 Results of the quantitative part

I based the measurement tool on four constructs that are believed to be representative for moral cognition (see the section about components of virtue in Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2017, pp. 5–8): 1) **Vocabulary**: The understanding of language and vocabulary associated with virtues; 2) **Comprehension**: general knowledge and understanding of virtues as human qualities; 3) **Application**: critical thinking skills and awareness of larger context; and 4) **Affect**: attitudes, perspective and emotional response. For the evaluation of the questionnaires, I developed a specific scoring framework in which each item was graded from 0–3 points relative to the quality of the answers regarding detail, clarity and reasoning. The maximum score possible was 42 points. Statistical analysis was done with Repeated Measures Anova with the open statistical platform *jamovi* (The jamovi project, 2025).

In the end, the quantitative results did not show any meaningful change in the participants' use of vocabulary or quality of expression. They did, however, show quite consistent individual differences since the internal consistency of the two questionnaire versions was considered very good as the calculated Cronbach's Alpha for test A was α 0.85, and for test B it was α 0.88. None of the statistical analyses yielded significant results, except for the girls in the control group, who did significantly better on the post-test. I thought that was perplexing because they did not participate in the intervention. However, their score in the pre-test was also better than the score of the girls in the experimental group.

This raises questions about the value of using tests of this kind to measure pupils' progress after a short intervention. The fact that the girls in the **control group** did make significant progress between the pre- and post-test invokes questions about the reasons, pointing to the test itself rather than the intervention. In the LSP project, the authors could affirm that the progress of their participants was due to instruction in the lessons (Jónsson et al., 2019, p. 9). While not statistically significant, the girls in the experimental group did make more progress than their male peers. A gender difference was also prevalent in the control group, which raises questions about gender differences in general. A similar trend was observed both in the LSP research and KVP, although not to the same extent as in the Icelandic research projects. Although the dimension of gender issues is outside the scope of this research, the significance of the difference between girls and boys at that age regarding educational achievement may raise questions about how we organise elementary education in general.

2.3.9 Measuring virtue

Challenges in measurement articulated themselves clearly in my research project. The reliability of a measurement that is "the extent to which the results generated could be generated again (e.g. by another researcher, in another context, at another time)" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 335), is difficult to obtain in education because of the inherent diversity of the student body—in addition to the contemporary call for teaching children on an individual basis, trying to meet their specific needs, rather than organise lessons with a whole group in mind. Following this, quantitative researchers "seek to minimise the influence of researcher—which is seen as a source of error or 'bias'" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 279). Already, as Maxine Greene (1973) has pointed out, the role of the teacher is never neutral, and for me, as an artist and teacher who is committed to creativity and imagination, the idea of neutrality is almost impossible in that context, except for the idea of the teacher being an open-minded person that seeks to suspend his judgement at all costs.

While measuring and assessing pupils' academic achievement is ubiquitous in education, it is far from being without controversy, especially regarding moral attributes and character. In the article "Can virtue be measured?," Randall Curren and Ben Kotzee (2014) discuss the challenges facing those who want to measure virtue. They propose that virtue could be measured in three different educational contexts: "high-stakes testing and accountability schemes, the evaluation of programs in character education, and routine student evaluation" (Curren & Kotzee, 2014, p. 266). However, measuring virtue in these contexts might have diverse consequences: Curren and Kotzee argue that high-stakes testing would undermine

social conditions within schools, “which are essential for students’ appreciation of valuable virtues” (p. 276). While they warn against “field testing educational programs (or structural reforms), including programs in virtue education, without a basis in prior research and tested theory,” they endorse measurements to establish the efficacy of a program but not to compare students. They suggest using a combination of pre- and post-tests in the form of focus groups, essays, and observations. Furthermore, they suggest a random selection of students for different measures to enhance the data quality (Curren & Kotzee, 2014, p. 277). To conduct a measurement, the characteristics measured must possess an underlying structure that can be built upon, similar to the natural sciences. If we can measure muscle mass after exercise, assessed by weight, mass, and performance, and say that the individual’s performance has become 10% better after two months of exercise, in what instances could we say that an individual has become 10% more virtuous after an intervention in moral education? Could we even describe someone as twice as virtuous as compared to another person (where is the virtue muscle)? Could we use an ordinal scale to measure the quantity of virtue? In education, we are dealing with a complex cluster of traits or abilities: emotions, attention, beliefs, reasoning, and behaviour, as well as sensitivity and motivation (see, for example, the seven components of virtues identified by JCCV: Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2022, p. 10).

In *Understanding Virtue: Theory and Measurement*, psychologists Jennifer Cole Wright, Michael T. Warren, and philosopher Nancy Snow discuss the “resurgence of interest in virtue among philosophers, psychologists, and educators (Wright et al., 2021, p. 1) and challenges that rise from interdisciplinary endeavours. While they endorse efforts to measure virtue and character development, they also point to the multiple factors that can be influential in that respect. They argue that there are two things necessary: “1) a conception of virtue and character that is both theoretically sound and empirically measurable; and 2) feasible strategies for measuring virtue and character development” (Wright et al., 2021, p. 6). However, while measuring virtue could be feasible using the correct measurement strategies, there are multiple ways that such measurement misses the mark:

Inevitably, when an abstract, unobservable construct is measured through observable means—through self-report, behavioral, physiological measures, etc.— the measure will “miss the mark” to some extent due to various sources of error, including: (1) conceptually defining the construct of interest (e.g., gratitude) in an imperfect way, (2) identifying indicators specific to the construct of interest (e.g., gratitude), which also overlap with related constructs (e.g., optimism),

making it less clear which construct is actually being measured, (3) respondents failing to interpret the measurement scenario as intended, or interpreting the measurement scenario differently depending on cultural context, (4) disparate sociocultural norms that influence how respondents construct their responses, (5) respondents' willingness to respond authentically, and (6) their ability to cognitively access accurate information, especially with self-report surveys, to name just a few. (Wright et al., 2021, p. 63)

The question of measuring virtue in an elementary school context is not really about the reliability of measurements but about the value and meaning of such measurements. In the Icelandic national curriculum guide published in 2013 is written that moral education is a desirable outcome: "Ethics teach how moral values may be examined, enhance moral sense and discuss controversial ethical issues" (Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, 2014, p. 202, see also pp. 203–209 for a list of desirable competences regarding pupils' "external world," "inner world," and "social world"). While these aims are clearly specified, they remain difficult to measure because of the inherent complex nature of moral life, especially in regard to opportunities in education to develop morality. Jónsson et al. (2019, pp. 4–5) frame this problem clearly in their article about the LSP research, "Young people, old literature and character education in Icelandic schools": 1) Real circumstances are not reproducible in schools; 2) Some aspects of moral virtue not readily testable; 3) The fruits of moral education not immediately visible but only show in the long run; 4) Moral qualities are very personal and private; and, 5) Teachers' freedom to challenge conventional morality and dominant ideology might be curbed.

However, although measuring virtue in education is challenging, it does not mean that we should not make efforts to discuss moral issues with our students: We can see our efforts as small steps on a long journey. With these results in mind, I decided to lay down my efforts to explore quantitative methods further in this project and began focusing more on my research journey, the value of the visual arts as an approach to moral education, and the role of the teacher in that respect. It follows that I had to try to make sense of the educational situation I'm in, which is the central theme in the fourth article presented in this dissertation (Waage, 2023).

3 The Articles

The research project consists of five peer-reviewed articles. My research project is in many ways original, as I am attempting to bring together fields that are not often mentioned together: education, arts, and ethics, which are more often brought together as pairs: education and the arts; the arts and ethics; education and ethics. However, adding this extra level of complexity has brought challenges in finding ways to reconcile these fields so that the project could stand as a whole, rather than fragmented pieces of research. The results of my research explore what happens when pupils are invited to grapple with artworks, engage in critical thinking, and undertake moral deliberation. Furthermore, they investigate the extent to which such approaches can benefit a comprehensive education that allows pupils to flourish according to their own potential.

3.1 Article 1: Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun

The aim of the first article, *Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun* (The Pillars of Education, Visual Arts and Character Education), was to put my ideas of introducing moral education into visual arts classes in context with the Icelandic school system. Although this article was peer-reviewed and published in an Icelandic outlet for educational research, I consider it a first attempt. In the fifth article, I have developed and honed the ideas introduced in this first article. That article has been accepted for publication in the book *Nordic Perspectives on Moral and Citizenship Education*—at the time of this writing, the chapter has been accepted for publication with some minor changes. However, it used the first article as a preparation for writing a concise theoretical overview, starting with a discussion about implementing a new national curriculum guide applied progressively from 2011 through 2016.

The revision of the curriculum guide was innovative in an augmented emphasis on the general aims of education, many of them moral, compared to the prior focus on the school subjects. From that, I argued that the new curriculum guide invited a greater emphasis on the moral aspects of education. Furthermore, I argued that to address the ethical dimension of education, the arts were particularly appropriate, especially the visual arts—as I had been teaching the visual arts for twenty years at

that time and could refer to my prior experiments that aimed at exploring the moral value of the visual arts in education.

In the article, I discussed the various moral aspects of the visual arts and introduced Aristotelian Character Education as the central framework of my research. In the article's central section, I proposed how selected artworks could be connected to each of the seven components of virtue introduced by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue (2022). Later, I realised that by using the visual arts for the sake of something external—moral education, I might have been guilty of the same instrumentalism I had been criticising earlier. Instead of subscribing to the notorious "Art for art's sake" view, I adopted a "pluralistic" view that many theorists have advocated (see, e.g., Carr, 2022). The theoretical novelty of this article is found in my attempt to connect the seven components of virtue in relation to Virtue literacy directly to specific artworks. These ideas are developed further in Article 5.

The article was written in Icelandic and published on December 31st 2018, in *Netla—the Online Journal of Pedagogy and Education*, a significant Icelandic outlet for educational research. Netla is published by the University of Iceland School of Education (<https://netla.hi.is>). Although the article is written in Icelandic, it is accompanied by an extensive 800-word English abstract.

3.2 Article 2: The Visual Arts in Contemporary Education: Exploring How Artworks Can Promote Moral Deliberation

In the second article, I discuss the results of my thematic analysis of pupils' texts and the responses they provided during the intervention, mostly from the pre- and post-tests. In the introduction, I discuss the role of education for moral development as suggested by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue at the University of Birmingham. I also reflect on the role of the visual arts in that respect and introduce the five artworks that pupils had written texts about during the intervention. These five artworks are Delacroix's "Liberty leading the people," Rockwell's "The problem we all live with," Hákonardóttir's "Fisherwomen," Riviere's "Daniel's answer to the king," and Munch's "The sick child." In the theoretical section, I went deeper into the role of the arts for education in general before outlining the backbone of Aristotelian character education and its historical developments. I concluded the theoretical section by discussing the relationship between truth, beauty and morality. The central focus is on Aristotle's writings on the educational value of imagination and imitation, especially for emotions and morality, and the role of the arts in providing such encounters.

I used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyse pupils' texts and responses, which gave invaluable insights into how they perceived the artworks, interpreted them, and put them into context regarding their personal experiences, their environment, and society.

From an educational perspective, the pupils displayed a rich and deep understanding of moral and societal issues. They displayed a significant capacity to deliberate on complex issues and express their thoughts about them, regardless of their varying skill levels in linguistic expression. That adolescents are capable of deep deliberation and solid argumentation should not be a surprise. However, much of contemporary educational literature and research shows that children in modern schools do not have too many opportunities to partake in reflections and discussions that are likely to help them develop further their communication skills, moral deliberation, critical thinking or aesthetic appreciation, and all of these are mentioned specifically as part of human flourishing in recent literature endorsed by UNESCO (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, 2023), OECD (Stevenson, 2022).

The article was published in 2020 as a chapter in a peer-reviewed book: *The validity and value of teacher education research*, edited by Kari Smith and published by Fagbokforlaget in Bergen, Norway. In 2022, the book was digitised and made available online on the publisher's website according to an open-access policy with a Creative Commons licence.

3.3 Article 3: Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland

In the third published article, I analysed four focus-group interviews: three groups of pupils and one group of teachers who participated in the intervention along with me. The article aimed to understand better the challenges and opportunities in implementing moral education in a traditional school setting, especially regarding specific and well-established subjects such as visual arts classes. The central research question was: What challenges and opportunities arise when moral deliberation is introduced into an established school setting during visual arts classes?

The article started with an introduction in which I reviewed the suggested value of the arts in education, beginning with a description of the growing emphasis on holistic and moral education within an all-encompassing framework of standardisation, measurements, and productivity and discussed how these

conflicting aims sit uneasily together. Then, I outlined the development of Aristotelian Character Education as a promising framework that could be beneficial for nudging educational discourse more into the realm of holistic education. This was followed by my discussion about the specific educational value of the arts in general and the visual arts in particular for moral cognition and moral imagination, building on Aristotle's (1988) ideas about the connection between representation and reality and Maxine Greene's (2000) emphasis on imagination and the arts for human cognition and existence.

Following that, I turned to the classroom setting, which sometimes seems to have been a double-edged sword by providing experiences that are not always educative but occasionally, on the contrary, mis-educative. After that, I discuss how the traditional classroom may have become too institutionalised with too much emphasis on practicality and instrumentalism. While educational theorists have been highly critical of the school system's structure, many attempts to reform education have been in vain. The American theorists David Tyack and William Tobin contribute these failures to an underlying, hidden structure which they coined as "the grammar of schooling" that describes how our perception of how schools should work is shaped by our own prior experiences in schools, to the extent that we are unaware of how these hidden attitudes shape our perception, similarly to how grammar shapes our language without us being aware of it—most of the time.

Through thematic analysis of the interviews, I established two overarching themes with five sub-themes. The first theme was "The aims of arts education," with three sub-themes: "The weight of tradition," "The value of the visual arts," and "The visual arts are recreational." The second theme was "The educational framework" with two sub-themes: "The graded school" and "Schools are factories." The results suggest that although the value of the arts for moral reflection and deliberation is widely recognised, interventions for moral education need to consider the existing educational framework, general educational aims, local school culture and the diverse characteristics of pupils and teachers.

The article was published online in the *Journal of Moral Education* on December 21st 2023. The *Journal of Moral Education* is a peer-reviewed international outlet published by Routledge (a Taylor and Francis group) on behalf of the Association of Moral Education.

3.4 Article 4: Horft um öxl: Listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi rýnir í eigin vegferð og þroskaferil í námi og starfi

The Icelandic title of this article translates to English as: “Looking back: An artist, teacher, and researcher reflects on his professional development.” In this study, I used action research to highlight the significance of long-term introspection and self-understanding for teachers. In a modern society, in which education is fundamental, the role of teachers is essential. However, a tension often arises between teachers’ personal views and societal expectations, creating a strain between systemic educational roles and personal beliefs. While an institutional culture often dominates in schools, as organic and independent beings, teachers need to develop skills to reflect on their profession and themselves (Guðjónsson, 2002).

In the article, I describe how I see teaching as an open-ended, continuous developmental process, similar to the artist’s profession. I describe my career exploration to understand my lifelong journey as an artist, teacher, and researcher. The theoretical foundation includes Maxine Greene’s (1973) ideas on the moral value of teaching and the significance of teachers’ awareness of their multifaceted roles. In the article, I argue that achieving this requires developing the virtues, especially “phronesis,” or practical wisdom, an intellectual virtue linking knowledge, curiosity, justice, and temperance (Aristotle, 1985). Data was collected through a research journal, including anecdotes, memories, reflections, and interviews with critical friends.

In the conclusion, I contextualise my developmental process and outline my evolution from artist to teacher to researcher, especially my challenges in working on my PhD project. This journey returns to the starting point, where the artist resumes control, inviting the teacher and researcher to contribute. The findings highlight the importance of teachers reflecting on their professional lives and the importance of engaging in meaningful discussions with colleagues while embracing their diverse roles and commitment.

The article was written in Icelandic and published on December 31st 2023, in *Netla—the Online Journal of Pedagogy and Education*, a significant Icelandic outlet for educational research. Netla is published by the University of Iceland School of Education (<https://netla.hi.is>). An extensive 600-word abstract in English accompanies the article.

3.5 Article 5: Moral education through dialogue on artworks

In this fifth and final article of the dissertation, I elaborate on some aspects of the first article. I view this article as the culmination of my doctoral journey; I also consider that it has the potential to be developed into a complete book later on, if my time and energy permit. I begin the article by discussing Aristotle's notion of imitation and poetry (mimesis and poiesis). Then I apply Aristotle's concepts to analyse real-life situations where a specific artwork had a profound societal effect, through imitation, both on the audience and on the subject of the artwork. Here I am referring to Marc Quinn's statue from 2012 of *Alison Lapper pregnant*. This sculpture displays well how art can impact society. Additionally, the sculpture exposes underlying attitudes within society, and, in the process, invites us to reflect and deliberate on moral issues with almost unprecedented impact.

In the following section on theoretical underpinnings, I concisely discussed moral education, virtue ethics, virtue literacy, and flourishing. I specifically discussed the modern conception of virtue ethics, often called Neo-Aristotelianism, which seeks to understand contemporary challenges through the lens of Aristotelian virtue ethics. I also address modern challenges as they have emerged in the context of flourishing as the aim of education, endorsed by UNESCO and OECD. Then, I provided a special subsection on the construct of virtue literacy, promoted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, as a core element in moral education. Here, I argued that the main components of virtue literacy are especially sensitive to being addressed and even educated through the visual arts by using a unique approach. In the following, I introduced *Visual Thinking Strategies* (Hailey et al., 2015) that allow for conceptualisation through emotional arousal and reflection.

In relation to the theoretical underpinnings, I used selected artworks in this article to introduce a visual thinking approach. While artworks can span the entirety of human existence, the ones I chose for this purpose come from different periods and styles but share distinctive narrative qualities. These artworks address three particular spheres of human life: "Everyday life" (Vermeer's *Milkmaid*, *Leyster's Self-portrait*), "Other people" (Abramovic's *The artist is present*), and "Spiritual experiences" (Kramskoi's *Christ in the wilderness*, Rivière's *Daniel's answer to the king*). My choice of artworks rests on my conviction that engaging in dialogue about art can help foster a better understanding of life's challenges, consequences, and implications in general, and our character in particular, as reflection and expression concerning external objects and beings are invariably redirected to our inner thoughts and self.

This fifth article is an invited chapter in a peer-reviewed book, *Nordic Perspectives on Moral and Citizenship Education*, which will be published by Brill later this year (2025). It is currently under review and has already passed the first round with minor revisions. The volume is edited by Kirsi Tirri at the University of Helsinki in Finland.

4 What have I learned?

In the introduction of this Kappa, I established the two dimensions of my research project I believe are descriptive of it. The first dimension focused on what Biesta and Burbules (2003, p. 2) have coined as *educational techniques and truths*:

Some argue, for example, that educational research should provide educators with educational techniques. On this account, the task of educators becomes one of implementing general educational “truths” that are produced elsewhere.

The second dimension addresses issues Biesta and Burbules (2003, p. 2) formulated as *making sense of educational situations*:

Others maintain that educational research provides different interpretations of educational reality. Practitioners can use these interpretations to understand and make sense of the educational situations they are in.

In the last section of the introductory chapter (1.3) I presented the three main research questions that have guided me through the research project:

1. What is the relationship between visual arts education and moral education?
2. How and in what ways can teachers connect education in the arts with moral education?
3. In what ways does my experience as an artist and educator shape my understanding of educational research?

These three main research questions connect differently to my proposed two dimensions. I see the first research question (**RQ 1**) as addressing the first dimension because the central idea behind the research project is built upon the idea of connecting the visual arts to moral education. I understand the second research question (**RQ 2**) as a bridge between the two dimensions because of the significance of the teacher’s role in education. While having access to solid teaching materials and methods may be considered necessary, it may not be

enough because I ultimately see the teacher's role as making the difference. The third research question (**RQ 3**) addresses my professional role as an art and philosophy teacher as an individual seeking to expand my horizons, develop professionally, and ultimately contribute to educational research. This last research question also has an empowering aspect because the emphasis within the teaching profession on professional development continues to be a responsibility of each teacher.

Throughout my research project, I have been making efforts to establish an understanding of the nature of the relationship between the arts and moral education. While the theoretical literature points directly to a significant relationship (Aristotle, 1988; Plato, 2007; Dewey, 2005; Eisner; 2002; Langer, 1957; Greene, 2000), there did not exist much empirical research that focused explicitly on this. Despite the challenges I have confronted in my research project regarding numerical measurements and statistical significance, the results of my thematic analysis discussed in **Article 2**, reveal the significance of inviting students to reflect and express their thoughts and feelings in connection with the moral dimensions of artworks. These results also display young people's capacities for profound thinking and deliberation, even though some of them have not yet developed their capacities for verbal expression and language. The quality of the language does not always seem to be in tandem with the quality of the thinking or the depth of the feeling. This points to the fact that an individual can have a feeling or thought without having developed the appropriate vocabulary to express that feeling. As Susanne Langer (1957, p. 7) wrote in referring to words and vocabulary, the absence of "handles for the mind" would not mean that the underlying emotional machinery of the self was not existing. Reflecting on the first research question based on this (*RQ1: What is the relationship between visual arts education and moral education?*), I believe that my research corroborates that artworks can be a valuable resource for moral education through qualities in the visual arts related to imagination, visual thinking, and aesthetic sensitivity, reaching beyond language (see **Articles 1 and 5**).

Regarding the second research question (*RQ2: How and in what ways can teachers connect education in the arts with moral education?*), I argue that for developing vocabulary and conversational skills about these matters, educators must be able to provide at least some means to help students develop their capacities in this respect. Similarly, when inspecting the pupils' artworks and reflecting upon them, the pupils display equal capacities to think and express their feelings and reflections on issues of a moral nature (see **Articles 2, 3, and 5**). Consider, for instance, the painting displaying pupils' notion of courage, presented here in chapter 2.3.6. (**Fig 13**) In line with the adage of "an image tells more than a

thousand words," the onlooker instantly understands the message almost in a visceral way; those who are familiar with stage fright might immediately respond emotionally to the scene portrayed in the painting, creating an opportunity for discussions that could eventually be beneficial for developing vocabulary and virtue literacy. However, while introducing moral education into art classes has a positive and promising appeal, I discussed explicitly in **Article 3** the challenges that may await those who wish to do so. Although such challenges are likely to arise, overcoming them is feasible and can be achieved with patience, consideration, care, and respect for students.

Reflecting on the third research question (*RQ3: In what ways does my experience as an artist and educator shape my understanding of educational research?*), I reckon that my multi-layered theoretical approach was quite challenging during my journey as an artist, teacher, and researcher. My various professional roles reflect three distinct theoretical domains: Virtue ethics, visual thinking, and education. I was grappling with questions about how I could connect (a) virtue ethics to (b) visual thinking and the arts; (c) pragmatic educational theories to (a) virtue ethics; and (b) visual thinking and the arts to (c) pragmatic educational theories. Although each pair can be valuable when viewed through the lens of the other, merging all three became an exciting challenge that I embraced after gaining new insights from the university course on action research I participated in and delving into literature on self-studies and autoethnography. Reviewing the literature revealed that I should make peace with my struggles. Maxine Greene (1973) highlights this in *Teacher as Stranger*, in which she describes the teacher as someone who must constantly be self-reflective, someone who challenges assumptions and seeks to inspire students. For her, teachers' freedom is imperative, and the role of imagination is paramount. Being a teacher is, therefore, not only about the transmission of knowledge but also about giving students room to shape their ideas and perspectives to become active citizens:

The teacher who wishes to be more than a functionary cannot escape the value problem or the difficult matter of moral choice. Confronting young people as he must, he presents himself as a representative—an agent—of what is taken to be adult culture. He is thus involved, sometimes against his will, in an enterprise more encompassing than the work he performs in his classroom: a process of perpetuating and remaking a distinctive way of life. (Greene, 1973, p. 181)

She promotes the idea of teachers adopting a "stranger's" mindset, advocating for a fresh and open perspective to cultivate critical thinking and creativity among students:

If [the teacher] is immersed and impermeable, he can hardly stir others to define themselves as individuals. If, on the other hand, he is willing to take the view of the homecomer and create a new perspective on what he has habitually considered real, his teaching may become the project of a person vitally open to his students and the world. (Greene, 1973, p. 270)

4.1 Concluding remarks

My PhD journey has provided me with important insights into the value of visual arts for moral education and a deeper understanding of the challenges facing educators and potentially policymakers aiming to reform educational practices. After ten years of pursuing my PhD research, I have learned many things and developed as a university teacher. My English has improved significantly—writing in English is undeniably challenging for a non-native speaker. I have written six articles and published five of them. I had countless meetings with my supervisors, wrote two progress reports each year, participated in various courses, and presented my research at numerous conferences, both internationally and in Iceland. I have also developed a university course (6 ECTS) with my colleagues and friends (Þóra Björg Sigurðardóttir, Kristian Guttesen, Elsa Haraldsdóttir, Anna Halldórsdóttir, and Guðbjörg Rannveig Jóhannesdóttir) who are interested in the value of the arts and literature for moral education. Two versions of that course have been conducted twice, the last time this spring semester (2025).

So, what now? Looking back, I see this research project as a pilot for further research. I have been investigating the feasibility of further developing my approaches to using the visual arts for moral education. However, many questions remain unanswered. My questionnaire could be refined for use within a broader research scope, applicable to different age groups, to understand the development of virtue-related language better. Teaching materials could also be enhanced further to support art teachers in encouraging the use of creativity to help pupils develop their understanding of virtues. As I have already mentioned, the fifth article has the potential to be developed into a complete book in which a larger number of artworks would be analysed for use in philosophical dialogues about ethics. I will use my administrative position at the Iceland University of the Arts to motivate and inspire our students and teachers to integrate moral education into their work. While I consider completing this dissertation to mark the end of my PhD studies, I also view it as a new beginning.

Bibliography

- Adams, T. E., Ellis, C., & Jones, S. H. (2017). Autoethnography. In J. Matthes, C. S. Davis, & R. F. Potter (Eds.), *The International encyclopedia of communication research methods* (pp. 1–11).
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011>
- Aristotle. (1961). *Poetics* (K. A. Telford, Trans.). Gateway Editions.
- Aristotle. (1985). *Nicomachean ethics* (T. Irwin, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company.
- Aristotle. (1988). *The politics* (S. Everson, Ed.; B. Jowett, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.
- Aristotle. (2016). *De anima* (C. J. Shields, Trans.). Clarendon Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1969). *Visual thinking*. University of California Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and visual perception: A psychology of the creative eye*. University of California Press.
- Arthur, J. (2020). *The formation of character in education: From Aristotle to the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Arthur, J., Crick, R. D., Samuel, E., Wilson, K., & McGettrick, B. (2006). *Character education: The formation of virtues and dispositions in 16–19 year olds with particular reference to the religious and the spiritual*. Canterbury Christ Church University.
- Arthur, J., Harrison, T., Carr, D., Kristjánsson, K., & Davison, I. (2014). *Knightly virtues: Enhancing virtue literacy through stories. Research report*. University of Birmingham. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/KnightlyVirtuesReport.pdf>
- Bamford, A. (2009). *Arts and cultural education in Iceland*. Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.
https://www.stjornarradid.is/media/menntamalaraduneyti-media/media/mrn-pdf_reports/ann_bamford.pdf
- Baumgarten, A. G. (1954). *Reflections on poetry*. University of California Press.
- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2005). *What Works in Character Education: A Research-Driven Guide for Educators*. Character Education Partnership. [Online].
<http://characterandcitizenship.org/images/files/wwcepractitioners.pdf>

- Biesta, G. J. J., & Burbules, N. C. (2003). *Pragmatism and educational research*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2018). What if? In C. Naughton, G. Biesta, & D. R. Cole (Eds.), *Art, artists and pedagogy: Philosophy and the arts in education* (pp. 11–20). Routledge.
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2022). *World-centred education: A view for the present*. Routledge.
- Björnsdóttir, L. (2024). “Það má einhvern veginn skapa alls konar list, það er enginn að pæla í því”—Hvaða tækifæri felast í skapandi vinnu til að ræða og skilja tilfinningar? Unpublished Master’s thesis. Iceland University of the Arts. <https://hdl.handle.net/1946/48638> [In Icelandic]
- Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. S. (2006). Communication as autoethnography. In G. J. Shepherd, J. St. John, & T. Striphos (Eds.), *Communication as ... Perspectives on theory* (pp. 110–122). SAGE.
- Bohlin, K. E. (2005). *Teaching character education through literature: Awakening the moral imagination in secondary classrooms*. RoutledgeFalmer.
- Bohlin, K. E. (2014a). Foreword. In J. Arthur, T. Harrison, D. Carr, K. Kristjánsson, & I. Davison, I. *Knightly virtues: Enhancing virtue literacy through stories. Research report*. (p. 4) University of Birmingham. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/KnightlyVirtuesReport.pdf>
- Bohlin, K. E. (2014b). Virtue: An argument worth rehearsing. *Journal of Character Education*, 10(1), 53–59.
- Box, G. E. P., & Draper, N. R. (1987). *Empirical model-building and response surfaces*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. Sage.
- Carr, D. (2022). On the educational significance and value of visual arts. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 56(2), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.5406/15437809.56.2.01>
- Carr, D., & Harrison, T. (2015). *Educating character through stories*. Imprint Academic.
- Carroll, N. (2003). Aesthetics and the educative powers of art. In R. Curren (Ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education* (pp. 365–383). Blackwell.
- Carroll, N. (2010). At the crossroads of ethics and aesthetics. *Philosophy and Literature*, 34, 248–259.

- Cherryholmes, C. H. (1992). Notes on pragmatism and scientific realism. *Educational Researcher*, 21(6), 13–17.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Cupchik, G. C. (2016). *The Aesthetics of Emotion: Up the Down Staircase of the Mind-Body*. Cambridge University Press.
- Curren, R., & Kotzee, B. (2014). Can virtue be measured? *Theory and Research in Education*, 12(3), 266–282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878514545205>
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1990). *The school and society and The child and the curriculum*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (2005). *Art as experience*. Perigee Books.
- Dewey, J., & Bentley, A. F. (1949). *Knowing and the known*. Beacon Press.
- Dobbs, S. M. (1998). *Learning in and Through Art: A Guide to Discipline-Based Art Education*. Getty Education Institute for the Arts.
- Dyer, J. (2007). The place of musica in medieval classifications of knowledge. *The Journal of Musicology*, 24(1), 3–71.
- Eikeland, O. (2006). Phronesis, Aristotle and action research. *International Journal of Action Research* 2(1), 5–53.
- Eikeland, O. (2008). *The Ways of Aristotle. Aristotelian Phronesis, Aristotelian Philosophy of Dialogue, and Action Research*. Peter Lang.
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. Yale University Press.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Altamira Press.
- Finke, S., Netland, T., & Solli, M. (2023). Art and linguistic bodies: A transformative view. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-023-09948-5>
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1979). *Truth and method* (W. Glen-Doepel, J. Cumming, & G. Barden, Trans.; 2. ed.). Sheed and Ward. (1965).
- Geertz, C. (1972). Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. *Daedalus*, 101(1), 1–37.

- Gísladóttir, K. R., Óskarsdóttir, E., Jónsson, Í. R., & Sívertsen, Á. M. (forthcoming). "When we change our thoughts, then the world around us changes": The role of art-based methods and living educational theories in knowledge generation. In *The Bloomsbury handbook of arts-based educational research*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger: Educational philosophy for the modern age*. Wadsworth.
- Greene, M. (2000). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. Jossey-Bass.
- Hailey, D., Miller, A., & Yenawine, P. (2015). Understanding visual literacy: The visual thinking strategies approach. In D. M. Baylen & A. D'Alba (Eds.), *Essentials of Teaching and Integrating Visual and Media Literacy: Visualizing Learning* (pp. 49–74). Springer.
- Harðarson, A. (2019). Aristotle's conception of practical wisdom and what it means for moral education in schools. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1585240>
- Harrison, T., Bawden, M., & Rogerson, L. (2016). *Teaching Character Through Subjects: Educating the virtues through and within 14 secondary school subjects*. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.
https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Teaching_Character_Through_Subjects_2016.pdf
- Hetland, L., Winner, E., Veenema, S., & Sheridan, K. M. (2007). *Studio Thinking: The real benefits of visual arts education*. Teachers College Press.
- Housen, A. (2002). Aesthetic thought, critical thinking and transfer. *Arts and Learning Journal*, 18(1), 99–132.
- Housen, A. (2007). Art viewing and aesthetic development: Designing for the viewer. In P. Villeneuve (Ed.), *Periphery to center: Art museum education in the 21st century* (pp. 172–189). National Art Education Association.
- Hofstadter, D. R. (1980). *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An eternal golden braid*. Penguin books.
- Hursthouse, R. (1987). *Beginning Lives*. Blackwell.
- Hursthouse, R. (1999). *On virtue ethics*. Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R., & Pettigrove, G. (2023). Virtue ethics. In E. N. Zalta & U. Nodelman (Eds.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2023 Edition).
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/ethics-virtue/>
- Jackson, P. W. (1990). Introduction. In John Dewey, *The school and society and The child and the curriculum* (pp. ix–xxxvii). The University of Chicago Press.

- Jackson, P. W. (1998). *John Dewey and the lessons of art*. Yale University Press
- James, W. (2010). *Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking*. Floating Press. (Originally published 1907).
- Janson, H. W., & Janson, D. J. (1977). *History of Art* (2nd ed.). Harry N. Abrams.
- Johnson, M. (2007). *The meaning of the body: Aesthetics of human understanding*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Jónsson, Ó. P., Harðarson, A., Sigurðardóttir, Þ. B., Jack, R., & Jóelsdóttir, S. S. (2019). Young people, old literature and character education in Icelandic schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 65(2), 212–225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2019.1659407>
- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. (2022). *A framework for character education in schools*. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/FrameworkforCharacterEducation.pdf>
- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. (2023). Statement on flourishing as an educational aim (various authors). The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Flourishing-as-an-Educational-Aim.pdf>
- Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. (2024). *About the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues*. https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/?page_id=11
- Júlíusdóttir, R. K. (2009). Multifaceted approach to visual arts education: Themes in Icelandic studies 1995–2007. In L. Lindström, *Nordic visual arts education in transition: A research review* (pp. 113–127). Vetenskapsrådet.
- Kitcher, P. (2022). *The main enterprise of the world: Rethinking education*. Oxford University Press.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Routledge.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2007). *Aristotle, Emotions and Education*. Ashgate.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2015). *Aristotelian Character Education*. Routledge.
- Langer, S. K. (1957). *Problems of art: Ten philosophical lectures*. Scribner's.
- Lichtman, M. (2010). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Martin, B. H. (2016). Teaching the arts as a second language: A school-wide policy approach to arts integration. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 118(2), 116–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2016.1160261>

- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. (2014). *The Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory Schools - With Subjects Areas*. Author.
- Murphy, J. P., & Murphy, A. R. (1990). *Pragmatism: From Peirce to Davidson*. Westview Press.
- Oatley, K. (1999). Why fiction may be twice as true as fact: Fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation. *Review of General Psychology*, 3(2), 101–117.
- Oddsdóttir, Á., Sæbjörnsson, E. (Ed.), Obrist, H. U., & Ley, A. (Ed). (2023). *Art can heal: The life and work of Sigríður Björnsdóttir*. Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König.
- Peirce, C. S. (1878). How to make our ideas clear. *Popular Science Monthly*, 12, 286–302.
- Peters, R. S. (1960). *The concept of motivation*. Routledge.
- Plato. (1980). *Meno* (G. M. A. Grube, Trans.). Hackett Publishing.
- Plato. (2007). *The Republic* (H. D. P. Lee & D. Lee, Trans.). Penguin.
- Poulos, C. N. (2021). *Essentials of Autoethnography*. American Psychological Association.
- Ryle, G. (2009). The thinking of thoughts: What is 'le Penseur' doing? In J. Tanney (Ed.), *Logic lane: Collected essays 1929–1968*. Routledge.
- Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Sanderse, W. (2016). Aristotelian action research: its value for studying character education in schools. *Educational Action Research*, 24(5), 446-459.
- Schiller, F. (1967). *On the aesthetic education of man: In a series of letters* (E. M. Wilkinson & L. A. Willoughby, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- Schoen-Nazzaro, M. B. (1978). Plato and Aristotle on the ends of music. *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, 34(3), 261–273.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/705684ar>
- Sevigny, M. J. (1987). Discipline-based art education and teacher education. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 21(2), 95–126.
- Shamoo, A. E., & Resnik, D. B. (2015). *Responsible Conduct of Research* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Snow, N. E. (2017). Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics. In N. E. Snow (Ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Virtue* (pp. 321–342). Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199385195.013.34>

- Stevenson, M. (2022). *Education for human flourishing*. Centre for Strategic Education.
- Thayer, E. M. (2016). *Að taka aðalnámskrá grunnskóla í sátt: viðhorf myndlistakennara til nýjunga í aðalnámskrá grunnskóla 2013* [Master's thesis, Listaháskóli Íslands (Iceland University of the Arts)]. Skemman. <https://hdl.handle.net/1946/25467> [In Icelandic]
- The jamovi project. (2025). *jamovi* (Version 2.6) [Computer Software]. Retrieved from <https://www.jamovi.org>
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (1981). *The Hobbit: Or there and back again*. Unwin Paperbacks.
- Tyack, D., & Tobin, W. (1994). The “grammar” of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), 453–479. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312031003453>
- Tyack, D., & Cuban, W. (1995). *Tinkering towards Utopia: A century of public school reform*. Harvard University Press.
- Waage, I. Ó., Kristjánsson, K., & Björnsdóttir, A. (2013). Hver eru viðhorf grunnskólakennara til lýðræðis í skólasterfi? *Hugur*, 25, 75–92.
- Waage, I. Ó., Kristjánsson, K., & Björnsdóttir, A. (2015). What are Icelandic teachers' attitudes to democracy in education? In P. R. Carr, P. L. Thomas, J. Gorlewski og B. J. Porfilio (Eds.) *Democracy and decency, what has education got to do with it?* (pp. 99–118). Information Age Publishing.
- Waage, I. Ó. (2017, April, 4). Encouraging pupils' virtue literacy through the visual arts. *The Jubilee Centre blog: Virtue insight*. <https://virtueinsight.wordpress.com/2017/04/04/encouraging-pupils-virtue-literacy-through-the-visual-arts/>
- Waage, I. Ó. (2018). Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. <https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2019.18>
- Waage, I. Ó. (2020). *Flourishing as an educational aim: An insight into the value of artworks for moral deliberation on life's challenges*. Unpublished conference paper for the 8th annual Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues conference at Oriol College, Oxford University, Friday 3rd–Sunday 5th January 2020. https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Waage_Full.pdf
- Waage, I. Ó. (2022). The visual arts in contemporary education: Exploring how artworks can promote moral deliberation. In K. Smith (Ed.), *Validity and value of teacher education research* (pp. 285–302). Fagbokforlaget. <https://doi.org/10.55669/oa050314>

- Waage, I. Ó. (2023a). Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland. *Journal of Moral Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2290977>
- Waage, I. Ó. (2023b). Horft um öxl: Listamaður, kennari og rannsakandirýnir í eigin vegferð og þroskaferil í námi og starfi. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. <https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2023.23>
- Waage, I. Ó. (Forthcoming). Moral education through teaching the visual arts. In K. Tirri (Ed.) *Nordic Perspectives on moral and citizenship education*. Brill.
- Wachowiak, F. (1993). *Emphasis art: A qualitative art Program for elementary and middle schools*. HarperCollins.
- White, H. (2010). William James's pragmatism: Ethics and the individualism of others. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, 2(1).
<https://doi.org/10.4000/ejap.941>
- Whitehead, J. (2015). The practice of helping students to find their first person voice in creating living-theories for education. In H. Bradbury (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of action research* (pp. 246–254). Sage.
- Whitford, W. G. (1923). Brief history of art education in the United States. *The Elementary School Journal*, 24(2), 109–115.
- Wivestad, S. M. (2013). "Upbuilding examples" for adults close to children. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 32(5), 515–532.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-012-9327-2>
- Wivestad, S. M. (2023). A challenge to self-education: The purpose and potential of a database annotating works of art for adults who are existential exemplars for children. *Journal of Moral Education*, 53(2), 255–272.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2218587>
- Wolff, T. F. (1985). Introduction. In J. Brown (Ed.), *Occluded front: James Turrell* (pp. 9–10). The Lapis Press.
- Wright, J. C., Warren, M. T., & Snow, N. E. (2021). *Understanding virtue: Theory and measurement*. Oxford University Press.
- Yenawine, P. (2003). Jump starting visual literacy: Thoughts on image selection. *Art Education*, 56(1), 6–12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3194026>.
- Yenawine, P. (2013). *Visual thinking strategies: Using art to deepen learning across school disciplines*. Harvard Education Press.
- Zeichner, K. M. (1993). Action research: Personal renewal and social reconstruction. *Educational Action Research*, 1(2), 199-219.

Paper I

Paper I



Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

► Abstract ► Um höfundinn ► About the author ► Heimildir

Innleiðingu nýrra aðalnámskráa 2011 fylgdu auknar almennar siðferðilegar áherslur þvert á námsgreinar með tilkomu hæfniviðmiða og grunnþátta menntunar sem eiga ýmislegt sameiginlegt með mannkostamenntun. Engu að síður virðist þörf á því að siðferðileg markmið aðalnámskrárinnar verði dregin betur fram og þeim fundinn traustur farvegur. Mannkostamenntun er reist á samtímaþenningum um aristótélíska dygðasiðfræði þar sem vitsmunaleg ígrundun, geðshræringar og virkur vilji skipta höfuðmáli. Að þroska með sér dygðir og mannkosti er ævilangt verkefni en hlutverk skólanna getur verið það að efla svokallað dygðalæsi nemenda, sem felst í að þekkja og skilja dygðir og geta hugsað á gagnrýninn hátt um siðferðileg álitamál. List- og verkgreinar snerta mikilvæg svið í hugmyndum Aristótelesar um fullkomna dygð, einkum vegna þess að listaverk geta vakið geðshræringar. Listir hafa frá örófi alda fylgt manninum og þær eru nátengdar vitsmunum okkar, sjálfsvitund og tilfinningalífi. Listirnar búa yfir eiginleikum sem felast í eftirlíkingunni og hjálpa okkur að skilja aðrar manneskjur og öðlast þannig dýpri skilning á hlutskipti annarra. Þannig geta fjölbreytt listaverk frá ýmsum tímaskeiðum og af ýmsum toga veitt okkur siðferðilega þekkingu og þau geta verið vettvangur samræðna og skodanaskipta um margvísleg siðferðileg álitamál sem ýmist eiga rætur sínar í samfélagslegum málefnum eða persónulegu innra lífi. Sum listaverk byggjast á persónulegri tjáningu listamannsins, önnur eru pólitískari og snerta mannréttindi í viðum skilningi og enn önnur eru tilvistarlegs eðlis og veita okkur innsýn í tilraun manneskjunnar til að skilja sjálfa sig andspænis samfélaginu og hinni víðu veröld. Þessir eiginleikar listanna sýna fram á að listgreinakennsla gegnir mikilvægu hlutverki í almennri menntun.

Efnisorð: mannkostamenntun, myndmennt, dygðir, geðshræringar, listaverk, dygðalæsi, Aristóteles.

Inngangur

Oft hafa verið uppi skiptar skodanir um hlutverk listarinnar í mannlífínu. Er listinni ætlað að standa sjálfstæð utan við samfélagið og þarfir mannanna og lúta einungis eigin lögmálum („listin listarinnar vegna“) eða getur listin verið gagnleg og fært okkur mikilsverða þekkingu um lífið, samfélagið og okkur sjálf (sjá t.d. Bakhtin, 1990; Berger, 1972)? Víst er að listin hefur oft reynst vera tvíeggjað sverð og flestar tilraunir til að skilgreina hana þröngt hafa runnið út í sandinn. Ég hygg að það sé farsælast að útiloka ekkert um hlutverk listarinnar að svo stöddu; þótt í þessari grein sé hugað sérstaklega að menntandi eiginleikum listarinnar á vettvangi skólastarfs eru það engan veginn lokaorðin um hið víðfeðma svið listanna sem teygir anga sína ýmist langt út fyrir sólkerfið um borð í geimkönnunarfarinu Voyager II eða djúpt ofan í hlydýpi sálarinnar.

Ég hef um langt skeið fengist við kennslu í myndlist annars vegar og heimspekilegri samræðu hins vegar þar sem viðfangsefnið hafa spannað vitt svið siðferðilegra álitamála. Ég hef ennfremur rekið mig á þá staðreynd að lítið er um efni þar sem fjallað er sérstaklega um möguleika myndlistarkennslu í þessu tilliti, þó að ýmislegt nýlegt efni meg finna sem tengir bókmenntir, tónlist og kvikmyndir við siðferðismenntun (sjá t.d. Sanderse, 2012; Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015; Kim, 2016; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse og Wright, 2017).

Það er von mín að þessi grein, sem er hluti af doktorsrannsókn minni um tengsl mannkostamenntunar og myndlistar, geti verið innlegg í þessa umræðu. Hér mun ég segja frá möguleikum og hlutverki myndlistarkennslu í mannkostamenntun með hliðsjón af þeim siðferðilegu áherslum sem birtast í grunnþáttum menntunar. Ég mun færa rök fyrir því að kennsla í myndmennt búi yfir margvíslegum sóknarfærum til að efla það sem kallað er dygdalæsi (e. virtue literacy), en dygdalæsi er færni sem getur hjálpað nemendum að ígrunda álitamál og tengja þau eigin reynslu, hugsun og ímyndunarafl.

Grunnþættir menntunar, hæfniviðmið og listgreinar

Innleiðingu nýrrar menntastefnu árið 2011 (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti, 2011) fylgdi að meðal annars var dregið úr áherslum á hin hefðbundnu þekkingar- og færnimarkmið sem eldri aðalnámskrár höfðu áður haft í öndvegi (sjá t.d. Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1989, 1999). Þessi breyting virtist vera til marks um aukna meðvitund um almenn siðferðileg markmið menntunar: velferð, persónulega og félagslega hæfni, sjálfsþekkingu og meðvitund um samfélagið sem lífræna og kraftmikla heild. Upp úr þessum jarðvegi spruttu sex grunnþættir menntunar; (1) læsi, (2) lýðræði og mannréttindi, (3) sjálfbærni, (4) heilbrigði og velferð, (5) sköpun og (6) jafnrétti. Grunnþáttum menntunar var ætlað að fléttast inn í hefðbundnar námsgreinar, tengja saman innri lífæðar þeirra og tryggja að meðfram námsefninu myndu nemendur dýpka skilning sinn á sjálfum sér og öðrum. Í stað eldri þekkingar- og færnimarkmiða voru sett fram hæfniviðmið í greinasviðum aðalnámskrár (sjá Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti, 2013), sum þeirra eru almenns siðferðilegs eðlis og eru í anda þess sem kallað er *mannkostamenntun* (e. character education). Hér áður fyrir var jafnan talað um *skapgerðarmenntun* en lifandi umræða síðustu missera meðal fræðimanna um mikilvægi siðferðilegrar menntunar fæddi af sér hið geðþekka hugtak *mannkostamenntun* í stað þess að talað sé um skapgerð þegar mannkostir, dygðir og farsæld eru annars vegar¹. Í þeim köflum greinasviða aðalnámskrárinnar frá 2013 sem fjalla um list- og verkgreinar er gefinn ádráttur um siðferðilegar áherslur:

Listupplifun opnar farveg til að skoða og meta eigin gildi og viðhorf, á beinan eða óbeinan hátt, út frá margvíslegum leiðum og miðlum. Í listum geta nemendur rýnt í gildi samfélagsins á ólíkum tímum og mismunandi menningarsvæðum og einnig persónuleg gildi, s.s. gagnvart einstaklingum, fjölskyldu, samfélaginu, vinnu og leik, náttúru og umhverfi, fegurð, ljótlega, ofbeldi og ást.

Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti, 2013, bls. 143

Ýmislegt í þessum hugmyndum fellur vel að list- og verkgreinum þar sem þær snerta mikilvæg svið í þeirri heildarhugmynd um fullkomna dygd sem Aristóteles skilgreindi á sínum tíma, einkum hið innra líf manneskjunnar (sjá t.d. Aristóteles, 2011). Að áliti Aristótelesar er tilfinningaþroski mikilvægur þáttur í farsælu lífi einstaklingsins, en hann hafði komið auga á mikilvæg tengsl listanna við tilfinningar og geðshræringar. Í kaflanum um sjónlistir í aðalnámskrá grunnskóla (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti, 2013, bls. 149) segir m.a.: „Við lok 10. bekkjar getur nemandi: [...] greint hvernig samtímalist fæst við álitamálefni [svo] daglegs lífs með fjölbreyttum nálgunum sem oft fela í sér samþættingu listgreina“, og „[...] túlkað listaverk og hönnun með tilvísun í eigin reynslu, nærumhverfi, samtímann, siðfræði og fagurfræði“. Í þessu samhengi er rétt að hafa einnig í huga þá mikilvægu eiginleika sem listir og verkgreinar búa yfir og tengjast

¹ Í þessu samhengi má nefna ráðstefnu Siðfræðistofnunar Háskóla Íslands um heimspeki Kristjáns Kristjánssonar: Geðshræringar, skapgerð, sjálf og frelsi sem haldin var í Háskóla Íslands í Odda, 29. apríl 2017. Upptökur af ráðstefnunni má hlusta á hér: http://sidfraedi.hi.is/upptokur_fra_radstefnunni_gedshraeringar_skapgerd_sjalf_og_frelsi

sköpun, tjáningu og fegurðarskyni. Hinir verklegu og skapandi þættir gefa nemendum „[...] tækifæri til að virkja og efla ímyndunarafl sitt, þjálfast í að taka ákvarðanir þar sem þeir veга og meta mismunandi valkosti og sjá afleiðingar af vali sínu“ (Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti, 2013, bls. 140). Þannig má sjá að hið siðferðilega gildi list- og verkgreina er ekki síst fólgið í skapandi athöfnum þar sem hugur, hjarta og hönd vinna saman. Slíkar hugmyndir eru ekki nýjar af nálinni því lengst af voru list- og verkgreinar hornsteinninn í því að tengja saman hinar þrjár menntunarlegu viddir; hina þekkingarfræðilegu, hina fagurfræðilegu og hina siðferðilegu (sjá t.d. Ongstad, 2013).

Í aðalnámskrá er hlutverk list- og verkgreina ágætlega skilgreint og þeim virðist vera ætlað töluvert rými í stundatöflu nemenda, en þrátt fyrir það bendir ýmislegt til þess að hægt og rólega fjari undan kennslu í þessum greinum. Þegar rýnt er í hina umfangsmiklu starfsháttaramsókn sem gerð var í reykvískum grunnskólum á árunum 2008–2013 kemur í ljós að milli sjöunda og tíunda bekkjar virðist kennslugreinin *myndmennt* vera í frjálsum falli sem mikilvæg námsgrein í augum nemenda (Gerður G. Óskarsdóttir o.fl., 2014, bls. 266). Ennfremur virðast kennarar í list- og verkgreinum vera einangraðir þar sem lítið virðist fara fyrir innihaldsríku þverfaglegu samstarfi (Gerður G. Óskarsdóttir o.fl., 2014, bls. 254). Myndlistarkennarinn Elín María Thayer (2016) rannsakadi viðhorf myndmenntakennara til nýju aðalnámskrárinnar og komst að þeirri niðurstöðu að þrátt fyrir jákvæðan hug viðmælenda hennar þá virtist vera skortur á kennsluefni og leiðbeiningum um hvernig vinna mætti með hæfniviðmiðin og tengja þau kennslu og námsmati í myndmennt eða sjónlistum.

Í þessu ljósi má spyrja hvort athafnir hafi fylgt orðum í þeirri þróun sem rakin hefur verið hér. Almennar siðferðilegar áherslur eru líkast til heldur almennar og fyrir vikið er hætt við að skrefin sem taka þarf verði hikandi. Kannski þarf að taka betur fram hvernig mæta skuli hinum siðferðilegu markmiðum aðalnámskrárinnar og finna leiðir til að tengja saman hug, hjarta og hönd.

Mannkostir, dygðir og geðshreringar

Á síðari tímum hefur umræða um mannkostamenntun orðið meira áberandi í menntaransóknum og menntastefnu (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015). Á yngstu skólastigunum á Bretlandseyjum hefur áherslan verið á siðrænar dygðir á borð við heiðarleika, sjálfsgaga, sanngirni, þakklæti og virðingu. Alla jafna telst mannkostamenntun vera hluti af siðferðilegri menntun (e. moral education) sem er aftur hluti af hinu víðfedma sviði menntunar um gildi (e. values education) og snertir vitsmunalegar (e. intellectual) og borgaralegar (e. civic) dygðir og framkvæmdadygðir (e. performance virtues) (Arthur o.fl., 2017). Sálfræðingarnir Christopher Peterson og Martin Seligman (2004) gera ráð fyrir að hinar sex megin dygðir sem finna má þvert á öll samfélög; vísdomur (e. wisdom) og þekking (e. knowledge), hugrekki (e. courage), manngæsa (e. humanity), réttlæti (e. justice), hófsemi (e. temperance) og handanvera (eða yfirsíkilvitleiki) (e. transcendence) séu samsettar af 26 mælanlegum mannkostum (e. character strengths) sem hver um sig geti haft ólíkar birtingarmyndir og séu að sama skapi mótanlegir þar sem aðstæður hverju sinni og eiginleikar einstaklingsins skipti máli (Peterson og Seligman, 2004).

Hugmyndin um mannkostamenntun er hvergi nærri ný af nálinni. Rætur hennar má rekja aftur til Forn-Grikkja, en þeir voru áhugasamir um menntun sálarinnar. Sókrates (Platón, 2009b) hélt því fram að ef manneskja kynni skil á hinu góða og rétta myndi hún vilja breyta í samræmi við það (Arthur, Crick, Samuel, Wilson og McGettrick, 2006). Aristóteles, sem var nemandi Platóns, var um margt ósammála lærimeistara sínum og eru kenningar hans meginuppistaðan í samtímakenningum um dygðasiðfræði og umræðu um mannkostamenntun (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse og Jones, 2015). Aristóteles taldi að dygðir væru samsettar úr nokkrum þáttum, bæði af toga vitsmuna og tilfinninga. Ólíkt Platóni, sem taldi að réttlát manneskja breytti af vitsmunahvötum, taldi Aristóteles að tilfinningarnar hvettu okkur til þess að breyta af dygð. Dygðug breytni eða athafnir ættu rætur sínar í þeim dygðum sem

einstaklingurinn hefði þroskað með sér og gert að vana. Í þessu samhengi er þó mikilvægt að áreitta að athafnir kunna að vera réttar eða góðar án þess að eiga rætur sínar í dygd; breytni okkar kann að vera stjórnad af skyldurækni okkar eða hagsmunum, en hin dygduga manneskja myndi þekja hið góða, vilja hið góða og búa yfir færni eða getu til að breyta í samræmi við það, og fullkomin dygd myndi þarfnast siðvits; hygginda (e. practical wisdom, good sense, gr. frónesis) (Arthur o.fl., 2006, sjá einnig Kristján Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; Carr og Harrison, 2015).

Frá fornöld þróadist mannkostamenntun með framgangi kristni í Evrópu, meðal annars með skrifum Tómasar af Akvínó sem reisti kenningu sína um siðferðisþroska á dygdasiðfræði Aristótelesar, með sérstakri áherslu á tilfinningar og leiðsögn hjartans (Arthur o.fl., 2006). Í þessu samhengi þarf þó að hafa í huga að söguleg tengsl mannkostamenntunar við trúarbrögð hafa á síðustu tímum vakið ugg um að mannkostamenntun feli í sér einhvers konar trúarlega innrætingu. Á síðari hluta tuttugustu aldar komst aristótelísk dygdasiðfræði í sviðsljósið, einkum fyrir tilstuðlan skrifá heimspækingsins Elisabethar Anscombe (Carr og Harrison, 2015; sjá einnig Anscombe, 1958, 1994) og Philippu Foot (2001). Anscombe rakti takmarkanir skyldusiðfræði og leiklokakenninga og hvatti til endurskoðunar á aristótelískri dygdasiðfræði (Carr og Harrison, 2015). Kjarninn í hugmyndum Anscombe var áherslan á mannkosti (e. character), dygd (e. virtue) og farsæld (e. flourishing). Skrif Anscombe hafa haft mikil áhrif í heimspékilegri siðfræði, siðferðilegri sálarfræði (e. moral psychology) og heimspéki menntunar.

Þannig má sjá að mannkostamenntun hefur þróast að mestu leyti, þó ekki eingöngu, á grunni dygdasiðfræði (Arthur o.fl., 2015). Sem slík býr dygdasiðfræðin yfir mikilvægri hagnýtri vidd þar sem góðar siðvenjur eru grundvöllurinn að þróun siðferðilegrar þekkingar (Sherman, 1999, bls. 35). Jafnvel þótt menntun á bernskuárum sé mikilvæg fyrir siðferðisþroska einstaklingsins, segir Nancy Sherman (1999, bls. 35) að hún ein dugi skammt því síðar á lífsleiðinni þurfi siðferðileg hyggindi eða siðvit að koma til skjalanna. Mannkostamenntun þarfnast þess einnig að góðar fyrirmyndir séu til staðar í uppvexti barna (Sherman, 1999). Slíkar fyrirmyndir er oft að finna í röðum kennara, sem hafa áhrif á mótun skapgerðar einstaklinganna, og hvort sem kennurum líkar það betur eða verr, þá eru þeir ávallt fyrirmyndir nemenda sinna, til góðs eða ills eftir atvikum (Berkowitz og Bier, 2006). Þetta snýst ekki um það að nemandinn sýni af sér sömu breytni eða viðhorf og kennarinn umhugsunarlaust, heldur um að fylgja siðferðilegri afstöðu hans, sem felst í því að ígrunda málefni og valkosti með gagnrýnum huga, spyrja spurninga og byggja afstöðu sína á þeim aðstæðum sem ríkja í hvert skipti; hlusta á hjartað. Spurningin snýst því ekki um það hvaða afstöðu kennarinn hefur til málefna, heldur hvernig hann tekst á við álitamálin.

Mannkostamenntun hefur verið að ryðja sér til rúms sem siðferðilega réttlætanager, sálfræðilega raunhæf og skilvirk leið í menntun barna og ungmenna (Arthur o.fl., 2006; sjá einnig Berkowitz og Bier, 2006; Kristján Kristjánsson, 2007). Áhrif mannkostamenntunar hafa verið rannsókuð ítarlega (Arthur o.fl., 2006), en raunverulegt gildi hennar felst ekki aðeins í samfélagslegum áhrifum hennar heldur einnig í því hvernig hún styður einstaklinginn á vegferð sinni til farsældar (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015).

Þrátt fyrir þessa þróun mála togast á ólíkar hugmyndir innan skólakerfisins; sumir kennarar trúa því stöðugt að skólar eigi að einbeita sér að miðlun viðurkenndrar þekkingar og hefðbundnum námsgreinum og að forðast beri að fjalla um hvers konar viðfangsefni sem varða hið siðferðilega og persónulega svið einstaklingsins, slíkt skuli vera á forræði heimilanna (Arthur o.fl., 2006). Slíkar hugmyndir má líklega rekja til óttans við innrætingu og þær mætti réttlæta í ljósi menningarlegs margbreytileika nemenda hvað varðar trú eða uppruna. Slík hugsun boðar að skólar skuli forðast að þröngva kennisetningum eins samfélagshóps upp á annan, og þá sérstaklega þegar um er að ræða minnihlutahópa. Jafnvel þótt slíkt hlutleysi sé virðingarvert getur það leitt til viðurkenningar á samfélagslegri og menntunarlegri kyrrstöðu og valdið því að nemendur fari á mis við menntunarlegan ávinning af gagnrýnum samræðum um viðkvæm málefni sem geta dýpkað skilning á gildum, dygðum og löstum (sjá t.d. Bohlin, 2005, 2014).

Dygðasiðfræði og ný-aristótelismi

Eins og fram hefur komið má rekja rætur mannkostamenntunar meðal annars til samtímakenna um dygðasiðfræði Aristótelesar, sem gjarnan eru kenndar við ný-aristótelisma (e. neo-Aristotelism) (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015). Eitt helsta viðfangsefni dygðasiðfræði er spurningin: hvernig verður hinu góða lífi lifað? (Hursthouse, 1987). Meginhugtök sem Aristóteles notaði til að lýsa farsæld manneskjunnar og útskýra í hverju hið góða líf væri fólgið eru hamingja eða farsæld (gr. eudaimonia, e. happiness, flourishing), ágæti (gr. arête, e. excellence, virtue) og siðvit (gr. frónesis, e. practical/moral wisdom, good sense) (Hursthouse, 1999, 2013). Aristóteles (2011) hélt því fram að hamingjan væri sjálfstætt og rökrétt markmið mannlegs lífs. Sérhver manneskja leiti farsældar en hún sé ástand sem krefjist skynsemi og rökhugsunar, það dugi skammt að láta náttúrulegar kenndir og þrjár ráða eingöngu för, þær kunni að vera nauðsynlegar til farsældar en ekki nægjanlegar. Jafnvel dygð snúist ekki aðeins um sjálfsga, þrá okkar eftir að þroska dygðir okkar ætti að stjórna af siðviti eða hyggindum sem er sérstakur þáttur visku sem gerir okkur kleift að hafa röklegt taumhald á tilfinningum okkar (Hursthouse, 1999; Kristján Kristjánsson, 2007).

Dygðir

Aristótelískar dygðir má flokka í fjórar gerðir (sjá Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues, 2017, bls. 5): 1) Siðrænar dygðir á borð við hugrekki, réttlæti, heiðarleika, samkennd, þakklæti og hógværð. 2) Borgaralegar dygðir sem tengjast borgaravítund og samfélagsþjónustu á borð við sjálfboðastörf. Slíkar dygðir beinast að samfélagslegum ávinningi. 3) Framkvæmdadygðir á borð við samvirkusemi, úthald, þrautseigju og sjálfsöryggi. Framkvæmdadygðir geta þó stefnt bæði að góðum og illum markmiðum þar sem það er mögulegt að vera þrautseigur og samvirkusamur fantur. 4) Vitrænar dygðir eins og vídsýni, opinn hugur, sannsögli og forvitni. Slíkar dygðir gera okkur kleift að leiða okkur rökrænt að sannleikanum og eru grundvöllur þess að öðlast þekkingu. Við þetta má bæta að jafnframt því sem siðvit telst vera vitræn dygð þá má hugsa sér siðvitið sem eins konar yfirdygð (e. meta-virtue); alhliða dómgreind sem tengir saman allar fjórar gerðir dygdanna (Arthur o.fl., 2017, bls. 10–11; Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues, 2017, bls. 5). Siðvitið varðar siðferðilega vegvísa sem þurfa að vera móttækilegir og næmir á breytilegar aðstæður (Sherman, 1999). Siðvitið hjálpar okkur að vege og meta hvernig og hvenær við breytum á viðeigandi hátt, við hvaða aðstæður, á hvaða andartaki og af hvaða ástæðu (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015). Nancy Sherman (1999, bls. 271–272) skrifar að siðvitið geri dygðirnar opnar en slík hugmynd er nauðsynleg þegar haft er í huga að það tekur heila mannsævi að þroska þær til fulls.

Sjö grunnþættir dygdugs lífennis (e. components of virtue)

Dygðugt lífenni er samsett úr sjö grunnþáttum. Þrír þeirra (A, B og F) snerta hina vitsmunalegu þætti dygðar; þekkingu, meðvitund og rök fyrir dygðum en þessir þrír þættir tengjast dygdalæsi (e. virtue literacy). Þrír þættir (C, D og E) varða dygduga breytni; tilfinningar, samsömun og innri löngun. Einn þáttur (G) sker sig frá hinum þar sem hann snertir dygdugar athafnir (Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues, 2017, bls. 8):

A. Þekking á dygðum (e. virtue knowledge):

Þekking á dygðum felur í sér skilning á merkingu dygðarhugtaksins og því hvers vegna dygðir eru mikilvægar, bæði sem sjálfstæðar dygðir og sem þáttur í heilsteyptu og farsælu lífi. Þetta þýðir að viðkomandi er fær um að koma auga á dygðir í eigin lífi og annarra.

B. Meðvitund um dygðir (e. virtue perception):

Meðvitund um dygðir veltur á því að taka eftiradstæðum þar sem dygð kemur til skjalanna eða hennar er þörf.

C. Tilfinning fyrir dygðum (e. virtue emotions):

Tilfinning fyrir dygðum snýst um að finna fyrir viðeigandi geðshæringum við réttar aðstæður á réttan hátt. Finna fyrir stolti yfir því að sýna dygðina og sektarkennd yfir því að sýna hana ekki – vera ósátt við að finna t.d. ekki til samúðar þegar það gæti átt við.

D. Samsömun við dygðir (e. virtue identity):

Samsömun við dygðir tengist því að spyrja okkur hvernig við sjáum okkur sjálf og athafnir okkar. Að hve miklu leyti er stolt eða sektarkennd í tengslum við upplifun geðshæringar hluti af sjálfsmynd okkar? Þetta felur í sér sjálfsþekkingu sem byggist á skuldbindingu viðkomandi til að leita dygðarinnar og ástunda hana.

E. Innri löngun til dygða (e. virtue motivation):

Innri löngun til dygða felst í því að hafa sterka löngun til að sýna dygð og að hafa að sama skapi þrá til að vera dygðug manneskja.

F. Röksemdir fyrir dygðum (e. virtue reasoning):

Röksemdir fyrir dygðum byggjast á síðviti (frónesis) til að meta við hvaða aðstæður dygð skuli sýnd eða henni beitt. Þetta felur einnig í sér að nota síðvit til þess að fella dóm um rétt viðbrögð þegar togstreita verður milli tveggja dygða.

G. Dygðugar athafnir (e. virtue practice):

Dygðugar athafnir fela það í sér að sýna dygðir af réttum ástæðum, á réttum tíma og réttum stað.

Gera má ráð fyrir því að þeir grunnþættir dygða sem varða vitsmunalegan skilning (dygðalæsi; A, B, F) henti vel til umfjöllunar í skólastarfi. Jafnvel þótt einstaklingur búi yfir traustri vitsmunalegri þekkingu á dygðum þá tryggir það ekki að hann búi yfir hvötum til athafna, en það má hugsa sér að slíkar hvatir geti vaknað þegar tekist er á við hina vitsmunalegu þætti. Í því felst einnig að sá sem býr yfir hvötinni til athafna þarf að vera meðvitaður um þær vitsmunalegu hliðar sem búa undir. Þannig má sjá að dygðalæsi getur snúist jafnt um meðvitund um það sem gerist í umhverfinu og það sem gerist innra með manni sjálfum.

Myndlist: skynjun, meðvitund og ígrundun

Í djúpum hellum víða um veröld má líklega finna fyrstu ummerki um óhlutbundna hugsun manneskjunnar. Forsöguleg hellamálverk og tálgaðar styttur sem rekja má allt að 35.000 ár aftur í tímann kunna að vera vísbendingar um vaknandi sjálfsvitund og aukna vitsmunu mannsins (Cupchik, 2016). Hellamálverkin þykja mikil ráðgáta en kenningar eru uppi um að þau hafi verið þáttur í einhvers konar trúarlegum athöfnum eða vígslum; líflegar og kraftmiklar myndir af veiðidýrum kunna að hafa verið taldar auka vald veiðimannanna yfir bráðinni. Hugarleikfimi þar sem veiðarnar voru æfðar í huganum með aðstoð myndanna gat þannig aukið hugrekki veiðimannanna og einbeitingu (sjá meira um þetta í Janson og Janson, 1977, bls. 23–49). Nýleg rannsókn bendir einnig til þess að nútímamenn hafi haft forskot á Neandertalsmenn þar sem teiknigeta þeirra fyrrnefndu gerði þeim kleift að gera margvísleg hugsanaform sýnileg og miðla þannig þekkingu og skilningi til annarra í ættbálknum. Þá virðist teikniíðjan hafa þjálfað nauðsynlegar fínreyfingar sem komu veiðimönnum að gagni við að kasta spjóti (Coss, 2018). Af listaverkum ísaldar má draga þá ályktun að sjálfíð hafi verið vaknað til lífsins þar sem veiðimaðurinn, bráðin, aðstæðurnar og umhverfið eru orðin hluti af meðvituðum athöfnum. Í þessum listaverkum birtist hæfnin til rökhusunar sem síðan er sett fram með formlegum og skipulegum hætti. Þau sýna vaxandi getu manneskjunnar til þess að móta umhverfi sitt á vitsmunalegan hátt en líka eiginleika taldi bandaríski heimspekingurinn Susanne Langer (1957) vera fölgna í listunum.

Einn helsti menntafrömuður síðustu áratuga á sviði listkennslu, Elliot Eisner (2002), áleit að listirnar fælu í sér umbreytingu meðvitundarinnar og gerðu hana margslungnari. Slíkar

hugmyndir má rekja allt aftur til Aristótelesar, sem hélt því fram að skynjun væri grundvöllur þekkingarinnar (Hobson, 2001). Eisner taldi að skynjun okkar á umhverfinu væri lærd og þroskaðist með hækkandi aldri. Öll athugun okkar á umhverfinu veldur þannig því að við mótum ákveðna meginreglu um skipan mála í veröldinni; við drögum almennar ályktanir af athugunum okkar með aðleiðslu (e. induction) (Hobson, 2001). Barnið fær upplýsingar í gegnum sjónrænt áreiti og skapar í framhaldinu vitsmunaleg mynstur; þekking og skilningur byggist upp með vaknandi meðvitund. Fyrir vikið verður reynslan merkingarbær og í kjölfarið skapast forsendur fyrir frekari reynslu og dýpri merkingu. Líkt og John Dewey (1938/2000) álitur Eisner að reynsla sé grundvöllur menntunar en hann líkir hugtökum við eimaðar ímyndir. Slíkar ímyndir eru meitluð, hreinsuð og einfölduð framsetning á veröldinni og við notum þær til að ímynda okkur það sem okkur er ókunnugt og framandi; við getum ímyndað okkur reynslu sem við höfum ekki öðlast og fyrir vikið skapast tiltekin og vídeigandi merkingarbærni. Á þessum skilningi og merkingu byggjum við síðan samskipti okkar við aðrar manneskjur (Eisner, 2002; sjá einnig Langer, 1957). Eisner (2002) heldur því fram að umbreyting hins þrönga persónulega sviðs yfir í hið víða almenna og samfélagslega svið sé undirstaða allra lista og vísinda. Í því ljósi gegni menntunin lykilhlutverk með því að hvetja ungt fólk til að ganga í gegnum slíka umbreytingu því jafnvel þótt barnið þroskast af sjálfu sér er ljóst að öll örvun styrkir og hvetur slíkan þroska.

Listirnar hjálpa okkur að verða meðvitund um skynjun okkar, þær veita okkur ákveðna tegund af óformlegri þekkingu sem er óháð tungumálinu. Málverk færa okkur nýtt sjónarhorn á birtu og samhengi lita og forma og ljósmyndir af byggingum opna augu okkar fyrir formgerð og formum og gefa okkur tilfinningu fyrir rými. Þannig veita listaverk okkur ferska sýn á kunnuglegt umhverfi og hjálpa okkur að koma auga á mynstur sem gjarnan eru okkur hulin (um frekari umfjöllun um tengslin milli listaverka og skynjaðs umhverfis, sjá Eisner, 2002, bls. 10; sjá einnig Carr, 2004; Karlsson, 2006). Í stuttu máli má kannski segja að listirnar geri hið ósýnilega sýnilegt.

Hin siðferðilega vídd sjónlistanna

Allt frá fornöld hafa tengsl lista og siðferðis verið nokkuð mótsagnakennd. Í Grikklandi hinu forna stóðu listirnar traustum fótum og höfðu óumdeilt siðferðilegt gildi í þjónustu sinni við hin veraldlegu og guðlega máttarvöld (Carroll, 2010; Carr, 2010). Engu að síður voru uppi efasemdaraddir meðal Forn-Grikkja. Í Ríkinu setti Platón t.d. fram hugmyndir um að listirnar gætu grafið undan þekkingunni, sannleikanum og siðferðinu í fyrirmyndarríkinu (Platón, 2009b). Dómur Platóns um listirnar er reistur á kenningu hans um frummyndirnar sem gerði ráð fyrir því að raunveruleikinn endurspegladi hugmyndir eða form sem væru ófniðkennd en gagnmerk, en á hinn bóginn væri listin aðeins eftirlíking af hinum sýnilega heimi; hún væri eftirlíking af eftirlíkingu og því lægi í hlutarins eðli að slíkt fyrirbæri gæti ekki veitt trausta og áreiðanlega þekkingu. Að mati Platóns var aðeins unnt að öðlast þekkingu fyrir tilstuðlan rökleggrar ígrundunar en ekki af skynreynslu, hvað þá með ímyndun. Í Menóni sýnir Sókrates fram á hið röklega ferli þar sem hann leiðir fram stærðfræðilegan skilning hjá ungum þræl með því að beita leiðandi spurningum í skipulegri samræðu (Platón, 2009a). Andspænis slíkri framvindu við öflun þekkingar virðast listirnar draga upp afmyndaða sýn á veruleikann með ranghugmyndum, útúrsmúningum og mælskubrögðum.

Aristóteles var á öðru máli en Platón hvað listirnar varðaði. Aristóteles (1962, 1997) áleit að eftirlíkingin, sem Platón var tortrygginn á, væri þvert á móti mikilvægur og menntandi eiginleiki listanna. Listaverk gætu, fyrir tilstuðlan eftirlíkingarinnar, vakið siðferðilega vídeigandi tilfinningar og þar með eftl siðferðilega dómgreind án þess að bein reynsla eða upplifun þyrfti að koma til. Þetta ferli áleit Aristóteles vera reist á hæfni manneskjunnar til að tengja saman ímyndun og reynslu. Mikilvægasti hlekkurinn í þessu ferli var að álitu Aristótelesar hið retóríska eðli listarinnar, sem felst í sannfæringarmætti hennar. Slíkur sannfæringarmáttur eigi rætur sínar að rekja til þeirra geðshræringa sem bærast innra með okkur þegar listaverk sýna atburði eða hluti sem við getum samsamað okkur við; hluti sem skipta okkur máli. Ástralski fræðimaðurinn Paul Duncum (2014) byggir á hugsun Aristótelesar og álitur hið retóríska eðli myndlistarinnar

vera grundvallað á þremur aðskildum þáttum: Fyrsti þátturinn felst í persónuleika listamannsins; hvert svo sem viðfangsefnið kann að vera þá birtist persóna listamannsins í hugmyndafræðilegri úrvinnslu. Listamaðurinn hefur frelsi til að skipuleggja myndflötinn og það endurspeglar áherslur hans og persónuleika (Gadamer, 1986). Annar þátturinn er fölginn í tilfinningalegu mikilvægi viðfangsefnisins fyrir viðtakandann en það á rætur sínar í eftirlíkingunni (gr. *mimesis*). Þriðji og síðasti þátturinn felst í glæsileika framsetningarinnar, handverkinu sem innsiglar áhrifamáttinn.

Hugtakið retórik, eða mælskulist, vekur gjarnan upp blendnar tilfinningar. Listirnar hafa í gegnum aldirnar þjónað mörgum herrum og þær hafa verið notaðar óspart til þess að innprenta fólki margvíslegar, og stundum vafasamar, hugmyndir. Í boði valdastéttarinnar sýndu listamenn mikilfengleik yfirboðara sinna í hetjulegum málverkum og Páfagarður fékk listamenn til að blása ólæsum almenningi trúarhita í brjóst með kraftmiklum málverkum barokktímans. Af þessum sökum sjá margir annmarka á því að treysta um of á listirnar sem áreiðanlegan vettvang fyrir sannleika og þekkingu. Á átjándu öld tóku listamenn að lýsa yfir sjálfstæði sínu og endurheimtu listrænt frelsi sitt (Carr, 2010). Þeir beindu sjónum sínum í ríkari mæli að viðfangsefnum sem endurspegluðu lífssýn þeirra sjálfra uns formið og framsetningin hafði yfirgnæft inntakið; hin fagurfræðilega reynsla var orðin að meginviðfangsefni listarinnar.

Sjónræn reynsla sett í siðferðilegt samhengi

Einn af mikilvægum eiginleikum aristótelískrar mannkostamenntunar er gagnrýnin hugsun. Hún er andsvar við hefðbundinni innrætingu margra annarra uppeldishugmynda (Arthur o.fl., 2006). Í stað þess að innihald listaverks sé sett fram í anda fyrirfram ákveðinna hugmynda eru nemendur spurðir gagnrýninna spurninga um inntak listaverksins, hvaða aðferðafræði listamaðurinn noti til að koma hugmyndum sínum á framfæri og að hve miklu leyti megi fallast á hugmyndir hans; hvort þær höfði til okkar í dag eða hvort þær tilheyri liðnum tíma. Paul Duncum (2014, bls. 211) mælir með því að við nálgumst viðfangsefni listaverkanna með hlutleysi gagnrýnnar hugsunar en veitum mikilvægi tilfinningalífsins og geðshræringa athygli. Margvíslegur ávinningur fáiast með vinnu af þessu tagi, ekki síst fyrir tilstuðlan duldu námskrárinna. Með því að veita siðferðilegum viðfangsefnum athygli í kennslustundum, til að mynda í myndmennt, má gera slík viðfangsefni sýnilegri. Þátttaka þeirra í verkefnum af þessu tagi gerir þá næmari fyrir álitamálum, þeir koma betur auga á blæbrigði sem eiga rætur sínar í fjölbreytilegum bakgrunni og reynslu. Að auki lærist þeim að njóta myndlistar á virkan hátt.

Aristóteles áleit að í tilfelli ljóðlistar og tónlistar væri eftirlíkingin á þrenns konar sviðum; í miðlinum, viðfangsefninu og framsetningunni. Í Um skáldskaparlistina lýsti Aristóteles (1997) listunum sem miðli þess mögulega; skáldskapnum (gr. *poiesis*) og eftirlíkingunni (gr. *mimesis*) (Marini, 2014). Í *Stjórnspekinginni* bendir Aristóteles á mátt tónlistar til að tjá eða sýna reiði eða hugrekki. Hann skrifar „[...] ef maður nýtur þess að skoða líkneski af öðrum manni af þeirri einu ástæðu að honum fellur útlit styttunnar vel, þá hlýtur hann óhjákvæmilega að njóta þess að horfa á manninn sjálfan, hvers líkindi hann er að ígrunda“² (1962, bls. 308–309). Hann heldur áfram og fullyrðir að siðferðilegir eiginleikar séu „[...] ígildi þeirra tóna sem við heyrum“³ (Aristotle, 1962, bls. 309; sjá einnig Carr, 2004, um listir, tónlist og framsetningu). Susanne Langer (1957, bls. 90–92) setur svipaða hugmynd fram í stuttri en snjallri bók sinni með tíu fyrirlestrum um listheimspeki, *Problems of Art*, þar sem hún lýsir því hvernig listamaðurinn umbreytir óslípuðu hráefni (grjóti, litarefnum, orðum, hljóðum og þess háttar) í tjáningarrík form sem gefa til kynna hliðstæðan veruleika fyrir tilstuðlan eftirlíkingarinnar.

Bandaríski listheimspekingurinn Noël Carroll (2003) skrifar um menntunarlegt og þekkingarfræðilegt gildi listanna í samhengi við fagurfræðilegt gildi þeirra. Hann segir að listirnar hafi alla jafna þótt búa yfir mikilvægu menntunargildi en í kjölfar upplýsingarinnar og þróunar veraldarhyggju hafi orðið þáttaskil í hugmyndum manna um þekkingarfræðilegt og menntunarfræðilegt gildi listanna. Þessi hugmyndafræðilegi umsnúningur er yfirleitt

² “[...] if a man enjoys looking at a statue of someone for no other reason than that he likes the look of it, then inevitably he will enjoy looking at the original, whose likeness he is at the moment contemplating” (þýðing höfundar úr ensku).

³ “[...] represented by the very tunes we hear” (þýðing höfundar úr ensku).

skilgreindur sem „Listin listarinnar vegna“ (e. art for art's sake)⁴, og olli klofningi milli samfélagsins og listanna (Carroll, 2003). Á þessum tíma var þekking í auknum mæli reist á raunvísindum og þekkingarfræðilegt gildi listanna þótti vafasamt. Á hinni siðferðilegu víglínu hafði framgangur rómantíkunnar á átjándu öld borið með sér aukna áherslu á persónulega reynslu og ímyndunarafli, kenndir, geðshræringar og frelsi til sköpunar. Listamenn tóku að láta sig varða margvísleg samfélagsleg málefni, frjálsir undan forskrift kennivalds (Carr, 2010). Listin var orðin sjálflæg og gildisdómar um listaverk voru fyrst og fremst byggðir á fagurfræðilegum grunni. Gott listaverk myndi miðla fagurfræðilegri reynslu en lélegt listaverk myndi ekki gera það. Carroll færir rök fyrir því að jafnvel þótt fagurfræðilegir eiginleikar væru nauðsynlegt skilyrði fyrir listrænu mati, þá gætu þeir einir ekki dugað því að listaverk séu svo fjölbreytt (Carroll, 2003, bls. 373). Hin hefðbundnu rök gegn menntunargildi lista byggðust á því að listirnar lytu ekki þeim þekkingarfræðilegu kröfum sem gerðar væru til fræða og annars efnis sem legði til raunverulega þekkingu. Carroll bendir hins vegar á að menntunargildi listanna sé byggt á öðrum grunni sem sé tengdari mannlegri reynslu og hann segir einnig að listirnar geti þroskað tilfinningarnar. Að mati Carroll geta listaverk vakið upp spurningar, hvatt til ígrundunar og valdið geðshræringum sem minna okkur á fyrrgreinda sameiginlega mannlega reynslu.

Gott dæmi um það hvernig listaverk getur veitt siðferðilega þekkingu eða skilning, þó að erfitt sé að sannreyna söguna sem listaverkið segir, er málverk rússneska málarans Ivan Kramskoi af Kristi í eyðimörkinni.⁵ Málverkið lýsir því þegar Kristur hafði hafnað freistingum kölska á fjallinu; hann situr á steini einn síns liðs og horfir íhugull í gaupnir sér. Nú má vera að listamaðurinn hafi ætlað að sýna hinn mikla siðferðisstyrk sem Kristur bjó yfir, sannfæringu hans og staðfestu í að berjast gegn hinu illa. En þegar horft er í andlit Krists virðast augun sýna mikla örvæntingu, efasemdir og ráðleysi. Þessi túlkun fær stuðning af einmanakenndinni sem auðnin vekur upp í ljósaskiptunum. Jafnvel þótt einhverjir lesendur séu tortryggirnir á sannleikann að baki bíblíusögunni og vilji draga úr þekkingarfræðilegu gildi hennar, þá getum við samsamað okkur við örvæntingu Krists þar sem hann horfðist í augu við erfiða, næstum óhugsandi valkosti. Manneskja þarf að búa yfir miklum siðferðisstyrk til þess að hafna tilboði um fullkomið sældarlíf; hver kannast ekki við að þurfa að veða og meta ákvarðanir sem koma upp í daglegu lífi; hvað mun reynast okkur betur til langs tíma lítið, hvernig eigum við að vita hvað færir okkur mestu farsældina þegar upp verður staðið við ævilok? Hvers konar manneskja vil ég vera?

Vera kann að lesendur dragi aðrar ályktanir um tilfinningalegt ástand Krists í málverkinu en hér var gert; kannski sýna andlitsdrættir hans staðfestu, einurð og hatur á hinu illa. Í raun skiptir ekki máli hvaða geðshræringar við sjáum, því allar eiga þær einhverja samsvörun innra með okkur og sem slíkt getur málverkið gert okkur meðvituð um okkar eigin hugrenningar og tilfinningar sem í framhaldinu mætti opna á í samræðu við aðrar manneskjur, skiptast á skoðunum um túlkunarmöguleikana og það sem liggur þeim að baki.

Noël Carroll (2003, bls. 382) kemst á endanum að þeirri niðurstöðu að jafnvel þótt einhver listaverk séu til þess fallin að næra hreinræktada fagurfræðilega reynslu, þá snúist ekki öll list um sjálfa sig. Mörg listaverk séu sérstaklega gerð til þess að örva margs kyns hagnýtar athafnir á borð við heimspekilega rannsókn, nám og menntun og það sé engin ástæða til þess að halda því fram að slíkir eiginleikar dragi úr listrænu gildi frekar en hin hreina ígrundun fegurðar í formi og lit. Þessar vangaveltur bera vott um hina flóknu og margbrotnu eiginleika listarinnar og sýna fram á mikilvægi þess að listirnar skipi stóran sess í menntun, sérstaklega þar sem listaverk af öllum stærðum og gerðum geta hvatt nemendur til að íhuga betur áskoranir lífsins. Þetta á ekki síður við um sköpun nemenda sjálfra þar sem þeim gefst tækifæri til þess að tjá hugsanir sínar og veraldarsýn í sínum eigin listaverkum og leggja þannig enn traustari grundvöll að hinu mikla undri sem raunveruleg menntun er (sjá frekari umræðu um þetta í Carr, 2010; Carroll, 2003 og Gaut, 2007). Í nýlegri grein segja Andrés Mejía og Silvia Eugenia Montoya (2017, bls. 370) þar sem þau ræða um bókmenntir, og ég er sannfærður um að hið sama á við um myndlist, að, [...] hið fagra og hið góða – geti vaxið hvort af öðru með slíkum hætti að fagurfræðileg reynsla rýrni ef hið góða er ekki rannsakað með huga og hjarta, og þetta gildi í báðar áttir.⁶

⁴ Afleiða „Art for art's sake“–hugmyndarinnar er fegurðarhygga (e. aestheticism) sem Noël Carroll (2010, bls. 249) rekur til Walter Pater, James Abbott McNeill Whistler og Oscar Wilde.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_in_the_Desert

⁶ “[...] the aesthetic and the moral—can actually be mutually reinforcing in such a way that aesthetic appreciation will suffer if the moral is not deeply examined with both mind and heart, and vice versa.” (Þýðing höfundar úr ensku)

Með framangreint í huga má spyrja sig hvers vegna svo sjaldan hefur verið litið á myndlist sem ákjósanlega kveikju fyrir umræðu um siðferðileg álitamál, mannkostamenntun og dygðalæsi, sérstaklega í ljósi vaxandi áherslu á bókmenntir, tónlist og kvikmyndir í þessu tilliti (sjá t.d. Sanderse, 2012; Kristján Kristjánsson, 2015; Kim, 2016; Arthur o.fl., 2017). Ég hygg að setja megí fram fjórar ástæður sem hver um sig eigi sinn þátt í því að myndlistin er vannýtt að þessu leyti, en þær eru; 1) sögulegar, 2) listrænar, 3) faglegar og 4) túlkunarfræðilegar. Þessum ástæðum verða gerð ítarlegri skil í annarri grein.

Sögulegu ástæðurnar tengjast þeirri staðreynd að myndlistarverk eru í mörgum tilvikum aðeins til í einu eintaki sem yfirleitt er varðveitt á safni eða sambærilegum stað. Með hraðri framþróun prentiðnaðarins varð unnt að prenta eftirmyndir af listaverkum en framan af voru slíkar eftirprentanir aðeins í svarthvítu. Þannig mátti miðla þeim, ýmist í listaverkabókum eða sem stærri eftirprentunum sem hentuðu til að hengja upp á vegg. Sumir skólar höfðu tækifæri til að heimsækja söfn með nemendum en það var þó ekki á færi margra. Þannig var myndlistin fjarlæg og lítt aðgengileg, ólíkt bókmentatextum, kvikmyndum eða upptökum á tónlist sem eru ekki bundnar við frumeintakið. En jafnvel þótt myndlist sé orðin aðgengileg í bókum og á netinu, þá eru slíkar eftirmyndir gjarnan aðeins svipur hjá sjón samanborið við frumgerðina því slagkraftur lita, forma, áferðar og stærðar tapast og rýmistilfinningin hverfur. Myndlistin var list höfuðborga og þeirra efnuðu og henni fylgir talsverð yfirstéttararfleifð enda telst hún til hinna fögru lista.

Listrænu ástæðurnar tengjast hugmyndinni um frelsi og sjálfstæði listamannsins; listin ætti eingöngu að þjóna sjálfri sér og hinn fagurfræðilegu upplifun. Þetta viðhorf er yfirleitt kennt við *Art for art's sake*-hugmyndafræðina sem spratt upp úr upplýsingunni. Þessum þætti hef ég gert allnokkur skil hér að framan.

Faglegu ástæðurnar byggjast á þeirri hugmynd að til þess að geta haft skoðun á myndlist þurfi viðkomandi að teljast vera sérfræðingur á sviði myndlistar. Fólk veigrar sér oft við að taka afstöðu til gildis listaverka eða tjá skoðanir sínar á þeim. Og þegar það þorir að tjá sig hefst ræðan yfirleitt á fyrirvara: „Ég hef nú ekkert vit á myndlist, en....“ Þetta hefur í för með sér að myndlistarkennarar hafa jafnan forræði yfir umfjöllun um myndlist, en aðrir kennarar halda sig til hlés.

Túlkunarfræðilegu ástæðurnar eru af heimspekilegum toga. Myndlist er kyrrstæð; hún sýnir frosið andartak og fyrir vikið verður framvindan til í huga áhorfandans, öfugt við það sem á sér stað í bókmenntum, kvikmyndum eða tónlist þar sem framvindan býr í verkinu; viðtakandinn stígur um borð og fylgir framvindunni. Þetta gerir það að verkum að upplifun af myndlist er í ríkari mæli á ábyrgð áhorfandans og þar með ríkir meiri óvissa og túlkunarmöguleikar eru mun opnari.

Listaverk, dygðalæsi, ígrundun og samræða

Listaverk af margvíslegum toga eru hafsjór tækifæra til þess að dýpka skilning nemenda á siðferðilegum álitamálum, auk þess sem samræða um listaverk skapar tækifæri til þess að efla dygðalæsi og skilning á siðferðilegum hugtökum. Í þessum kafla segi ég frá því hvernig flétta megí saman listaverk, aristótélíska dygðasiðfræði og mannkostamenntun, einkum með hliðsjón af hugmyndum frá Jubilee Centre (2017) um dygðalæsi. Samræðuformið er tilvalið; listaverkin opna gáttir og þátttakendur í samræðum leggja sjónarhorn sín í þúkkið. Úr verða snertifletir sem geta stuðlað að aukinni þekkingu og skilningi þátttakenda. Þau listaverk sem hér eru til umfjöllunar eru alls ekki einu verkin sem koma til greina en þau hafa reynt mér vel í kennslu um árabíl.

A. Þekking á dygðum (e. virtue knowledge):

Þekking á dygðum felur í sér skilning á merkingu dygðarhugtaksins og því hvers vegna dygðir eru mikilvægar, bæði sem sjálfstæðar dygðir og sem þáttur í heilsteyptu og farsælu lífi. Þetta þýðir að viðkomandi er fær um að koma auga á dygðir í eigin lífi og annarra.

Hvers vegna þarf að bregðast við af dygd? Líklega þekkja flestir dæmisöguna um miskunnsama Samverjann. Maður nokkur, Samverji, kom manni í nauðum til aðstoðar eftir að aðrir menn höfðu heykt á að hjálpa honum, en boðskapurinn er sá að hjálpa beri náunganum án tillits til þess hver hann er. Franski listmálarinn Eugène Delacroix sviðsetti söguna í málverki sínu⁷ og Vincent van Gogh⁸ málaði eftirgerð af verki Delacroix í spegilmynd. Sjálf dæmisagan er skýr og skorinorð þar sem röð atburða er í forgrunni, en málverkin bæta við nýjum viddum sem sýna hversu mikið Samverjinn þurfti að leggja á sig til að koma manningnum til aðstoðar. Þannig má sjá að í málverki van Gogh lyftir Samverjinn máttfara manningnum á bak asna sem hann hafði til reiðar. Í bakgrunni má sjá ferðalanginn, sem virti ekki hinn þjáða mann viðlits, fara leiðar sinnar. Það er einnig áhugavert að bera saman verk Delacroix og van Gogh. Delacroix lætur Samverjann setja hinn slasaða á bak asnanum frá vinstri hlið skepnunnar og fyrir vikið virðist hann frekar vera að taka slasaða manningnum af baki asnanum. Þessi áhrif má rekja til þeirrar tilhneingingar okkar að lesa listaverk frá vinstri til hægri (Dondis, 1973; Rose, 2016); þannig er því rökréttara að hugsa sem svo að hinn slasaði maður sé á leið niður af baki asnans. Van Gogh speglaði myndina og þá virðist áhorfandanum Samverjinn leggja meira á sig. Hvað geta málverk Delacroix og van Gogh af miskunnsama Samverjanum sagt okkur um samkennd? Hvers vegna er mikilvægt að huga að velferð annarra? Hafa ekki flestir lent í svipaðri aðstöðu á lífsleiðinni? Stundum þarf að sýna kjark og stundum þarf að taka persónulega áhættu. Það hefur sýnt sig að þegar einelti á sér stað kjósa margir að standa á hliðarlínunni og skipta sér lítið af.

B. Meðvitund um dygðir (e. virtue perception):

Meðvitund um dygðir veltur á því að taka eftir aðstæðum þar sem dygd kemur til skjalanna eða hennar er þörf.

Í Mjólkurþernunni⁹ eftir Johannes Vermeer getur að líta þjónustustúlku hella mjólk í skál. Þessi litla mynd eftir hollenska meistarann býður áhorfendum upp á fjölmargar spennandi spurningar sem tengjast dygðum. Yfir verkinu er mikil kyrrð en þótt ekki sé mikið að gerast er alls engin kyrrstaða í myndinni. Athöfnin er íhugul og krefst einbeitingar, hún er hægfare og mjólkurþernan virðist vera í eins konar leiðslu. Heildarblær málverksins sýnir að vinna þarf öll verk af heilindum og þolinmæði. Margt það sem við gerum í lífinu krefst þess sama af okkur. Stundum leiðist okkur, einkum ef ekki er nógu mikið um að vera. Hvernig öðlumst við þolinmæði og æðruleysi gagnvart því sem við þurfum að gera? Hvernig tökumst við á við verkefni sem eru tímáfræk, jafnvel leiðigjörn, þar sem tíminn silast áfram? Mjólkurþerna Vermeer er stórkostlegt dæmi um þá eiginleika sem manneskjur þurfa að þroska með sér: heilindi, jafnaðargeð og yfirvegum.

C. Tilfinning fyrir dygðum (e. virtue emotions):

Tilfinning fyrir dygðum snýst um að finna fyrir viðeigandi geðshæringum við réttar aðstæður á réttan hátt. Finna fyrir stolti yfir því að sýna dygðina og sektarkennd yfir því að sýna hana ekki – vera ósátt við að finna t.d. ekki til samúðar þegar það gæti átt við.

Málverk Edvard Munch, Veika barnið¹⁰, sýnir systur hans, Jóhönnu Soffiu, þegar hún lá banaleguna. Hún lést úr berklum sem var skæð drepsótt áratugina fyrir og eftir aldamót níttjándu og tuttugustu aldar. Munch hafði misst móður sína nokkrum árum fyrir og þjáðist alla tíð af sektarkennd og söknuði. Hann átti erfitt með að skilja hvers vegna hann slapp við veikindin en þurfti þess í stað að horfa upp á ástvini sína þjást og deyja (Messer, 1985). Hvaða tilfinningar vakna þegar við skoðum þessa mynd? Hvað segir myndin okkur um lífið, dauðann, sorgina og forgengileikann? Framsetning Munch er áhrifamikil, hann notar samspil ljóss og skugga óspart, litatónar eru þungir og vangí stúlkunnar er fögur. Þetta er kryddað með grænum litum veikinda og svörtum klæðnaði konunnar sem í örvæntingu felur andlit sitt. Rauðgullið hár stúlkunnar gefur henni nærri því engilslegt yfirbragð; hún horfist í augu við erfiðleika sína með reisin, það er engu líkara en hún sé að hvísla huggunarorð að frænku sinni. Svo virðist sem hún

⁷ [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Good_Samaritan_\(Delacroix_1849\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Good_Samaritan_(Delacroix_1849).jpg)

⁸ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vincent_Willem_van_Gogh_022.jpg

⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Milkmaid_\(Vermeer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Milkmaid_(Vermeer))

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child

hafi sett sig við örlög sín, æðruleysið og hreinleiki hjartans skín af verkinu. Hvaða tilfinningar bærast í brjóstum okkar þegar við skoðum þetta persónulega málverk Munch? Finnum við fyrir hluttekningu? Erum við hlutlaus? Finnst okkur hluttekning okkar viðeigandi eða finnst okkur hlutleysið viðeigandi?

D. Samsömun við dygðir (e. virtue identity):

Samsömun við dygðir tengist því að spyrja okkur hvornig við sjáum okkur sjálf og athafnir okkar. Að hve miklu leyti er stolt eða sektarkennd í tengslum við upplifun geðshræringar hluti af sjálfsmynd okkar? Þetta felur í sér sjálfsþekkingu sem byggist á skuldbindingu viðkomandi til að leita dygðarinnar og ástunda hana.

Breski myndhöggvarinn Marc Quinn gerði merkilega stytta af Alison Lapper¹¹. Lapper fæddist fóta- og handalaus en hefur starfað sem listamaður alla tíð. Verkið sýnir manneskju sem tekst á við áskoranir lífsins af reisu. Þannig er verkið óður til hugrekki, sjálfstæðis og styrks og setur fram áleitnar spurningar um ytra útlit og innri verund (Quinn og Rogers, 2006; Lapper, 2017). Í samfélagi sem hyllir fegurðina og fullkomið útlit skammast margar manneskjur sín fyrir sjálfar sig. Mörgum þykir óþægilegt að horfast í augu við þennan sannleika enda litu margir undan þegar verkið var afhjúpað (Quinn og Rogers, 2006; Lapper, 2006). Sannleikurinn var óþægilegur ásýndum. En hvað segir þetta um okkur sjálf? Hvers vegna erum við feimin við raunveruleikann? Verða fordómar okkar sjálfra þá skyndilega sýnilegir? Kannski megum við spyrja okkur hvort stytta af Alison Lapper eftir Marc Quinn veki hjá okkur hneykslun. Ættum við að gera okkur far um að vinna bug á þeirri tilfinningu og þroska með okkur aðdáun á hugrekki hennar og viðurkenna að fegurð lífsins er fólgin í margbreytileikanum?

E. Innri löngun til dygða (e. virtue motivation):

Innri löngun til dygða felst í því að hafa sterka löngun til að sýna dygð og að hafa að sama skapi þrá til að vera dygðug manneskja.

Margir hugsa eflaust sem svo að þeir vildu verða betri manneskjur, við könnumst líklega flest við einhverja agnúa á verkum okkar og við erum yfirleitt meðvituð um breyskleika okkar. En hvað þarf til? Dugar þráin eða löngunin ein til þess eða þurfum við að láta verkin tala? Höfum við kjark til að berjast fyrir réttlætinu? Málverkið Frelsisgyðjan leiðir fólkið¹² (e. Liberty leading the people) eftir franska listmálarann Eugène Delacroix vekur upp áleitnar spurningar um frelsi, réttlæti og hugrekki. Málverkið er málað 1830 til að minnast júlí-uppreisnarinnar það ár í Frakklandi, þegar Karli tíunda, konungi Frakklands, var steipt af stóli. Delacroix tók ekki sjálfur þátt í uppreisninni en skrifaði bróður sínum að hann vildi leggja sitt af mörkum til uppbyggingar samfélagsins með þessu málverki (Delacroix, 2001). Hugmyndina um frelsgyðjuna má sjá víða og Frelsisstytta í New York er byggð á svipaðri hugmynd, en hún var einmitt gjöf Frakka til Bandaríkjamanna. Í málverkinu hefur frelsið verið persónugert í líki gyðju sem leiðir fólkið áfram. Frelsisgyðjan birtist í málverkinu sem framtíðarsýn og sameiningartákn sem í nafni réttlætis knésetur þá sem eru ímynd kúgunar og drottandi valds. Þó að verkið virðist við fyrstu sýn segja einhliða sögu hinna kúguðu sem knýja fram réttlæti vakna spurningar við nánari skoðun, einkum faist tækifæri til að skoða listaverkið sjálft þar sem það hangir í Louvre-safninu í París. Málverkið er ógnarstórt og hangir hátt uppi. Í augnhæð áhorfandans eru limlestir líkamar hermanna konungs. Slík sýn vekur strax upp spurningar um það hversu langt sé réttlætanlegt að ganga í baráttunni fyrir frelsi; hvaða gjald er réttlætanlegt að greiða fyrir frelsið? Mun byltingin ekki ávallt éta börnin sín á endanum?

F. Röksemdir fyrir dygðum (e. virtue reasoning):

Röksemdir fyrir dygðum byggjast á siðviti (gr. frónesis) til að meta við hvaða aðstæður dygð skuli sýnd eða henni beitt. Þetta felur einnig í sér að nota siðviti til þess að fella dóm um rétt viðbrögð þegar togstreita verður milli tveggja dygða.

¹¹ <http://marcquinn.com/artworks/alison-lapper>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People

Bandaríski myndlistarmaðurinn Norman Rockwell málaði myndir fyrir The Saturday Evening Post í nærfell fimm áratugi. Hann sótti sér myndefni í líf almennings og í augum margra tókst honum að draga upp skýra mynd af því sem einkenndi daglegt líf Bandaríkjamanna um miðja tuttugustu öldina. Honum voru mannréttindi hugleikin, einkum þó hin sjálfsagða og nauðsynlega réttindabarátta Bandaríkjamanna af afrískum uppruna. Eitt þekktasta verk hans er „Vandamálið sem við búum öll við“¹³ (e. The problem we all live with) sem er táknrænt fyrir baráttuna gegn kynþáttaðskilnaði. Myndin sýnir það þegar hin sex ára gamla Ruby Bridges fór í skólann í fylgd öryggisvarða 14. nóvember 1960 eftir að sett voru lög sem afnámu kynþáttaðskilnað í New Orleans. Þetta hafði í för með sér að öllum börnum, óháð kynþætti, bauðst að sækja skóla saman, en áður höfðu eingöngu hvít börn sótt þann skóla sem Ruby litla tók að sækja eftir lagabreytinguna. Bæjarbúar mótmæltu afnámi kynþáttaðskilnaðarins harðlega og voru þess dæmi að Ruby fengi líflátshótanir. Til þess að tryggja öryggi hennar fékk hún fylgd fjögurra þjóðvarðliða til og frá skólanum fyrsta árið (Bridges, 1999). Skyldu þjóðvarðliðarnir í málverki Norman Rockwell hafa átt í innri togstreitu þegar þeir fylgdu þessari stúlku í skólann undir árásum og hótunum íhaldssamra íbúa bæjarins? Öttuðust þeir um eigin hag eins og títt er um hermenn sem þjóna föðurlandinu? Hvaða kenndir bærðust í brjósti litlu stúlkunnar sem hnarreist hélt sínu striki í skotlínu tómata, hótana og ókvæðisorða? Má kannski færa rök fyrir því að til þess að réttlætið nái fram að ganga þarfnist það einurðar, ósérhlífni og hugrekki? Eru dygðir forsenda þess að raunverulegt réttlæti nái fram að ganga?

G. Dygðugar afhafnir (e. virtue practice):

Dygðugar athafnir fela það í sér að sýna dygðir af réttum ástæðum, á réttum tíma og réttum stað.

Í verki sínu „Listamaðurinn er viðstaddur“¹⁴ (e. The Artist is Present) fléttar Marina Abramović saman gjörningi og raunverulegri athöfn sem tengir sálir manna saman með dramatískum hætti. Gjörningurinn fór fram í Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) í New York frá 14. mars til 31. maí 2010 (MoMA.org, 2018). Abramović mætti hvern dag á safnið og sat í miðju sýningarrýminu við borð, íklædd glæsilegum kjól og horfði í gaupnir sér. Áhorfendum gafst kostur á að koma, einum í einu, og setjast andspænis henni og horfa í augu henni að vild. Þegar einhver var kominn í sæti áhorfandans leit Abramović upp og horfði í augu hans – það var óheimilt að snerta Abramović eða tala til hennar – og ef litíð var undan lauk setunni. Í einfaldleika sínum varð þessi athöfn ákaflega sterk tilfinningaleg reynsla fyrir alla viðstadda; þarna kom berlega í ljós að augun eru spegill sálarinnar. Fyrir sjálfan listamanninn má segja að verkið hafi verið eins konar kaþarsis. Listamenn leggja sál sína og tilfinningalíf í verkin sem þeir skapa en í tilviki myndlistar er fjarlægðin við áhorfandann jafnan mikil og listamaðurinn hefur vissa stjórn á því hversu langt hann gengur nærri tilfinningalífi sínu. Í tilviki Abramović verður gjörningurinn að lifandi verki þar sem listamaðurinn tekur mikla tilfinningalega áhættu og tengist áhorfendum sínum á einkar kraftmikinn og áhrifaríkan hátt¹⁵. Í verkinu tókst Abramović að afhjúpa tilvistarleg regindjúp mennskunnar; hvað það þýðir að vera manneskja og hvernig þræðir mennskunnar liggja milli okkar allra óháð uppruna, stétt eða stöðu. Í einni sviphendingu birtist heiðarleiki og sannleikur viðstöddum með frelsandi hætti; hið ósýnilega varð skyndilega sýnilegt og hafði varanleg áhrif á þá sem urðu vitni að því.

Lokaorð

Margs af því sem börn læra í skólum er hvergi getið í námskrám eða kennsluáætlunum. Þó má segja að nokkur skref hafi verið stigin með síðustu endurskoðun aðalnámskráanna, þar sem síðferðileg markmið eru orðin sýnilegri, en að sama skapi verður úrræðaleysið við að mæta þessum markmiðum meira áberandi. Með þetta í huga er mikilvægt að minna á það að menntun er samfelldur og heildstæður þráður sem liggur frá frumbersku til æviloka; í raun lýkur menntun aldrei, heldur er hún þrotlaus ígrundun um reynslu og athafnir og (stundum) einbeittur vilji til

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_We_All_Live_With

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Abramovic#/media/File:ArtistIsPresent.jpg

¹⁵ A YouTube má sjá allmörg myndskráir frá því atviki þegar fyrrverandi sambýlismaður Abramović, listamaðurinn Ulay, kom óvænt og settist andspænis henni. Sjá t.d. hér: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS0Tg0ljCp4>

Þess að hnika lífinu í farsælar áttir, og oft reynast litlu, en staðföstu, skrefin koma að mestu gagni. Þar hafa skólar og menntastofnanir hlutverki að gegna því að nemendum gefst þar færi á að skilja veröldina með hliðsjón af sjálfum sér og öðrum. Persónuleg reynsla af lífinu er okkar eigin útsýnisturn yfir veröldina en hætt er við að sjónarhornið geti orðið þröngt. Til þess að sjónarhorn okkar geti orðið víðara þurfum við að fá innsýn í reynslu annarra manna og þannig gefst okkur jafnvel tækifæri til þess að sjá okkur sjálf með augum annarra. Fáir hlutir í veröldinni koma betur að gagni við slíka útvíkkun meðvitundarinnar en listaverk. Listin er vettvangurinn þar sem við getum mætt hvert öðru, prófað hugmyndir okkar, kynnst ólíkum viðhorfum og reynsluheimi, sett okkur í spor annarra og fundið að þrátt fyrir allt er fleira sem sameinar okkur en sundrar.

Fundamental pillars of education, visual arts and character education

The increased current interest in the field of character and moral education reflects the urgency of expanding those dimensions in education. Similar “socio-moral” objectives are expressed throughout the recent Icelandic National Curriculum Guide, implying a holistic and pluralistic educational paradigm shared with Aristotelian character education (ACE). In the section about the visual arts in the Curriculum Guide, these aims emerge through the focus on personal and social skills, self-knowledge, and general understanding of society as a dynamic construct. However, it appears that the articulation of the moral significance of education needs to be emphasized and clarified further, both at curricular level and within the school setting, thus allowing for a deeper and richer dialogue about the aims of education.

Central to ACE are Aristotelian Virtue Ethics; securing the necessary moral conditions for comprehensive character education. The primary concern of virtue ethics is the question of how to live a good life. Aristotle maintained that the good life involved the exercise of *arête* (excellence or virtue) and *phronesis* (practical or moral wisdom) which eventually would lead to *eudaimonia* (flourishing). Therefore, flourishing requires excellence that is fostered by the integration of reason and the emotions through practical wisdom. Rational cultivation of the emotions is a prerequisite for further personal development; the emotions serve as a compass in directing our desires and actions.

Virtue literacy provides pupils with moral concepts for further moral cognition and deliberation – assisting them in relating their own lives to the end of increased moral sensitivity. Although virtue literacy does not in itself guarantee moral conduct, it may nevertheless be considered necessary for it. Each virtue (e.g. compassion, honesty) is analyzed in terms of seven components: virtue knowledge, virtue perception, virtue emotion, virtue identity, virtue motivation and virtue reasoning – all of which are regarded as informing virtue literacy – and, lastly, virtue practice. These components can be addressed explicitly through the visual arts, as an artwork can reflect one or more of these components, allowing for deeper conceptualization through emotional arousal and cognitive reflections.

The cognitive role of the arts includes raising our awareness, providing us with a certain type of “informal” and non-verbal knowledge. Artworks give us a fresh perspective on familiar environments, allowing us to discern patterns hidden from view.

A strong connection between the visual arts and moral education has existed through the ages, and the visual arts have been considered educative in the broadest sense. Aristotle claimed that the educative elements of the arts resided in imitation (*mimesis*), which consequently appealed to the emotions through the rhetorical qualities of the

arts. The beholder is informed about the lives and experiences of those depicted in an artwork by arousing emotional responses which, in turn, appeal to his concerns. Hence, artworks promote quasi-experiences through imitation, providing moral knowledge through collective and personal deliberation on the artwork in question. Such experiences can also be stimulated through the imitation or reconstruction of moral considerations and issues in personal artistic creation. However, to avoid indoctrination, the rhetorical qualities of the arts must be accompanied by critical thinking and metacognition.

Artworks can be categorized according to their messages and narrative qualities. This applies to a variety of artworks from different periods and styles. In some cases the artist's own emotional experience is central to the impact of the painting, giving the narrative voice of the artist himself a greater value. Other artworks relate more to ideological and political dimensions, focusing on human rights, especially in the light of contemporary contexts, while yet other works rest on spiritual and religious foundations, addressing existential issues and our responsibility to other human beings.

Artworks can promote a deeper understanding of how to respond to the options we have in life, to consider consequences, implications, and not least, our character. These considerations suggest the highly complex and pluralistic nature of the arts that justifies their presence in education, allowing for pupils' participation in the ongoing debate through confrontation with artworks and their own creativity. In general, giving moral issues an educational focus through creativity and pictorial/philosophical analysis appears to be helpful in placing character on the educational agenda.

Keywords: Character education, Visual arts education, Virtues, Virtue literacy, Aristotle, Emotions, Artworks.

Um höfundinn

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage (iow1@hi.is; ingimar@lhi.is) er myndlistar- og heimspekikennari, listmálari, doktorsnemi við Háskóla Íslands og aðjúnkt við Listaháskóla Íslands.

About the author

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage (iow1@hi.is; ingimar@lhi.is) teaches visual arts and philosophy; he is a painter, a doctoral candidate at the University of Iceland, and an adjunct at the Iceland University of the Arts.

Ég vil þakka ritrýnnum fyrir afar góðar og gagnlegar athugasemdir sem hafa gert mér kleift að skerpa enn betur á hugmyndum mínum.

Heimildir

- Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958). Modern moral philosophy. *Philosophy*, 33(1), 1–19.
- Anscombe, G. E. M. (1994). Siðfræði nútímans (Benedikt Ingólfsson þýddi). Í Einar Logi Vignisson og Ólafur Páll Jónsson (ritstjórar). *Heimspeki á tuttugustu öld* (bls. 181–203). Reykjavík: Heimskringla.
- Aristotle. (1962). *The Politics* (T. A. Sinclair þýddi). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Aristóteles. (1997). *Um skáldskaparlistina* (Kristján Árnason þýddi). Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Aristóteles. (2011). *Siðfræði Níkomakkosar* (Svavar Hrafn Svavarson þýddi). Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Arthur, J., Crick, R. D., Samuel, E., Wilson, K. og McGettrick, B. (2006). *Character education: The formation of virtues and dispositions in 16-19 year olds with particular reference to the religious and the spiritual*. Canterbury: Canterbury Christ Church University.
- Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Harrison, T., Sanderse, W. og Wright, D. (2017). *Teaching character and virtue in schools*. London: Routledge.
- Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Walker, D., Sanderse, W. og Jones, C. (2015). *Character education in UK schools. Research report*. Sótt af [http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/Research Reports/Character_Education_in_UK_Schools.pdf](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/Research%20Reports/Character_Education_in_UK_Schools.pdf)
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1990). Art and answerability. Í M. Holquist og V. Liapunov (ritstjórar), *Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays by M. M. Bakhtin* (bls. 1–3). Austin: Texas University Press.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC og Penguin.
- Berkowitz, M. W. og Bier, M. C. (2006). *What works in character education: A research-driven guide for educators*. Sótt af <http://characterandcitizenship.org/images/files/wwcepractitioners.pdf>
- Bohlin, K. E. (2005). *Teaching character education through literature: Awakening the moral imagination in secondary classrooms*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Bohlin, K. E. (2014). Virtue: An argument worth rehearsing. *Journal of Character Education*, 10(1), 53–59.
- Bridges, R. (1999). *Through my eyes*. New York: Scholastic.
- Carr, D. (2004). Moral values and the arts in environmental education: Towards an ethics of aesthetic appreciation. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 38(2), 221–239. doi:10.1111/j.0309-8249.2004.00377.x
- Carr, D. (2010). Dangerous knowledge: On the epistemic and moral significance of arts in education. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 44(3), 1–15. doi:10.1353/jae.2010.0002
- Carr, D. og Harrison, T. (2015). *Educating character through stories*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.
- Carroll, N. (2003). Aesthetics and the educative powers of art. Í R. Curren (ritstjóri), *A companion to the philosophy of education* (bls. 365–383). Malden: Blackwell.
- Carroll, N. (2010). At the crossroads of ethics and aesthetics. *Philosophy and Literature*, 34(1), 248–259. doi:10.1353/phl.0.0073
- Coss, R. G. (2018). Drawings of representational images by upper paleolithic humans and their absence in Neanderthals might reflect historical differences in hunting wary game. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture*, 1(2), 15–38. doi: 10.26613/esic/1.2.46
- Cupchik, G. C. (2016). *The aesthetics of emotion: Up the down staircase of the mind-body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Delacroix, E. (2001). *Eugène Delacroix: Selected letters, 1813-1863* (J. Stewart, ritstjóri). Boston: Artworks.
- Dewey, J. (2000). *Reynsla og menntun* (Gunnar Ragnarsson þýddi). Reykjavík: Rannsóknastofnun Kennaraháskóla Íslands (frumútgáfa 1938).
- Dondis, D. A. (1973). *A primer of visual literacy*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Duncum, P. (2014). Revisioning premodern fine art as popular visual culture. *Studies in Art Education*, 55(3), 203–213. doi:10.1080/00393541.2014.11518930
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Elín María Thayer. (2016). *Ad taka aðalnámskrá grunnskóla í sátt: Viðhorf myndlistakennara til nýjunga í aðalnámskrá grunnskóla 2013* (óútgefin meistaratgerð). Listaháskóli Íslands, Reykjavík.

- Foot, P. (2001). *Natural goodness*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1986). Art and imitation. Í R. Bernasconi (ritstjóri), *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays* (bls. 92–104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaut, B. (2007). *Art, emotion, and ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gerður G. Óskarsdóttir, Kristín Á. Ólafsdóttir, Brynjar Ólafsson, Helga Rut Guðmundsdóttir, Ingibjörg Kaldalóns, Ragnheiður Júnísdóttir, ... Sigrún Guðmundsdóttir. (2014). List- og verkgreinar. Í Gerður G. Óskarsdóttir (ritstjóri), *Starfsættir í grunnskólum við upphaf 21. aldar*. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan.
- Hobson, P. (2001). Aristotle, 385–322 BCE. Í J. A. Palmer (ritstjóri), *Fifty major thinkers on education: From Confucius to Dewey* (bls. 14–19). Oxon: Routledge.
- Hursthouse, R. (1987). *Beginning lives*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hursthouse, R. (1999). *On virtue ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R. (2013). Virtue ethics. Í Edward N. Zalta (ritstjóri), *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Sótt af <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/ethics-virtue/>
- Janson, H. W. og Janson, D. J. (1977). *History of Art* (2. útgáfa). New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues. (2017). *A framework for character education in schools*. Sótt af [https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework for Character Education.pdf](https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf)
- Karlsson, M. M. (2006). Landscape and art. Í Æ. Sigurjónsdóttir og Ó. P. Jónsson (ritstjórar), *Art, ethics and environment: A free inquiry into the vulgarly received notion of nature* (bls. 56–72). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholar Press.
- Kim, J. (2016). Living drawing: Aesthetic teaching for moral artists. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(4), 465–480. doi:10.1080/03057240.2016.1239573
- Kristján Kristjánsson. (2007). *Aristotle, emotions and education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Kristján Kristjánsson. (2015). *Aristotelian character education*. London: Routledge.
- Langer, S. K. (1957). *Problems of art: Ten philosophical lectures*. New York: Scribner's Sons.
- Lapper, A. (2006). *My life in my hands*. London: Pocket Books.
- Lapper, A. (2017). *About*. Sótt af <http://www.alilapper.com/about>
- Marini, G. (2014). Aristotelic learning through the arts. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 33(2), 171–184. doi:10.1177/1470357215616066
- Mejía, A. og Montoya, S. E. (2017). On the meeting of the moral and the aesthetic in literary education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51(2), 370–386. doi:10.1111/1467-9752.12237
- Menntamálaráðuneytið. (1989). *Aðalnámskrá grunnskóla*. Reykjavík: Höfundur.
- Menntamálaráðuneytið. (1999). *Aðalnámskrá grunnskóla*. Reykjavík: Höfundur.
- Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti. (2011). *Aðalnámskrá grunnskóla*. Reykjavík: Höfundur.
- Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneyti. (2013). *Aðalnámskrá grunnskóla 2011: Almennur hluti: Greinasvið 2013*, [2. útgáfa með breytingum]. Reykjavík: Höfundur.
- Messer, T. M. (1985). *Edvard Munch*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- MoMA.org. (2018). *Marina Abramović: The artist is present*. Sótt af <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/964>
- Ongstad, S. (2013). Relasjonen estetikk – epistemologi – etikk og fagdidaktikk. Et semiotisk-kommunikativt perspektiv på estetikk og utdanning. *Nordic Journal of Art and Research*, 2(1), 82–108. doi:10.7577/if.v2i1.616
- Peterson, C. og Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- Platón. (2009a). *Menón* (Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson þýddi). Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Platón. (2009b). *Ríkið* (Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson þýddi). Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Quinn, M. og Rogers, R. (2006). *Marc Quinn: Fourth plinth*. Göttingen: SteidlMack.
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials* (4. útgáfa). London: Sage.

Sanderse, W. (2012). *Character education: A neo-Aristotelian approach to the philosophy, psychology and education of virtue*. Delft: Eburon.

Sherman, N. (1999). Character development and Aristotelian virtue. Í D. Carr og J. Steutel (ritstjórar), *Virtue ethics and moral education* (bls. 35–48). London: Routledge.



Ingimar Ólafsson Waage. (2018).

Grunnþættir menntunar, myndlist og mannkostamenntun.

Netla – vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun. Sérrið 2018 – Bókmenntir, listir og grunnþættir menntunar.

Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands.

Sótt af http://netla.hi.is/serrit/2018/bokmenntir_listir_menntun/05.pdf

<https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2019.18>

Paper II

Paper II

Kari Smith (red.)

**VALIDITY AND
VALUE OF TEACHER
EDUCATION
RESEARCH**



FAGBOKFORLAGET

Boken ble første gang utgitt i 2020 på Vigmostad & Bjørke AS.

Redaksjonelt arbeid, utvalg og introduksjon © Kari Smith 2022

Hvert enkelt kapittel © den respektive forfatter 2022.

Materialet i denne åpen tilgang-versjonen av publikasjonen omfattes av åndsverkløven og er utgitt under lisensen Creative Commons Navngivelse 4.0 Internasjonal (CC BY 4.0).

Denne lisensen gir tillatelse til å kopiere, distribuere eller spre materialet i hvilket som helst medium eller format, og til å remikse, endre eller bygge videre på materialet til et hvilket som helst formål, inkludert kommersielle. Disse frihetene gis med følgende forbehold: Du må oppgi korrekt kreditering, oppgi en lenke til lisensen, og indikere om endringer er blitt gjort. Du kan gjøre dette på enhver rimelig måte, men uten at det kan forstås slik at lisensgiver bifaller deg eller din bruk av materialet. Du kan ikke gjøre bruk av juridiske betingelser eller teknologiske tiltak som lovmessig hindrer andre i å gjøre noe som lisensen tillater.

Fullstendig lisenstekst kan leses på <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode.no>

Merk at andre rettigheter, som reklamerettigheter, personvern og ideelle rettigheter, kan begrense bruken av dette materialet.

Boken er fagfellevurdert i henhold til UHRs retningslinjer for vitenskapelig publisering.

ISBN trykt utgave: 978-82-450-3381-6

ISBN elektronisk utgave: 978-82-450-4087-6

Spørsmål om denne boken kan rettes til:

Fagbokforlaget

Kanalveien 51

5068 Bergen

Tlf.: 55 38 88 00 Faks: 55 38 88 01

e-post: fagbokforlaget@fagbokforlaget.no

Omslagsdesign ved forlaget

CHAPTER 14

The Visual Arts in Contemporary Education: Exploring How Artworks Can Promote Moral Deliberation.

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, Iceland University of the Arts and University of Iceland

ABSTRACT

The current interest in moral education reflects the need for holistic education that embraces the broad spectrum of human life. It has been suggested that the arts have a significant role in this respect, mainly through the insights they provide into human life and experiences from which an audience can relate and learn. This chapter discusses the results of a research project that aimed at discerning how analyzing artworks in an elementary school setting could provide insights into the potentials of the arts for moral deliberation. The theoretical background draws on Aristotelian virtue ethics, especially to a fruitful branch of Neo-Aristotelianism that has been termed as Aristotelian character education, and contemporary accounts of the moral and epistemological value of the visual arts. Results suggest that artworks induce emotional experiences that give insights into real situations, suggesting educative elements which can be a precursor for moral development. The artworks discussed in this chapter generated student reflections on various issues, ranging from general social justice threatened by civil wars, racism, misogyny and poverty, to the moral virtues such as courage, compassion and empathy, and to emotional responses where pupils related what they saw in artworks to their personal challenges and experiences in life. The results suggest that the visual arts are an untapped educational source that can have a significant impact on teacher education and classroom practices in addition to interdisciplinary opportunities. In general, giving moral issues an educational focus through pictorial and philosophical analysis appears to help opening new pathways for value-based education.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers and theorists at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham in England have argued that current educational discourse could benefit from Aristotle's virtue theory to give education a much-needed focus on character and moral sensitivity (Kristjánsson, 2015; Jubilee Centre, 2017). Their view is diametrically opposed to the narrow instrumentalism about educational aims that is prevalent in our western educational systems (Biesta, 2010, 2018; Kristjánsson, 2015). The Jubilee Centre's research has shown that its program, Aristotelian Character Education, has had an impact on educational prospects in England (see e.g. Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse & Jones, 2015; Carr & Harrison, 2015). However, the implementation of these educational aims is not only dependent upon teaching materials but also on teachers' professional development and identity as role-models in moral education (see, e.g. Sherman, 1999). This calls for greater emphasis on teachers as role-models and facilitators in ethical deliberation and the first steps in that direction are through teachers education (Arthur, Fullard, Watts & Moller, 2018).

The development of character and moral sensitivity rests on a person's cognitive and emotional ability to reflect on life's challenges. In this regard, the teacher's role is to provide a playground for children to exercise these abilities, in which critical thinking is a key concept (Sanderse, 2012). While the objective is well established, it remains a challenge to implement character education in schools. There is, however, evidence that the arts can have an essential role in this respect, primarily because they invite the audience to think for themselves, helping them to evaluate ideas on personal grounds and experiences involving both cognitive and emotional processes (see, e.g. Carr & Harrison, 2015 on the value of literature for character education). However, the neglect of the visual arts as a suitable vehicle for character education is surprising given the recent emphasis on literature, music and cinema for that purpose (see, e.g. Sanderse, 2012; Kristjánsson, 2015; Kim, 2016; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse & Wright, 2017).

As a visual arts teacher, I have been doing experiments in classes by inviting pupils to participate in philosophical discussions about artworks in addition to suggesting that they create art inspired by the virtues and what it means to lead a good life. My professional development led me to gather my reflections on the value of the visual arts for character education in a doctoral research project in which I designed an intervention for visual arts classes of 13-year-old pupils. The intervention was created to develop teaching methods to enhance virtue

literacy and moral sensitivity through art creation, philosophical group discussions and the writing of short texts about selected works of art.

In this chapter, I discuss the findings from the philosophical part of the project and the qualitative analysis of student writings. The research question guiding this part of the project is: How do pupils respond to ethical questions about five works of visual art that have a virtue related theme? I approached the research question from three perspectives, which I suggest are present in the artworks I chose to use in the project: social justice, moral virtues and moral emotions. I chose four oil paintings and one artwork in textile that are rather conventional figurative artworks with a narrative structure.

In 1830, Eugène Delacroix painted *Liberty Leading the People*¹², a painting which he intended to be his contribution to the civil war when Charles X was overthrown during the July Revolution of 1830 in Paris (Delacroix, 2001). The painting depicts a female form symbolizing liberty leading a group of citizens who had overpowered the King's soldiers. The first impression of the picture suggests the notion of bravery, freedom and leadership. However, closer inspection invites the onlooker to discern the horrors of the war and whether real justice and freedom could be reached through violence.

Norman Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With* (1964)¹³ depicts young Ruby Bridges escorted to school by four U.S. Marshals. She was the first black child to attend an all-white school in New Orleans in 1960 after desegregation became law in the U.S. She had to endure constant threats from white citizens who opposed desegregation (Bridges, 1999). Despite the challenges, Ruby persisted in her intention to break down the walls of racism and hatred. This painting raises many pertinent questions about social justice, racism, courage and determination.

The textile artwork *The Fisherwomen* (1971)¹⁴ by Hildur Hákonardóttir shows a group of women working in a fish plant under the watchful gaze of the manager. The artwork addresses women's rights and displays the inherent hierarchy in society and the power underlying it.

Briton Rivière's *Daniel's Answer to the King* (1890)¹⁵ illustrates a biblical story from the Old Testament. Although the religious content of this painting is not of interest for the present research, the artist depicts how Daniel shows composure

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People

13 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_We_All_Live_With

14 <http://www.umm.is/UMMIS/Listamenn/Listamadur/343>

15 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_in_the_lions'_den

when locked up in the lions' den. The picture can raise questions about courage and the importance of controlling fear when faced with an adverse situation (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_in_the_lions'_den).

Edvard Munch's *The Sick Child* (1895-96)¹⁶ is an autobiographical painting that portrays his older sister on her deathbed fighting tuberculosis (Messer, 1985). A close relative is by her side, hiding her face in despair. Despite these circumstances, the young girl seems to be comforting the older woman. This picture can raise questions about dignity and equanimity when facing the inevitableness of death.

Internet links to the artworks provided at the end of the chapter.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The role of the arts in education

The role of the arts in education has been debated for decades or even centuries or millennia. Many accounts have focused on a clearly defined instrumental value of the arts, such as the idea that the arts could promote learning in unrelated subjects, skills or qualities (Biesta, 2018), or that they could be beneficial for health (see, e.g. Mastandrea et al, 2019 about the relaxing effect of visiting museums). In contrast to the instrumental value of the arts, proponents of the arts maintain that aside from providing aesthetic experiences, the arts have no practical usefulness whatsoever and should have their place in education for their own sake with no further need of justification (Biesta, 2018, see also Carroll, 2010 about *Art for Art's sake*). In the present-day educational discourse, these incompatible options seem to cancel each other out, leaving us with art programs in education that are increasingly marginalized (Biesta, 2018).

Gert Biesta (2018) proposes, instead, that the value of the arts in education is not to be found in predefined instrumental benefits but in their open-ended nature and how they relate to human cognition and emotions in a multi-layered fashion. This suggests that, in education, the arts allow for educational experiences that give pupils and teachers a mutual playground to delve into issues of human life that invite unexpected learning experiences. Through the arts, we can turn our focus to issues that are of real concern for human development, including sustainable moral growth. When I refer to sustainable moral growth, I am referring to Aristotelian virtue ethics, especially to a fruitful branch of

16 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child

Neo-Aristotelianism that has been termed as Aristotelian character education (Kristjánsson, 2015).

Aristotelian character education

The concept of character was a concern of the ancient Greeks. Socrates (Plato, 1941) insisted that if a human agent knew what was good, he or she would want to act accordingly (Arthur, Crick, Samuel, Wilson & McGettrick, 2006). However, the main inspiration for character education in modern-day educational discourse is Aristotle (384-322 BC), whose works are the primary inspiration of contemporary virtue ethics (Kristjánsson, 2015; Arthur, Kristjánsson, Walker, Sanderse & Jones, 2015). Aristotle maintained that virtues comprised various components, the most salient one, perhaps, being the emotional *qua* motivator of action that moves us to act virtuously.

According to Aristotle, the virtues require abilities to reason about human good. Therefore, people need to practice moral deliberation to become entirely virtuous, although children take the first steps towards moral virtue through habituation and adult guidance (Aristotle, 1955). To be sure, there can be proper actions without virtue as duty and personal advantages can guide our actions, but virtuous individuals would know what was good, want the good and possess the abilities to act accordingly (Arthur et al., 2006, see also Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; and Carr & Harrison, 2015). According to Aristotle, full virtue requires practical wisdom in addition to natural virtue, or natural goodness, which is primarily emotional. Becoming a virtuous human being is a life-long task that incorporates both virtuous actions and the ability to reflect on moral issues and conflicts (Arthur, Harrison, Carr, Kristjánsson & Davison, 2014).

Each virtue, e.g., courage or honesty, consists of seven distinctive components: perception, knowledge and understanding, emotion, identity, motivation, reasoning, and action and practice. Three of these are interrelated and concern virtue literacy. Virtue perception “is concerned with noticing situations involving or standing in need of the virtues”, and virtue knowledge/understanding relates to the acquisition of language usage through familiarity with virtue concepts. Lastly, virtue reasoning focuses on making reasoned judgements on moral situations (Jubilee Centre, 2017, pp. 5-8). Virtue literacy as the ability for moral reflection and deliberation requires a command of relevant concepts and vocabulary. Moral development as an educational objective is an attempt to develop virtue literacy, which could provide pupils with the basic ethical

concepts for further moral cognition and deliberation (Jubilee Centre, 2017; Kristjánsson, 2015).

Truth, beauty and morality

In *The Republic*, Plato (1941) considered the arts to be subversive of knowledge, truth, and morality in the ideal state. His harsh judgement of the arts derives from his theory of forms, according to which reality reflects substantive, but non-physical, ideas or forms. True knowledge could only be obtained via rational deliberation, not through sense experience or imagination. In contrast to Plato, Aristotle (1988) described imitation as an important educational aspect of the arts that might arouse morally appropriate emotions and thereby help people to become more virtuous and wiser. This would draw on the human ability to relate to experience through imagination.

Aristotle cited various types of poetry and music as modes of imitation that are distinctive in three respects: the medium, the objects and the manner (or mode) of imitation. In this respect, the medium refers to the artwork itself, the object to the content, and the manner to the performance or execution, the style of the artist. In *Poetics*, Aristotle (1988) characterized arts as the mediation of the possible, an open-ended educational quality, which could allow for the expanding of the learning horizon (Marini, 2013). In *Politics*, Aristotle pointed out the power of music to express or represent anger or courage and writes that “if a man enjoys looking at a statue of someone for no other reason than that he likes the look of it, then inevitably he will enjoy looking at the original, whose likeness he is at the moment contemplating” (1962, p. 309).

According to present-day discussions, works of art can promote inquiry and reflection, even emotional responses, that remind us of our shared humanity and collective experiences (Carroll, 2003). Works of art and fiction can sometimes even be “twice as true as facts” (Oatley, 1999, p. 101), and they can appear to us as good examples for moral development (Wivestad, 2013). In this aspect, images can be seen as refined representations where we can articulate or imagine experiences and objects, and these would be essential in communication and generally understanding others’ worldviews (Eisner, 2002). In other words, “artworks can provide an understanding of reality” similar to “scientific hypotheses and historical narratives” (Young, 2001, p. 23).

METHODOLOGY

My doctoral project uses a pragmatic theoretical framework that focuses on the concept of education as a values-based practice (Biesta, 2010, Kristjánsson, 2015). One hundred and fifty pupils, all 13-years-old in an upper elementary school in the capital region in Iceland participated in the research. In the participating school, each year group is divided alphabetically into two groups when attending classes in arts and crafts; half of the pupils are in the visual arts for the autumn semester and the other half in textile crafts and vice versa during the spring semester.

I designed an intervention (see introduction) for the visual arts classes which took place from late September through November 2018. Before and after the intervention, pre and post tests were administered to the whole year-group, where the pupils in textile crafts served as a control group for later quantitative analysis. In these tests, pupils were asked to write short reflections, or vignettes (Gray, Royall & Malson, 2017), based on open questions on four artworks. This procedure allowed me to collect responses from the whole year-group on four artworks resulting in 150 texts on each artwork; *Liberty Leading the People*, *The Problem We All Live With*, *The Sick Child* and *The Fisherwomen*. In addition, the pupils participating in the visual arts classes reflected by writing about one additional artwork, *Daniel's answer to the King*, resulting in 75 texts. The tests were only marked by random numbers without any personal identification.

I used thematic analysis to analyze the data using a theoretical approach that “tends to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytical interest in the area” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). In line with this, I looked for texts that expressed virtue-related themes: How do pupils perceive the need for virtue in a given situation? Do they possess a conceptual understanding of what ethical virtues are and why they are important? Do they express emotional dispositions to the situations displayed in the artworks, or do they demonstrate the ability to deliberate on circumstances when two or more virtues collide? Since the pupils’ texts were handwritten, I transcribed them on a computer into a word processing program, which is usually considered to be the first step in getting familiar with the data. The analysis included reading and re-reading the texts; I took notice of concepts and ideas that seemed pertinent, I developed initial codes across the dataset since I was interested in how the participants as a group responded to the artworks. Eventually, I generated themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that

allowed me to draw conclusions about the potentials of the arts for enhancing moral deliberation and virtue literacy.

In addition to general ethical concerns in research, the sensitive position of minors in educational studies requires attention and care. In this research project, I did not collect any sensitive information and my methods are consistent with the ethical requirements laid out by Shamoo and Resnik (2009, p. 276). Before the intervention and data collection took place, I received informed consent from parents and pupils, who were free to opt-out of participation at any time. The research was conducted in compliance with guidelines from The Icelandic Data Protection Authority and was acknowledged by the University of Iceland's committee on ethical conduct in research.

CENTRAL FINDINGS

Justice, hypothetically speaking

When do we need to step in and put our efforts into seemingly unresolvable conflicts? Are our actions guided by particular and personal benefits or by a broader universal notion of morals and justice? To what extent would our efforts be well spent? As one pupil bluntly put it in regard of Delacroix' painting of liberty, "[w]hy sacrifice yourself for peace?"

Pupils perceived the need to fight for justice in proportion with their own reality. An artwork with a high level of conceptual abstraction and fewer options to identify with those portrayed, such as Delacroix' *Liberty Leading the People*, generated ideas that were more hypothetical and less infused with emotions. However, this disinterestedness allowed for a philosophical analysis that revealed the paradoxical and controversial nature of wars and fight.

How can she [liberty] declare peace and victory by waving the flag, even though a lot of people have died and a lot of people are still ready to kill?

Justice was not only perceived as a result of, but also as an essential quality of, the agents in question, and the contradiction between freedom and fight became apparent. "The goddess of liberty was holding a gun and threatening to kill", as one pupil pointed out. Pupils recognized that persistent repression and injustice could eventually bring about disastrous consequences. They commented on "how many people get killed in civil wars", and they asked, "why are wars needed?." It was suggested that "greed was the root of all evil", but humans were also to

blame because “people could be unjust and cruel.” Participants recognized the importance of internal cohesion in social structures. They feared that these could collapse if “widespread anger” was left to ferment until reaching the point of total disruption where “each was against all” and the distinction between “the good and the evil” could no longer be made.

While pupils’ reception of *Liberty Leading the People* was rather passive, pupils responded differently to artworks that examined issues of social justice that were closer to their reality. These include the Norman Rockwell’s *The Problem We All Live With* and *The Fisherwomen* by Icelandic textile artist Hildur Hákonardóttir. Both these artworks induced intense indignation about racism and misogyny.

The 1963 painting by Norman Rockwell, *The Problem We All Live With*, produced worries about injustice in societies in which racism, hatred and xenophobia are prevalent. Norman Rockwell’s message is even more pertinent today. Pupils expressed bewilderment over and strong repulsion to the fact that people would fight against human rights and try to hinder young children from going to school on the grounds of skin color. One student wrote: “I am angry. One should not maltreat people just because of their race.” Another asked: “What is wrong with people when they are against people of different origin, colored people, or a different religion.” Many students expressed their disapproval and lack of understanding as to why the state of affairs in the world needs to be this way and asked in disbelief: “Why do people always have to think so much about other people[’s] race.” Pupils also wondered about why a girl would need to be escorted to school, and why she was threatened by her community. “It gets on my nerves. Nobody should need to be escorted to school by soldiers, threatened by flying fruits and tomatoes. It’s ridiculous!” Although Rockwell’s painting describes the situation in the US almost sixty years ago, similar conditions prevail in many parts of the world. As one participant put it, “[i]t hurts to think about that the world once was like that, and it kind of still is.”

Pupils’ responses to Hildur Hákonardóttir 1971 textile work *The Fisherwomen* focused on women rights, class struggles and labor. A student pointed out that the work appears to be “from the period when women didn’t have any rights, and it is irritating.” The artwork even generated contempt.

The man is in a higher position than the women and gets better paid, but the women do all the work. They are likely to revolt and reject how they are treated. I feel humiliation and shame when looking at this image.

The uneven distribution of resources and workload was also criticized. "It is unfair that the women are doing all the work while the man is just standing there and looking at them." Many pupils recognized that, in the past, women seldom had any choice about their jobs or working hours. A participant predicted that the women would revolt against the injustice and oppression.

These women cannot choose their jobs. They have always been working in this place to have money for food. One day, they will revolt and fight for women's rights because they are tired of others making the decisions that concern them.

Pupils seemed to be able to discern the cruelty sometimes present on the labor market, especially regarding women.

They are standing by a table while their boss is standing over them. Most of them are exhausted and irritated because they have been working for long hours without breaks for resting or eating. They had asked for a break many hours ago, but their boss denied it and decided to monitor them.

Virtue is desirable

In the pupils' responses, virtue seems to be of significant importance for a good life. Displaying virtues such as courage and setting a good example is considered to be praiseworthy. Ruby Bridges, a young black woman who represents a marginalized group in her community, is regarded as a good example because she showed courage in attending a desegregated school despite of the obstacles inflicted on her by anti-desegregation protesters in her town.

She is brave going to a school of white kids only. She is proud of being the first, and she is a pioneer, both as a girl and as a black person.

Showing virtue is considered as something good. Ruby acts as a role model by showing character traits to which others can aspire. According to student interpretation of the painting, she is proud of her actions and proud of herself; being

virtuous is a part of her identity. “She shows courage because she cannot change how she appears.” Pupils wrote that, when facing adverse situations, courage would not only be seen in actions, but also in her fearless manner of encountering a challenge. “She is courageous because she stands straight and walks as if she has nothing to fear.” Being fearless is one thing but being dedicated and energetic when entering a difficult situation is considered even more admirable. “She shows courage and strength because she walks briskly, and it looks like she is not scared.” Being courageous involves a certain level of confidence, which becomes obvious to the audience. “She is self-confident because she walks calmly with the soldiers and her face is calm.” Another student described her as being “upright, with good confidence and doesn’t seem to be afraid.”

Virtue makes a difference

According to pupils, the virtues are not only desirable as character traits, but they also seem to be a necessity for motivation and drive. Courage is also considered to be beneficial in many respects and has a significant practical dimension in dealing with other people. All leadership needs courage, as in the case of *Liberty Leading the People*. As a student stated, “[f]or a leader, it takes courage to lead the people.” Pupils ascribed virtues specifically to women, both in the case of liberty, who a pupil described as “strong and courageous”, and in the case of the Fisherwomen, where pupils recognized how women would sacrifice themselves for their children and families.

They are likely working for their families, to be able to feed their children when they are not able to feed themselves. They will most certainly spend the last minutes of their lives doing something for their families, like working or cooking.

Here, the fisherwomen are considered to represent the idea of motherhood, commitment and unconditional love. Despite adverse conditions and oppression from powerful men, these strong women are toiling through their difficulties in hope of contributing to the greater and higher good.

One of the practical aspects of courage can be seen in the pupils’ thoughts about Rivière Briton’s painting of *Daniel’s Answer to the King* (often referred to as *Daniel in the Lions’ Den*). When communicating with others, appearing confident and courageous is considered to be important in regard to mutual trust and respect. Pupils appear to ascribe these qualities metaphorically to

Daniel amidst the lions, since hungry lions are not likely to care about mutual respect and fearlessness. The idea of mutual respect as a result in interactions or communication was described as a conscious decision from showing courage.

It looks like the man is showing courage in not being afraid of the lions, then the lions are not afraid of him and have nothing to fear.

However, such a fearless appearance can be empowering and could influence the lions in such a way that they would not only hesitate to attack the man, but also become afraid of him. “The lions are afraid of him because he doesn’t show any fear and they become afraid instead.” This line of thought suggests that, in similar cases, the real intention of the antagonists would be unveiled by their reactions; bad intentions would result in fear but good intentions in peace. “The man shows courage and peace. He shows peace by not hurting the lions.” While most pupils focused on the benefits of virtues for a good life, some warned against vices. “He knows that if he shows weakness, the animals will not hesitate to eat him.”

Virtue for personal development

While the virtues have a practical, outward looking dimension, they are equally important for personal development and character, and not least, for a good life. Pupils described the notion of courage as a conscious decision that helps you become better or stronger:

When we show courage, we are increasing our comfort zone, which results in our capacity to deal with more challenges later on and show more courage.

Courage was also seen as a key element in doing the right thing or guiding others in order “to be able to stop bad things from happening or stop people from doing wrong things.” Courage is also important for self-development because it allows you to “conquer your fears”, and courage allows you “to get through life in the right way and deal with new and exciting things.”

There is also present an idea of courage as a character trait regarding acceptance, meeting your destiny with dignity. When describing what Daniel might be thinking, the notion of equanimity seems to be present. It was suggested that, as Daniel looks up through the window and into the light, he could be thinking

of “how wonderful it is outside.” As a pupil wrote, “he has accepted the fact that he is going to die.” Equanimity is also ascribed to the lions as fellow prisoners with Daniel, as everyone in the dungeon is waiting for the inevitable. “Instead of running to the door and trying to get out, they just look into the light and wait for it to come to get them.” Courage plays also an essential role when facing the inevitable, according to one pupil, who said that “[t]he man knows that he will die, and you have to be courageous to face the facts. Also, he knows that there is no way out of these circumstances.”

In the pupils’ texts, the virtues seem to be essential for our inner lives, health, future prospects and relationships. Edvard’s Munch painting of his dying sister induced serious deliberation about life’s challenges. Pupils noted that the reality of life can be harsh and that we needed to accept the facts of life and find a way to cope. “I think it is sad, but this is how life is, and you must be brave.” In a similar vein, but with added importance on gratitude, one pupil wrote that:

I think the woman with the red hair is seriously ill and maybe dying, she is possibly thanking her daughter ... for a good life and much help. I think the painting is sad because it hurts to lose someone, but you’ll have to go on because such is life.

With a similar focus on difficult moments, pupils wrote that virtues such as appreciation and forgiveness could be of great importance for psychological well-being after having been through emotional suffering. As such, Munch’s painting can be perceived as a reminder of appreciating life, and that each moment could be the last one. “Love your family and enjoy your friends. Because you’ll never know when you’ll lose someone.” The importance of forgiving and not holding grudges was emphasized in this vignette:

In the last days, they had a fight which ended badly, and they hadn’t spoken since. Then the mother gets a phone call where she is told that her daughter had been in a car accident ... They both realize the importance of forgiving. After some crying and laughing, the daughter dies, and five days later the mother dies of sorrow.

Virtuous emotions

The third facet of the pupils’ responses to the artworks concerns affective and emotional issues. Looking at an artwork can foster emotionally induced moral virtues through perception and imagination. The emotional charge in Munch’s

painting seems to arouse similar emotions with the audience. One pupil wrote that “[h]er husband is so sad that he is praying for her. You perceive the sorrow and anguish of death in this painting, because of how sad he is, and she is afraid.” In some accounts, pupils expressed compassion and empathy with a hint of hope. “I feel sad for the woman who is crying and hiding her face in the other woman’s lap. It is as if she is saying: ‘Everything will be alright’.”

The prospects of imminent demise are also accentuated by the pupils: “I think the redhaired one is going to die, and I sense much fear and sorrow in this painting.” Other pupils added how the dark and heavy colors in the painting evoked similar feelings in them. For example, one wrote that “[t]his painting is somber, and I became sad when I looked at it.” Another remarked that “[t]he dark colors are bad for the atmosphere in the painting. If the artist had used brighter and more vivid colors, the painting would have been different.” One pupil commented on the darkness in the room concerning, saying that the darkness “makes me feel as if nobody has been around to help her.” Although the presence of sadness was pronounced, there was also a positive emotion that could counter the difficulties.

There will be much sorrow over the next days. The emotions I feel are sorrow because of the demise of the woman. But also, a lot of relief because the woman had been going through much pain and it is good to leave.

In some instances, Munch’s painting made pupils to relate to their own painful experiences. One pupil wrote that the painting “is tragic because I know how it is to lose someone who is close, and whom you love.” Another pupil took a precise example from her own experience:

They were like working outside because it looks like it is in the old times, then suddenly she passes out, but then she recovered. I get this feeling as it hurts in my stomach and things. This happened to my grandfather, but he is alright now.

In a similar vein, a pupil wrote that he or she felt “sorrow, anger and resentment. I feel these emotions because my grandmother is fighting cancer.” In one account, a pupil related to the situation as something that could happen to her.

She became suddenly very ill, so her mother took her to the hospital and there it was discovered that she suffered from an incurable heart disease. Then, they were sent home to be together until she would stop breathing. It feels sad because it could, in a way, be my mother and me.

DISCUSSION

In line with theoretical literature on the value of the arts for moral development, my results suggest that when analyzing artworks, pupils can articulate moral concepts and relate them to both their external and internal reality. Pupils were not only able to objectively describe the events depicted in the artwork, but they were also able to justify their responses: what they thought or felt and why. Their responses also demonstrated that their reactions were dependent on the extent to which they could relate to the persons depicted in the artwork: this can be seen in their deliberations on social justice. In many instances, pupils' responses were infused with virtuous emotions: they expressed resentment, anger and shame, and they recognized sorrow and grief and showed empathy towards the persons depicted. Some described the importance of gratitude and forgiving, they perceived equanimity and tranquility, and they expressed admiration when beholding the virtues of others. They outlined how courage can be beneficial in many ways in human life, both regarding others and for personal guidance when facing fear or obstacles. Colorful and imaginative texts displayed how each participant brought his or her own experiences and background into the interpretation. This shows that art can be the bedrock for the open-ended deliberation that contemporary educational discourse emphasizes. This also follows Aristotle's theory about the development of the virtuous human being, which says that in our conduct and judgement, we need to be sensitive to a variety of different situations, which we must evaluate from various perspectives. Although the open-ended nature of art could, in theory, allow for moral relativism in our responses, these attitudes did not appear. Despite the colorful variety of texts, they shared an inner coherence which can be observed in how the main themes in the analysis are constructed.

At the heart of moral deliberation is the ability to think about moral issues and experience feelings and emotions as a result. Aristotle (1955) wrote that these qualities need to be developed through habituation, upbringing, and, not least, practice. Artwork such as that used in this research project seems to allow for deliberation about various moral issues. Through representation and

imitation, visual images provide a playground for free and unhindered thinking about how to deal with moral challenges in real life, and in some instances, the artworks allow for a deeper reflection on pupils' own (sometimes painful) experiences. Although it remains unknown whether pupils would act in accordance with their writing in situations similar to those presented in the artwork, their deliberation remains an important rehearsal or practice through imagination in which they can evaluate their thoughts and feelings.

Although my results are promising, it must be kept in mind that my project is limited in some respects. For instance, this research explores a single age group, and a different collection of artworks could have produced different findings. However, my experience in teaching the visual arts and philosophy in an upper elementary school tells me that the artwork chosen for analysis always induces emotional and cognitive reactions that allow for discussion and reflections, regardless of the pieces chosen.

Despite these limitations, I believe that my research project unveils an untapped educational source that can have a significant impact on teacher education and classroom practices. My research also suggests interdisciplinary opportunities, since the introduction of art into other school subjects could enrich learning. In general, giving moral issues an educational focus through pictorial and philosophical analysis appears to help open new pathways for value-based education.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle. (1955). *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. J.A.K. Thomson. Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books.
- Aristotle. (1988). *Poetics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Aristotle. (1962). *The Politics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Arthur, J., Crick, R.D., Samuel, E., Wilson, K. and McGettrick, B. (2006). *Character Education: The Formation of Virtues and Dispositions in 16-19 Year Olds with Particular Reference to the Religious and the Spiritual*. Canterbury: Canterbury Christ Church University.
- Arthur, J., Fullard, M., Watts, P. and Moller, F. (2018). *Character Perspectives of Student Teachers: Initial Insights. Research Report*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Retrieved February 18, 2019 from https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/projects/TransformativeBritain/Character_Perspectives_Student_Teachers.pdf
- Arthur, J., Harrison, T., Carr, D., Kristjánsson, K. and Davison, I. (2014). *The Knightly Virtues: Enhancing Virtue Literacy through Stories. Research Report*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Retrieved December 12, 2016 from: <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/KVPDF/KnightlyVirtuesReport.pdf>

- Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Harrison, T., Sanderse, W. and Wright, D. (2017). *Teaching Character and Virtue in Schools*. London: Routledge.
- Arthur, J., Kristjánsson, K., Walker, D., Sanderse, W. and Jones, C. (2015). *Character Education in UK Schools. Research report*. Birmingham: Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Retrieved March 15, 2016 from [http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/Research Reports/Character_Education_in_UK_Schools.pdf](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/Research%20Reports/Character_Education_in_UK_Schools.pdf)
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2010). Why “What works” still won’t work: from evidence-based education to value-based education. *Studies in Philosophy of Education*, 29, 491-503.
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2018). What if? Art education beyond expression and creativity. In C. Naughton, G.J.J. Biesta and D.R. Cole, *Art, Artists and Pedagogy: Philosophy and the arts in Education* (pp. 11-20). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Bridges, R. (1999). *Through my eyes*. New York, NY: Scholastic.
- Carr, D. and Harrison, T. (2015). *Educating Character Through Stories*. Exeter: Imprint academic.
- Carroll, N. (2003). Aesthetics and the educative powers of art. In R. Curren (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Education*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Carroll, N. (2010). At the crossroads of ethics and aesthetics. *Philosophy and Literature*, 34, 248-259.
- Delacroix, E. (2001). *Eugène Delacroix: Selected letters, 1813-1863* (J. Stewart, ed.). Boston, MA: Artworks.
- Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the Creation of Mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Gray, D., Royall, B. and Malson, H. (2017). Hypothetically speaking: using vignettes as a stand-alone qualitative method (pp. 71-93). In V. Braun, V. Clarke and D. Gray (eds.), *Collecting Qualitative Data*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues. (2017). *A Framework for Character Education in Schools*. Accessed at [https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework for Character Education.pdf](https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf)
- Kim, J. (2016). Living drawing: Aesthetic teaching for moral artists. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(4), 465-480.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2007). *Aristotle, Emotions and Education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Kristjánsson, K. (2015). *Aristotelian Character Education*. London: Routledge.
- Marini, G. (2014). Aristotelian learning through the arts. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 33(2), 171-184.
- Mastandrea, S., Maricchiolo, F., Carrus, G., Giovannelli, I., Giuliania, V., and Berardi, D. (2019). Visits to figurative art museums may lower blood pressure and stress, *Arts & Health*, 11(2), 123-132.
- Messer, T.M. (1985). *Edvard Munch*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams.
- Oatley, K. (1999). Why fiction may be twice as true as fact: fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation. *Review of General Psychology*, 3(2), 101-117.
- Plato. (1941). *The Republic*. New York, NY: The Modern Library.
- Sanderse, W. (2012). *Character Education: A Neo-Aristotelian Approach to the Philosophy, Psychology and Education of Virtue*. Delft, Netherlands: Eburon.
- Shamoo, A.E. and Resnik, D.B. (2009). *Responsible Conduct of Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sherman, N. (1999). Character development and Aristotelian virtue. In D. Carr and J. Steutel (eds.), *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* (pp. 35-48). London: Routledge.
- Young, J.O. (2001). *Art and Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Wivestad, S.M. (2013). "Upbuilding examples" for adults close to children. *Studies in Philosophy of Education*, 32, 515-532.

Artworks

Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child

Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People

Norman Rockwell, *The Problem We All Live With*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_We_All_Live_With

Briton Rivière, *Daniel's Answer to the King*: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_in_the_lions'_den

Hildur Hákonardóttir: *The Fisherwomen [Fiskikonurnar]*: <http://www.umm.is/UMMIS/Listamenn/Listamadur/343>

Paper III

Paper III

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

Iceland University of the Arts
University of Iceland

Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland

Abstract

In this paper, I discuss the results of focus-group interviews with teachers and pupils in Iceland who participated in an intervention in visual arts classes aimed at cultivating virtue literacy, critical thinking, and moral deliberation through pupils' creativity and discussions regarding moral topics. Pupils and teachers generally welcomed the ethical approach of the project, but thematic analysis revealed challenges to implementing moral education in a traditional school setting. The results suggest that although the value of the arts for moral reflection and deliberation is widely recognised, interventions for moral education need to consider the existing national educational framework, general educational aims, local school culture and the diverse characteristics of pupils and teachers.

Keywords: Visual arts, moral education, virtue literacy, educational aims

Introduction

For decades, an education based on instrumental aims (goals, objectives, outcomes) has prevailed in Western educational systems, along with an increased emphasis on measurements, standardisation, and the productivity of those systems (see, e.g., Kitcher, 2022; Biesta, 2018; Muller, 2018; Harðarson, 2017). Despite this, paradoxically, education as a moral framework seems to have re-emerged simultaneously as an underlying ubiquitous principle (Jubilee Centre, 2022; Kristjánsson, 2015, 2020). Regardless of this promising development, it remains a challenge to implement the moral dimensions of education. In the Icelandic National Curriculum guide, for example, moral attitudes are mentioned in several

Paper IV

Paper IV



Horft um öxl: Listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi rýnir í eigin vegferð og þroskaferil í námi og starfi

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

► Abstract ► Um höfund ► About the author ► Heimildir

Í þessari grein, sem er persónuleg frásögn, segir frá starfendarannsókn sem höfundur framkvæmdi með það fyrir augum að öðlast betri skilning á eigin vegferð á löngum ferli í starfi sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi. Fræðilegur grunnur rannsóknarinnar byggist á hugmyndum Maxine Greene um siðferðislegt gildi kennarastarfsins ásamt mikilvægi þess að kennarar séu meðvitaðir um margbrotið hlutverk sitt og mæti áskorunum með skýr *áform* og *vilja* að leiðarljósi. Til þess að svo megi verða þarf einstaklingurinn að leita leiðsagnar dygdanna, einkum og sér í lagi þeirrar yfirdygðar sem Aristóteles nefndi hyggindi. Gagna var m.a. aflað með skrifum í rannsóknardagbók þar sem örsögur, minningar og afturblik léku lykilhlutverk auk viðtals við rannsóknarvin. Í niðurstöðukaflanum setur höfundur þroskaferli sitt í röklegt samhengi og greinir þróun sjálfsmyndar frá listamanni, yfir í kennara og síðar rannsakanda. Þroskaferlið leiðir höfundinn loks á upphafsreit þar sem hann lýsir því að hvernig *listamaðurinn* er aftur sestur undir stýrið á ferðalaginu og hefur boðið *kennaranum* og *rannsakandanum* far í von um að þeir hjálpi til í ferðinni. Niðurstöður benda til mikilvægis þess að kennarar horfi inn á við jafnframt því sem þeir sinna margbrotnum störfum sínum og gæti þess að ígrunda eigið starf af kostgæfni, íhygli og ekki síður að þeir leiti leiða til að eiga í gjöfulem samræðum við aðra kennara og rannsakendur um störf sín og áskoranir.

Efnisorð: starfendarannsóknir, farsæld, kennarastarfið, hyggindi, sjálfsskilningur, starfsþróun

Inngangur

Mannfólkið hefur áor það ýmsu merkilegu í gegnum tíðina, hvort sem það eru pýramíðarnir í Egyptalandi, tunglferðir eða ofurhröð snjalltækni samtímans. Þrátt fyrir slík tæknileg afrek má fljótt sjá að oft er stærsta áskorun manneskjunnar sjálfsskilningur og eigin tilvera í samhengi við nánasta umhverfi og samferðafólk. Margir listamenn hafa veitt okkur innsýn í tilraunir til sjálfsskilnings; fjölmargar sjálfsmyndir Rembrandts sýna hann einblína til áhorfandans með rannsakandi augnaráði, eins og hann vænti þess að hann geti lært eitthvað um sjálfan sig í gegnum augasteina listunnandans, jafnvel þótt aldir skilji að. Á svipaðan hátt má hugsa sér kennara sem staldrar við eftir langa vegferð og spyr sjálfan sig hvernig hann hafi komist á þann stað sem hann er á. Sagan sem ég vil segja hér er mjög löng, hún spannar kannski þrjátíu ár og er býsna persónuleg. Í þessari stuttu grein er ekki unnt að rekja heila ævisögu, þannig að ég lít fremur á hana sem einhvers konar ágríp eða yfirlit sem kannski á eftir að þróast áfram í lengra verk.

Ég hef alltaf haft áhuga á myndlist, náttúrunni, heimspeki, jarðfræði, fjöllum, örnefnum og þess háttar. Ég málaði talsvert og fékk mikið út úr því að tengja myndlistina við náttúruna. Mér leið

samt stundum eins og það stæði mér fyrir þrifum hvað áhugasvið mín voru flókin og margbrotin. Ég minnst þess þegar ég var í framhaldsnámi í myndlist í Frakklandi að mér fannst ég ekki eiga neinn heimavöll: Ég var „jack of all trades – but master of none“ og fann hversu mér þótti það stundum erfitt að dvelja í þessu einskismannslandi milli fræðasviða sem á margan hátt eru ólík; myndlist, heimspeki og jarðfræði. Það var ekki fyrr en síðar á lífsleiðinni sem ég áttaði mig á að mér tókst að sameina þessi ólíku áhugasvið í gegnum kennarastarfið, og ekki síst í gegnum þá uppgötvun að það er fullkomlega leyfilegt að vera ekki bara eitthvað eitt og fylgja ekki bara einni línu.

Tilgangur og markmið rannsóknarinnar

Tilgangur þessarar rannsóknar minnar og sjálfsskoðunar er að varpa ljósi á mikilvægi ígrundunar og sjálfsskilnings kennara í starfi, ekki síst þegar horft er til lengri tíma. Skólastarf er undirstaða nútímasamfélags og á því sviði leika kennarar lykilhlutverk að mínu áliti en eins og gefur að skilja togast gjarnan á persónuleg sýn kennarans á starf sitt annars vegar og væntingar samfélagsins hins vegar. Vangaveltur af þessum toga endurspeglar þá lifandi umræðu sem er ríkjandi í samtímanum um kennaramenntun og áhersluna á margþætt hlutverk kennara. Dæmi um það má t.d. sjá í nýlegum lögum um hæfni kennara (lög nr. 95/2019) og meðfylgjandi reglugerð (reglugerð nr. 1355/2022) þar sem ýmislegt í almennri hæfni kennara er á siðferðislegum nótum, eins og lesa má í 5. grein þar sem kennurum er ætlað að stuðla að menntun og farsæld barna með því að „mæta námslegum, félagslegum og persónulegum þörfum nemenda og skipuleggja nám og kennslu út frá líkamlegum, tilfinningalegum og vitmunalegum þroska þeirra“ (reglugerð nr. 1355/2022) auk þess að „skilja hvernig bakgrunnur og reynsla nemenda hefur áhrif á nám, líðan, hegðun og samskipti“ (reglugerð nr. 1355/2022). Samsvarandi nýleg umræða um farsæld sem markmið menntunar og hlutverk kennara þar að lútandi varpar einnig upp mikilvægum spurningum um siðferðislegt hlutverk kennara (Kolbrún Þ. Pálsdóttir og Kristján Kristjánsson, 2023).

Kennsla er á margan hátt óvenjulegt starf og hefur þann eiginleika að yfirtaka stundum líf viðkomandi á vissan hátt. Kennari stimplar sig ekki svo auðveldlega inn og út þótt vinnuveitendur kennara á sveitarstjórnarstiginu haldi annað. Þannig togast á kerfislegar hugmyndir um kennarastarfið annars vegar og tilvistarlegar hugmyndir hins vegar. Hafþór Guðjónsson (2002) reifar í doktorsritgerð sinni að þrátt fyrir að unnið sé með skapandi hugmyndir og lifandi þælingar í kennaranámi, þá taki yfir viss stofnanamenning eftir að nýir kennarar hefja störf á vettvangi. Þetta gæti verið angi af fyrirbæri sem Tyack og Tobin (1994) nefndu *The grammar of schooling* og byggir á þeirri hugmynd að fastmótad fyrirkomulag skólastarfs hafi ávallt vinninginn þegar verið er að innleiða nýjar nálganir. Tilgátan um *The grammar of schooling* gerir ráð fyrir því að í skólastarfi sé undirliggjandi og alltumlykjandi strúktúr sem móti sýn okkar á skólastarfið, svipað því hvernig málfræði mótar máltilfinningu okkar, án þess að við séum sérstaklega meðvituð um hana. Þrátt fyrir að umgjörð skólans sé fastmótud þá gildir það ekki um nemendur og kennara sem öll eru lífrænar og sjálfstæðar heildir. Enginn verður nokkurn tíma fullmótaður kennari og því má halda fram að góður kennari sé jafnframt nemandi í einhverjum skilningi. Hér er við hæfi að rifja upp hugleiðingar Sókratesar um takmarkanir eigin visku og þekkingar (Platón, 2006). Þannig má sjá kennarastarfið sem samfellt þroskaferli sem líkist starfi listamannsins: Fiðluleikarinn telur sig seint hafa fullmótað tækni sína og listmálarinn er í stöðugri leit að hinni hreinu fagurfræðilegu upplifun og tæra sannleika sem hann vonar að kraftbirtist einn góðan veðurdag. Kennarastarfið er á þann hátt lifandi og síkvíkt og hefur það umfram mörg störf að dansa á mörkum ólíkra fræðasviða og rannsóknahefða. Auk hefðbundinnar orðræðu um gagnreyndar kennsluaðferðir og samfélagslegar skyldur má segja að kennsla sé allt í senn; list, rannsókn, athöfn og samskipti.

Markmið þessarar rannsóknar er að skoða vegferð mína og þroskaferil sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi og varpa ljósi á hvernig starfsþróun mín hefur mótað mig með hlidsjón af þeim væntingum sem ég hafði til þessara ólíku hlutverka. Hápunktur þessa ferðalags er doktorsnám sem ég hóf haustið 2015 en í því ferli hafa kristallast áskoranir sem hafa beint mér inn á nýjar brautir. Rannsóknarspurningin sem leiðir mig áfram er: Hvernig hefur sjálfsprottin starfsþróun haft áhrif á menntahugsun mína og sjálfsskilning sem kennara, rannsakanda og listamanns? Ég álit að

niðurstöðurnar geti verið innlegg í umræðuna um hlutverk kennara, einkum og sér í lagi um þessar mundir þegar siðferðislegar víddir kennarastarfsins eru í brennidepli eins og vísbendingar eru um og ég hef vikið að hér að framan (sjá t.d. Kolbrún Þ. Pálsdóttir og Kristján Kristjánsson, 2023, bls. 94; Stevenson, 2022, bls. 14).

Fræðilegt yfirlit

Starfsumhverfi kennarans

Eins og fram hefur komið þá er starf kennarans tilvistarlegt í eðli sínu og fléttast saman við einkalíf viðkomandi. Fyrir vikið getur skapast togstreita milli umgjardar starfsumhverfisins og persónulegrar sýnar og reynsluheims. Maxine Greene (1973, bls. 11) ræðir í bók sinni *Teacher as stranger* þá hugmynd að kennarar og nemendur séu samferðafólk í veröld sem mótuð var af öðrum. Þrátt fyrir að samferðafólk beri ekki ábyrgð á þeim ramma sem mótar sviðið þá minnir hún á að umhverfið losi manneskjur ekki undan ábyrgð, því „kennsla sé markmiðsbundin athöfn sem verði að framkvæma af árvekni þrátt fyrir síbreytilegar aðstæður“ (Greene, 1973, bls. 69). Hún heldur áfram, kallar kennarann til ábyrgðar og segir að „[...] kennarinn verði að hafa *áform* um að hrinda í framkvæmd breytingum á aðstæðum nemenda [og] hann verði að *vilja* gera þær mögulegar eftir tilteknum leiðum [...]“ (Greene, 1973, bls. 69). Af orðum hennar má ráða að kennarinn sé aldrei hlutlaus embættismaður, heldur beri honum siðferðisleg skylda til að horfa lengra og hærra en hefðbundin kerfishugsun býður upp á. Ætla má að sá vilji sem Greene leggur áherslu á tengist því að kennarinn hafi skilning á hlutverki sínu og setji sjálfan sig í merkingarbært samhengi. Þar spilar sjálfsmýnd kennarans lykilhlutverk auk þekkingar á aðstæðum þar sem spurningin er um hvað sé framkvæmanlegt í ljósi aðstæðna.

Hin siðferðislega áskoranin kennarans

Spurningin um sjálfsmýnd kennarans og meðvitund um eigin stöðu og hlutverk er í grundvallaratriðum siðferðislegs eðlis. Maxine Greene (1973, bls. 181–182) lýsti hvernig kennarar standa iðulega frammi fyrir siðferðislegum klípum og því hversu mörg spjót geta staðið á kennurum. Þannig er kennarinn fulltrúi veraldar hinna fullorðnu og ábyrgu jafnframt því að virða viðhorf, lífssýn og reynsluheim þeirrar æsku sem honum er treyst fyrir. Kennarinn er í senn fulltrúi þess valds sem ríki eða sveitarfélög hafa afhent honum og falið að sinna störfum samkvæmt fyrirliggjandi námskrám og trúnaðarmaður nemenda sem leggur sig fram um að hlúa að og mæta þeim þar sem þau eru stödd á hverjum tíma með mannlega reisn og kærleika að leiðarljósi (Greene, 1973). Þarna birtist okkur þversögn menntunarinnar; að kennari þurfi samtímis að veita leiðsögn um fastmótaðar hefðir og reglur – bæði samfélagsins og fagsviðanna – þar sem sjálfstjórn, sanngirni og hófstilling veiga þungt, jafnframt því að hvetja nemendur til sjálfstæðis, víðsýni, forvitni og meðvitundar um gildi, og um leið efla með þeim kjark til að andæfa ríkjandi viðhorfum og gildum.

Hvernig eiga kennarar að takast á við slíkar áskoranir og á sama tíma geta fundið jafnvægi í störfum sínum og ákvörðunum? Mér sýnist að siðfræðikenningar geti komið að gagni við slíkar aðstæður, einkum dygðasiðfræði Aristótelesar (2011). Þannig má hugsa sér að áform og vilji Maxine Greene (1973) sem kynnt voru til sögunnar hér að framan, þarfnist leiðsagnar dygðanna og hvað kennarann snertir má ætla að yfirdygðin *hyggindi*¹ skipti talsverðu máli. Aristóteles (2011; sjá einnig í Eikeland, 2006; Kristján Kristjánsson, 2020) skilgreinir *hyggindi* (gr. *fronêsis*) sem vitræna dygð sem býr yfir sérstökum eiginleikum sem felast í að tengja saman aðrar vitrænar dygðir (t.d. þekkingu og forvitni) og siðrænar dygðir (t.d. réttlæti og hófsemi). Hún er því sérstök yfirdygð og *hyggindi* geta hjálpað okkur þegar höfuðdygðir takast á. Dæmi um það gæti verið þegar kennarinn stendur frammi fyrir því að vera heiðarlegur eða sýna hluttekningu, vitandi að í sumum tilvikum má satt kyrrt liggja (sjá t.d. Kristján Kristjánsson, 2020).

¹ Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson þýðir forn-gríska orðið *fronêsis* sem *hyggindi* í þýðingu sinni á Siðfræði Nikomakkosar (Aristóteles, 2011). Á ensku er yfirleitt talað um *practical wisdom* eða *good sense*. Kristján Kristjánsson (2020) álitur að ekki sé til neitt samsvarandi hugtak á íslensku sem fangi anda hugtaksins fyllilega. Ekki er óalgennt að notuð séu orðin *siðvit*, *dómgreind* eða *víska* til jafns við *hyggindi*. Í þessari ritgerð klys ég að halla mér að þýðingu Svavars Hrafnis og nota orðið *hyggindi*.

Aristóteles (2011) áleit æðsta markmið manngs lífs vera farsældina. Mikilvægur hluti farsældarinnar er dygðin en hana er að finna í meðalhófinu. Aristóteles (2011, bls. 269) ræðir meðalhófið í *Síðfræði Nikomakkosar* og tekur dæmi af hugrekki: „Meðallagið milli ótta og fifldirfsku er hugrekki. Hvað viðvíkur skefjaleysi ber sá ekkert nafn sem er skefjalaust óttalaus (margir lestir eru nafnlausir), en skefjalaust hugrakkur maður er fifldjarfur, og sá sem óttast skefjalaust og brestur þor er huglaus.“ Aristóteles (2011, bls. 276) viðurkennir einnig að það sé „erfitt að henda reiður á meðallaginu og [það] tilheyri frekar skynjun en skynsemi“, og það sé „verk að finna alltaf meðallagið“, og það sé „ekki á hvers manns færi“. Lausnin felist í að forðast það sem er „andstæðara meðallaginu“ (Aristóteles, 2011, bls. 277). Áhugi á dygðasiðfræði Aristótelesar í samtímanum á rætur sínar að rekja til þess að við finnum þörf til að öðlast þekkingu og færni sem hjálpar okkur að takast á við áskoranir lífsins á farsælan hátt. Í stað þess að byggja ákvarðanir okkar um rétt og rangt með fyrirfram gefnum fastmótuðum aðferðum er mikilvægt að maður standi með eigin ákvörðunum og þær séu teknar í samhljómi við okkar innra líf, tilfinningar, sjálfsvitund og sjálfsvirðingu.

Norski menntunarfræðingurinn Olav Eikeland (2006) ræðir hvernig samtímaáhugi á *hyggindum* sprettur hjá ýmsum fræðimönnum af þrá þeirra til að finna samhljóm í túlkun og beitingu og með rökfærslum og innri ígrundun um eigin athafnir. *Hyggindi* eru þannig mikilvægur hluti kennarastarfsins (Kristján Kristjánsson, 2005), en til þess að geta aðgerðabundið *hyggindi* setur Kristján fram kenningu um fjóra grunnþætti *hygginda* sem vel mætti þjálfá og greina og gæti slíkt líkan hentað kennurum vel.

Þessir grunnþættir eru að mati Kristjáns:

- Síðferðileg skynjun; að sjá heiminn í ljósi síðferðilegra hugtaka á borð við mannkosti og dygðir og gera sér t.d. grein fyrir því að aðstæðurnar sem maður stendur frammi fyrir geti kallað á bæði heidarleika og góðvild.
- Síðferðileg rökhugsun; að hafa þjálfun í að vega og meta aðstæður, með yfirvegun og mati á ólíkum kostum, til að ákvarða hvort þessar tilteknu aðstæður kalli fremur á heidarlega góðvild eða góðviljaðan heidarleika (eða hugsanlega hreina hvíta lygi ef nógu mikið er í húfi).
- Síðferðileg sjálfmynd; skýr mynd af því hvernig persóna maður vill vera og hvernig maður skilur tilgang mannlífsins almennt.
- Tilfinningastjórnun; hæfni til að sveigja eigin tilfinningar í rökvísa átt og láta þær ekki stjórna ákvarðanatöku á óyfirvegaðan hátt.

(Kristján Kristjánsson, 2020, áttunda efnisgrein)

Þegar maður dýfir tánum í viskubrunn þar sem ekki sést almennilega til botns er auðvelt að hnjóta um rótarflækur heimspekikenna og síðari tíma túlkun á Aristótelesi, sérstaklega í ljósi þess að flest það sem til er eftir hann eru ýmist fyrirlestranótur eða innblásin eftirrit nemenda hans. Skilgreiningin á *hyggindum* er þannig sama marki brennd en þeir grunnþættir sem Kristján setur fram, og ég vitna til hér, virðast mér vera nægilega skýrir til þess að geta ígrundað mitt eigið þroskaferli sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi.

Aðferðafræði

Mig hefur lengi langað til að skoða mitt eigið ferli sem listamaður, kennari og síðar rannsakandi. Það blasti við að í slíku ferðalagi þyrfti ég að njóta leiðsagnar aðferða starfendarannsóknna. Hafþór Guðjónsson (2011) rýnir í gildi starfendarannsóknna í greininni „Kennari sem rannsakandi“, segir þær vera leið til að vaxa í starfi en þær séu frábrugðnar öðrum rannsóknarhefðum því „að rannsakandinn *beinir athyglinni að sjálfum sér og starfsháttum sínum*“ (Hafþór Guðjónsson, 2011, bls. 3). Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir (2011, bls. 3) bendir á að sjálfsrýni af þessum toga feli í sér að yfirfærslugildi starfendarannsóknna er frábrugðið öðrum rannsóknarsniðum og snúist hvorki um yfirfærslu niðurstaðna né sönnun á tilgátum. Starfendarannsóknir eru þannig ákveðið form þátttökurannsóknna þar sem rannsakandi miðlar eigin reynslu og þekkingu og reisir með þeim hætti brú milli framkvæmda og fræða (Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir og Svanborg R. Jónsdóttir, 2012, bls. 4).

Á löngum tíma safnast upp mikil reynsla sem oft og iðulega sekkur til botns í hafdjúpi lífshlaupsins án þess að vera færð til bókar á kerfisbundinn hátt en starfendarannsóknir byggjast gjarnan á reglubundnum dagbókarfærslum þar sem rannsakandinn færir hugrenningar sínar í letur með kerfisbundnum hætti. Slíku er ekki alltaf til að dreifa þegar um er að ræða langt tímaseið, hvað þá heilan starfsferil. Engu að síður er unnt að móta rannsóknarspurningu og nota rannsóknardagbók til að slæða reynslubankann með það fyrir augum að festa hendur á merkingarbærum minningum. Hafþór Guðjónsson (2011, bls. 1) minnir á mikilvægi þess fyrir menntarannsóknir að raddir kennara heyrist því „sjónarhorn utanaðkomandi rannsakanda gæti aldrei náð fullkomlega yfir reynslu, þekkingu eða skilning kennara sjálfra á því sem gerist í skólstofunni og því væri mikilvægt að viðurkenna þátt þeirra í þróun kennarastarfsins, ígrundun og túlkun á því“.

Gögn og gagnaöflun

Í rannsókninni notaði ég margvísleg gögn sem eiga sér ólíkan uppruna, sjá yfirlit í *Täflu 1*:

Tafla 1

Yfirlit um gögn

Tegund gagna:	Tilgangur:	Gagnsemi:
a) Rannsóknar- og lestrardagbók	Þessi dagbók inniheldur eitt og annað sem ég hef haldið til haga, bæði eftir lestur greina og þælingar og hugmyndir sem skjóta upp kollinum.	„Meta-athugun“ á því hvernig ég nálgast rannsóknina. Þetta hjálpar mér að fylgjast með sjálfum mér meðan á ferlinu stendur.
b) Afturblik, örsögur og minningabrot	Verðmætustu gögnin en um leið þau sem erfðast er að draga fram. Þarna þurfti ég að treysta á minnið og tilfinningarnar. Þetta er iðulega tengt við eitthvað haldbært, t.d. gamla ljósmynd eða einhvers konar haldreipi.	Áhugavert að bera þetta saman við ljósmyndirnar af listaverkum nemenda. Aðallega vegna þess að þar myndu mætast óáreiðanlegar minningar við ljósmyndir af veruleikanum. Þessi atriði gætu kallast skemmtilega á.
c) Ljósmyndir af listaverkum nemenda	Mikilvægt í tengslum við fyrri greiningar og ígrundun um þær.	Ég get dregið fram hvernig ég hef þróast sem greinandi.
d) Kennsluáætlanir og skipulagsgögn	Haldreipi á ferðalagi um fortíðina.	Ég get líka skoðað hvernig ég hef þróast í gegnum tíðina.
e) Viðtal við rannsóknarvin	Fá heildræna yfirsýn á þælingar mínar, einkum með það í huga að móta heildaryfirsýn á doktorsrannsóknarferlið á grunni starfendarannsóknar.	Oft hjálpar að segja hlutina upphátt til að skilja þá betur.

Uppistaðan í gagnabanka mínum er því afturblik í formi frásagna og dæmisagna (Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir, 2011). Í rannsóknarferlinu notaði ég einnig skáldlegar og ljóðrænar aðferðir þar sem hugmyndir eru tjáðar í sjónrænu eða skapandi formi (Shagoury, 2011) þar sem ólík skynfæri tengjast minningum okkar á ólíkan hátt. Ég kaus að reyna að ná utan um sjálft rannsóknarferlið með táknrænum hætti. Þar sem ég hélt að liðin tíð væri „sokkin til botns“ eða „farin undir brúna“ bjó ég til dálítinn bát sem ég naut aðstoðar við að búa til og ég notaði til að slæða minningafljótið mikla. Báturinn varð þannig að tákni fyrir það hvernig ég get endurheimt eitt og annað úr djúpi minninganna. Pillay o.fl. (2019) lýsa þessu ferli sem mósaík sem er sett saman af stuttum minningabrotum í bland við táknræna

hluti. Þessi einfaldi pappírsbátur er því táknrænn fyrir rannsóknarferli mitt og kannski má segja að aðstoðin sem ég naut við „skipasmíðina“ sé dæmigerð fyrir lifandi náms- og þroskaferli því enginn er eyland og nám fer fyrst og fremst fram í samskiptum.

Þegar ég hafði safnað gögnum saman dreifði ég úr þeim, las yfir textana og skoðaði myndirnar því minningar streymdu áreynslulaust fram þegar samhengið birtist mér. Ég skrifaði niðurstöðurnar eins og ævisögu og reyndi að finna röklegan þráð í sögunni í anda þess sem Ruth Shagoury (2011, bls. 301) kallar kristöllum (e. crystallization).

Siðferðisleg álitamál

Sú frásögn sem hér birtist er persónuleg en á vissum stöðum er einstaklinga getið sem áttu samleið með mér á ferðalagi mínu. Í þeim tilvikum leitaði ég eftir samþykki viðkomandi um nafnbirtingu ásamt að frásögnin væri í samræmi við reynslu viðkomandi, og fékk jákvæðar undirtektir.

Niðurstöður

Listamaður verður kennari

Ég ætlaði aldrei að verða kennari, en ég á eina minningu þar sem eftirfarandi hugmynd dúkkaði upp í áttunda eða níunda bekk á ofanverðri tuttugustu öld: Að það gæti verið skemmtilegt að vera kennari. Þessi hugsun kom óvænt og óboðin en ég bægði henni strax frá mér því ég hafði önnur og „merkilegri“ plön. Ég ætlaði að verða listamaður, enda teiknaði ég myndir og málaði málverk af miklum móð. Eftir að hafa lokið námi í Myndlista- og handíðaskóla Íslands (MHÍ) fór ég til Frakklands í framhaldsnám. Ég valdi borgina Lyon vegna þess að konan mín var þar í námi í Suzukifíðlukennslufræðum. Strax og ég flutti heim frá Frakklandi sumarið 1993 tók ég að mér fjallaleiðsögn og starfaði alls í ellefu sumur sem leiðsögumaður franska ferðamanna í bakpokatúrurum um hálendi Íslands. Ég sá strax að leiðsögninni svipaði mjög til kennslu. Haustið 1993 réð ég mig til nýstofnaðs myndlistarskóla í Hafnarfirði. Þar kenndi ég teikningu og líkaði starfið vel, en þetta var aðeins eitt kvöld í viku sem dugði augljóslega skammt í fjárhagslegu tilliti. Í desember 1994 rak ég augun í atvinnuauðgýsingu þar sem auglýst var eftir afleysingakennara í myndmennt í Garðaskóla í Garðabæ. Ég hafði lengi trúað því að það væri svo sniðugt fyrir listamenn að kenna meðfram listsköpuninni því kennslan væri svo „auðvelt starf“ og „vinnutíminn stuttur“. Hver kannast ekki við þessar mýtur? Ég rifjaði upp þessi fyrstu skref mín í kennarastarfinu í viðtali við rannsóknarvin minn:

Ég byrjaði að kenna myndmennt fyrir margt löngu þegar ég var ráðinn sem afleysingakennari í Garðaskóla í ársbyrjun 1995. Ég hafði lært myndlist bæði í „Mynd-og-hand“ og síðar í útlöndum og var bara listmálari og fór að kenna eins og ég hafði lært, skilurðu. Ég var ekki með kennsluréttindi og fór að kenna í grunnskóla og það kom fljótt í ljós að það þýðir ekkert að mæta nemendum með einhverjar svona myndlistarskólakennsluaðferðir; að þau hafi eðlilega áhuga á því að teikna lauk eða einhvern fjáránn. En það tók mig samt smá tíma að átta mig á því. En hlutirnir gengu samt alltaf vel því nemendur eru svo hlýðnir, þau gera það sem þau eru beðin um að gera til þess að forðast átök. Þú veist, það vilja allir forðast átök, bara eðlilegt sko. Það tók mig semsagt mjög langan tíma að átta mig á því að ég þyrfti að hugsa öðruvísi um myndlistarkennslu.

Þessi fyrstu ár í Garðaskóla liðu hratt, ég kepptist við að vera allt í senn; kennari, starfandi listamaður, faðir tveggja ungra barna og eiginmaður. Þegar ég rifja upp þennan tíma og þá sýn sem ég hafði á kennarastarfið og listamenskuna þá sé ég ungan mann sem trúir á myndlistina umfram allt annað en þyrfti ásamt makanum að sjá sér og sínum farborða með launavinnu. Þessu fylgdi eilíf togstreita. Mér fannst ég aldrei fá nægan tíma til að sinna málverkinu og þá sjaldan að tími gæfist til var orkan af skornum skammti. Í rannsóknardagbókinni rifja ég upp kvöldheimsókn mína á vinnustofuna sem ég leigði í aflóga húsnæði niðurlagðrar netagerðar í Borgartúni 19 í Reykjavík (til gamans má geta þess að síðar reisti Kaupþing, nú Arion banki, höfuðstöðvar sínar á lóðinni):

Sætur keimurinn af línólífunni fyllir vitin og magnast þegar ég stekk síðustu tröppurnar upp á efstu hæðina. Húskofinn er á síðasta snúningi og gömul fúkkalykt rennur saman við ferskan ilminn af línólífunni og balsamterpentínunni. Lyktin af olúlítunum vekur alltaf hjá mér notalegar tilfinningar. Stóra málverkið af Skyggisvatni virðist hafa þornað, enda nokkrir dagar síðan ég kom síðast. Djúpur bláminn í vatninu virkar sannfærandi en himininn er hrár og skortir trúverðuga birtu.

Mér fannst kennslan ræna mig orku og tíma en hún veitti mér fjárhagslegt öryggi. Til að treysta stöðu mína í Garðaskóla innritaði ég mig í kennsluréttindanáms sem Kennaraháskóli Íslands bauð upp á frá haustinu 1996. Námið var fyrst og fremst ætlað framhaldsskólakennurum og flestir nemendurnir voru leiðbeinendur í iðn- og starfsnámi. Þetta gerði ég fremur af hagkvæmnisástæðum en hugsjónaeldi. Námið var forvitnilegt og áhugavert og skilaði mér tveimur leyfisbréfum; leyfi til að kalla mig grunnskólakennara og leyfi til að kalla mig framhaldsskólakennara. Almennt get ég sagt að mér hafi gengið mjög vel í kennslunni, ég átti í góðum og jákvæðum samskiptum við nemendur en ég hafði horn í síðu margs í skólakerfinu. Ég hataðist við prófamiðun og áherslu á mælanleika – líkt og í stærðfræði – því ég sá hvaða áhrif það hafði á nemendur og viðhorf þeirra til náms og menntunar. Ég öfundaði þó líka stærðfræðikennarana eins og eftirfarandi minningabrot úr rannsóknardagbókinni minni sýnir:

Starf kennarans er krefjandi og lifandi, maður virðist samt aldrei „ná þessu alveg“. Kannski er það vegna þess að eðli myndlistar býður ekki upp á lokaða nálgun? Það má vissulega kenna nemendum teikningu, litafræði og formfræði samkvæmt ströngum lögmálum en vandinn er að slík nálgun virðist merkingarlaus innan grunnskólans. Þess vegna öfunda ég stundum stærðfræðikennarana. Þau eru alltaf með skotheld viðfangsefni og niðurnjörvaðar aðferðir. Öngvar „Kannski?“, „Hvað ef?“ eða „Hvað finnst þér?“ spurningar.

Ég var farinn að finna fyrir vaxandi óþreyju og mig langaði til að hætta kennslu og skipta alfarið um starfsvettvang. Ég vildi samt gera það með reisn – ekki flýja af hólmi með skottið milli lappanna – heldur hætta „á toppnum“. Löngunin um að hætta með stæl kynti undir áhuganum á að þroska sjálfan mig í kennslu – eins mótsagnakennt og það er. Ég fór þá að leita leiða til að skilja betur myndmenntarkennsluna og þróa hugmyndir sem gætu gefið myndlistinni traustari grundvöll í almennu skólastarfi. Mér upplukust nýjar víddir þegar ég laumaðist inn í kennslustund í heimspeki hjá samstarfskonu minni, heimspekikennaranum Brynhildi Sigurðardóttur. Um þennan tíma skrifa ég eftirfarandi minningabrot í rannsóknardagbókina mína:

Þegar ég leit við í heimspekítímanum var hópurinn að ræða fullyrðingu Egils Helgasonar sem hann hafði sett fram í Kiljunni um að „unglingar væru náttúrlega vitlausir almennt“. Fullyrðingin hafði vakið viðbrögð nemanda í Hagaskóla sem skrifaði í Moggann og mótmælti því að það væri stöðugt verið að tala unglunga niður (Guðrún Ingibjörg Þorgeirsdóttir, 2008). Egill svaraði í Mogganum daginn eftir og baðst afsökunar (Óvarleg alhæfing, 2008). Fréttin varð að samræðuefni í kennslustund hjá Brynhildi. Það gekk svo langt að Brynhildur bauð Agli að koma og hitta hópinn sem hann gerði og átti þar mjög interessant samræður við nemendur. Ég kom sem sagt inn í tímann í kjölfarið á heimsókn Egils og ég hreinlega hreifst af þeim tækifærum sem heimspekileg samræða bauð upp á.

Þarna varð ég þess sterkt áskynja hvernig mætti brjótast út úr hinni hefðbundnu umgjörð skólastarfsins á jákvæðan hátt, sækja viðfangsefni beint í samfélagsmæðuna og nota tækifærið til að ræða mikilvæg heimspekileg álitæfni á borð við alhæfningar um hópa og túlkun á inntaki. Allt þetta varð til þess að ég skynjaði betur hvernig ég gæti notfært mér áhuga minn á heimspeki og fléttað hann saman við myndlistina.

Kennari verður rannsakandi

Nú hófst spennandi tímabil í starfi mínu. Löngunin til að hætta kennslu vék fyrir nýrri forvitni um okannaðar lendur. Heimspekileg samræða kitlaði einhverja nýja strengi hjá mér. Ég taldi mig

kunna allt til að kenna myndlist en ég kundi ekki neitt í heimspekilegri samræðu. Fremur en að kunnáttuleysið drægi úr mér máttinn, þá tvífeldi vanþekkingin mig á dularfullan hátt. Tækifærin virtust óþrjótandi. Í viðtalinu við rannsóknarvin minn komst ég svona að orði um fyrstu reynsluna af heimspekilegri samræðu í tengslum við listaverk:

Samræðuaðferðin vakti áhuga minn eftir tímann hjá Brynhildi og svo leiddi þetta til þess að ég fór sjálfur að gera tilraunir til að vekja upp samræður um listaverk. En þetta voru meira óformlegar og ómarkvissar þreifingar. Þetta var á forsendum heimspekilegrar samræðu sem byggja á því að það eru nemendur sem spyrja spurninganna en ekki kennarar og þannig fór þessi hugmynd að fæðast hjá mér. Ég fann fyrir henni í maganum sem einhvers konar AHA! mómenti en ég var ekki viss um það hvernig ég ætti að höndla hana. Mér hefur alltaf fundist myndlist skipta máli en mig langaði til að nýta hana þannig að hún hefði meiri merkingu eða breiðari skírskotun til fleiri en ekki bara til einhverra guðsútvaldra listamanna, og þannig byrjaði þetta að þróast.

Ég fór í kjölfarið á námskeið í heimspekilegri samræðu hjá hinni skosku Catherine C. McCall (sjá t.d. McCall, 2009) og fór að æfa mig kerfisbundið eftir hennar aðferðum. Í rannsóknardagbókinni minni lýsi ég fyrstu skipulögðu tilrauninni sem ég gerði eftir að námskeiðinu lauk:

Ég raðaði nemendum í hring og bað þau um að skrifa svör þeirra við spurningunni: Hvað sýnist ykkur vera að gerast í þessu listaverki? Ég valdi listaverk sem mér er kært en jafnframt ráðgáta.² Málverkið sýnir baksvip manns sem stendur við arinhillu sem á hvílir bók. Á veggnum virðist vera stór spegill – eða hvað? – því maðurinn speglast ekki rétt, baksvipur hans er endurtekinn í „speglinum“, en bókin á arinhillunni speglast hins vegar eðlilega. Þannig verður til þversögn sem var ákveðið einkenni á verkum listamannsins. Þversagnir af þessum toga virðast „slökkva“ á rökhugsuninni og opna fyrir nýjar víddir og óhugsanlegar hugsanir. Fyrr en varði settu nemendur fram pælingar sem komu mér í opna skjöldu og sýndu mér nýjar hliðar. Allmörg nefndu hugmyndir í þá veruna að maðurinn skammaðist sín svo mikið fyrir eitthvað sem hann hefði gert að hann gæti ekki horfst í augu við sjálfan sig.

Ég hélt áfram að gera þessar tilraunir um nokkurra ára skeið og safnaði gögnum kerfisbundið. Ég var jafnvel svo kokhraustur að ég tók að mér heimspekikennsluna þegar Brynhildur fór í fæðingarorlof. Fyrstu mánuðirnir í þeirri kennslu voru afar lærdómsríkir. Ég þurfti að venjast þeirri óvissu sem fylgdi starfi heimspekikennarans því ég gat aldrei séð fyrir hvernig nemendur myndu bregðast við þeim verkefnum sem ég lagði til, en ég var svo heppinn að hafa aðgang að umfangsmiklum verkefnabanka sem Brynhildur hafði byggt upp. Málin þróuðust svo þannig að ég tók alfarið yfir heimspekikennsluna í Gardaskóla og Brynhildur fór að sinna stjórnunarstörfum.

Um þetta leyti frétti ég af nýju námstilboði á Menntavísindasviði Háskóla Íslands: Meistaránámi í heimspeki og félagsfræði menntunar. Í náminu kynntist ég m.a. Kristjáni Kristjánssyni heimspekingi. Hans nálgun opnaði augu mín fyrir siðferðislegu gildi menntunar og í kjölfarið fór ég að hugsa um skólastarf á nýjan hátt. Ég var ekki viss um hvert næsta skref mitt ætti að vera og þegar ég leitaði til Kristjáns stakk hann upp á ritgerð um lýðræðishugmyndir Dewey í tengslum við nýju aðalnámskrána og grunnþætti menntunar. Ég tengdi strax við það því ég hafði alltaf talið sjálfan mig vera lýðræðislegan kennara.

Innan við ári eftir að ég skilaði meistaraprófsritgerðinni bauðst mér stundakennsla í Listaháskólanum. Ég var kominn á algerlega nýjar brautir. Undarlegur fiðringur í maganum í bland við kennsluna í Listaháskólanum kynti undir hugmyndum um doktorsnám þar sem ég myndi leita svara við siðferðislegu gildi listgreinakennslu. Doktorsnámið varð að veruleika 2015. Ég rifjaði upp hugmyndirnar að baki doktorsrannsókninni í viðtalinu við rannsóknarvin minn:

² Hér má skoða umrætt málverk eftir René Magritte: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not_to_Be_Replicated

Og svo er það auðvitað þessi spurning um hvert sé gildi og markmið menntunar og ég hallast meira og meira að því að það sé eitthvað sem snýr að einhvers konar mannlegri reisu og farsæld og einhverju slíku frekar en að hún hafi eitthvert tækisgildi í anda iðnbyltingarinnar. Og þetta eru rosalega stórar spurningar og auðvitað hafa engar tvær manneskjur sömu markmið í lífinu, þannig að þetta snýst um siðferðislegar spurningar um menntun og listir og eðli málsins samkvæmt er mjög erfitt að höndla þær. En sem sagt, ég fer af stað í þetta ferðalag og hef lítið í höndunum og fer að gera fleiri tilraunir með nemendum mínum í Garðaskóla. „Hvað er hugrekki, krakkar?“, spurði ég, „Málið nú mynd þar sem þið getið tjáð hugrekki eða hvenær þið hafið upplifað eða sýnt hugrekki í lífinu,“ eða „Hvað er vinátta?“ og fór að safna svona myndum.

Eftir því sem listaverk nemenda hrönnuðust upp, sá ég að þau bjuggu yfir spennandi vinklum sem mig grunaði að ekki hefði verið unnið mikið með. Sum listaverkin fjölluðu um almennar hugmyndir um hugrekki. Í rannsóknardagbókinni rifja ég upp þessar vangaveltur:

Fallhlífarstökk er greinilega vinsælt viðfangsefni og kannski það tengist almennri hugmynd um hugrekki? Hver þorir að stökkva út úr flugvél á flugi og þurfa að treysta á þunna fallhlíf? Þetta er svona últra-lofthræðslu-element þar sem öll lofthræðsla heimsins er saman komin í því andartaki þegar fallhlífarstökkvarinn lætur sig falla út. Svo eru þarna líka nokkrar myndir sem sýna mannveru stökkva fram af háum kletti út í sjó. Þær myndir gefa líka til kynna lofthræðslu en um leið kjark til að skora hana á hólum án mikils tilstands.

Þrátt fyrir að maður fallist strax á tengslin milli hugrekkis og fallhlífarstökkis sem einhvers konar hversdagslegs sannleika, þá var eitthvað í myndunum sem fékk mig til að ígrunda þær betur. Hvaðan skyldu höfundar myndanna hafa fengið slíkar hugmyndir án þess að hafa nokkurn tímann prófað fallhlífarstökk? Eða hoppað fram af kletti? Er þarna kannski bara kröftugt ímyndunarafl að verki? Og ef svo er, hvernig má nota ímyndunarafl á uppbyggilegan, jafnvel menntandi hátt? Inn á milli voru afar merkilegar myndir sem sýndu að nemendur virtust hugsa um hugrekki á flókinn hátt með athyglisverðum skírskotunum eins og sjá má af lýsingunni úr rannsóknardagbókinni á umræddu myndverki:

Sjónarhornið er innan úr flugvélinni, út um dyrnar og það má sjá tvo svífandi fallhlífarstökkvara og einn sem er að láta sig gossa út. Á gólfi flugvélarinnar við opnar dyrnar situr náungi í hnipri með hendurnar utan um hnén. Hann er með fallhlífina á bakinu og skelfingarsvip á andlitinu. Myndin er lituð með trélitum og máluð lauslega. Frjálst og blátt áfram framsetning og á vissan hátt mjög kómísk. Það kemur á óvart hvað strákslegur húmorinn – næstum kaldhæðnislegur – getur opnað fyrir mikla dýpt.

Myndverkið sýnir ágætlega að okkur hættir til að vanmeta hæfni nemenda til að skilja hluti og setja í merkingarþætt sambengi. Kannski er þessi skólastrákahúmor einmitt vísbending um merkilegar þælingar? Við erum oft fljót að fordæma einmitt þetta element því það hentar ekki „fullorðinshugsun“ og „ábyrgðarvitund“ okkar kennaranna. Ég hugsaði „OK! Það er hægt að vinna með þetta“. Þessar þælingar þróuðust yfir íhlutunarverkefnið sem varð uppistaðan í doktorsrannsókninni. Ég rifja þetta upp í viðtalinu við rannsóknarvin minn:

Ég þróa sem sagt þetta íhlutunarverkefni [...] að fyrirmynd þeirra í Birmingham, þeir notuðu riddarasögur og unnu með hinar riddaralegu dygðir í sex eða átta vikur og svo var þekking nemenda og skilningur nemenda á siðferðislegum hugtökum og skilningur á alls konar klípukenndum aðstæðum kannaður með fyrir- og eftir-prófum. Ég vildi gera eitthvað svipað út frá myndlist og spurði mig hvort myndlistin myndi færa okkur eitthvað annað eða meira eða eitthvað slíkt. [...] Í staðinn fyrir að lesa texta skoðuðu nemendur myndir af listaverkum sem ég hafði valið. Svo var spurningalistinn minn lagður fyrir þarna um haustið og ég keyri átta vikna verkefni í áttunda bekk í samstarfi við þrjá myndmenntarkennara sem voru starfandi með mér í Garðaskóla.

Fyrir- og eftir-prófin skiluðu mjög áhugaverðum textum eftir nemendur og það urðu til búsna margar skemmtilegar myndir en kannski ekki eins fínar og árin áður, þegar ég var að gera tilraunirnar með frjálstri aðferð og ekki kominn með hnút í magann út af alvarleika doktorsnámsins og hátímbráðri gagnasöfnun, en stóru spurningarnar voru: Tók tilraunahópurinn framförum í siðferðislegum orðaforða og þankagangi, og er hægt að mæla þær framfarir?

Rannsakandi verður listamaður

Miðpunkturinn í upphaflegu rannsóknaráætluninni var áherslan á megindlega samanburðarrannsókn í anda fyrri rannsókna (Arthur o.fl., 2014) á íhlutunarverkefnum í mannkostamenntun. Ég vissi auðvitað innst inni að heimurinn er flóknari en svo að það sé hægt að segja neitt af viti um veröldina, hvað þá samfélag manna og sálarlíf fólks, með því að skoða allt í gegnum smásjá – en svarið við stóru spurningunni var skýrt og skorinort: Nei. Ekki tókst að sýna fram á að nemendur hefðu tekið framförum í skilningi á siðferðislegum hugtökum, né aukna færni í að greina listaverk og tjá hugsanir sínar um þau. Þessu lýsti ég í viðtalinu við rannsóknarvin minn:

Og ég ligg yfir þessu, greini þetta og bý til helling af tölulegum gögnum, sko, og keyri þetta í gegnum tölfraeðiforrit. En síðan bara kemur það í ljós að það var enginn marktækur munur, sem ætti kannski ekki að koma neitt á óvart í rauninni. Það vakna alls konar spurningar, sko, stelpurnar tóku framförum, en það var ekki marktækur munur, strákunum fór aftur. Hvernig má það vera? En þeim sem fór mest fram voru stelpurnar í samanburðarhópnum, og þær voru bara í textílmennt allan tímann!

Ég stóð ráðþrota gagnvart þessum niðurstöðum. Eitthvað hafði farið úrskeiðis. Kannski var kennslan ekki nógu vel undirbyggð? Kannski var mælitækið ekki nógu gott? Kannski var greiningarlykillinn sem ég hannaði og þrælprófaði í samvinnu við leiðbeinanda minn ekki nógu góður? Lögðu nemendur sig nægilega fram þegar þau tóku eftir-prófin? Voru þau orðin leið á viðfangsefninu eða fannst þeim verkefnið ekki eiga að fullu heima í myndmenntartímum? (sjá t.d. Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, 2023). Um leið og vonbrigðin helltust yfir mig og sjálfásakanir um að hafa ekki vandað nægilega til verka, þá fann ég sömuleiðis fyrir talsverðum létti og jafnvel frelsistilfinningu. Það fór fram persónulegt uppgjör hjá mér – ég fór í gegnum hreinsunareld. Allt í einu fannst mér ég sjá betur hvað skipti máli og hvað ekki. Hið skynræna, ímyndunaraflíð og hið óáþreifanlega reyndist vera það sem mestu máli skiptir en hvorki mælanleiki né fyrirsjáanleiki. Í öðrum gögnum sem ég safnaði í tengslum við íhlutunarverkefnið voru næg dæmi um slíkt, svo sem í samræðum við nemendur, textum þeirra og myndverkum.

Ég stend á tímamótum og finn það núna að það er hin listræna og skapandi nálgun sem skiptir mestu máli. Þannig má segja að ég sé að vissu leyti kominn á upphafsreit í starfsferli mínum. Listamaðurinn er aftur sestur undir stýrið en að þessu sinni er hann ekki einn á ferð, heldur hefur hann boðið kennaranum og rannsakandanum far í von um að þeir hjálpi til í ferðinni.

Umræða

Þegar ég skoða feril minn sem listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi tek ég eftir jafnvægisleitni. Í upphafi kennsluferilsins leit ég á mig sem listamann en umhverfið krafðist meira af mér, ég þurfti að sinna vissum skyldum sem Maxine Greene (1973) lýsir svo vel sem sibreytilegum aðstæðum. Þótt ég væri ekki alltaf sammála þeim kröfum sem starfsumhverfið gerði til mín, þá hugsaði ég um þær sem áskoranir sem hjálpuðu mér að vaxa í starfi. Að vísu má segja að þjálfun mín í listum hafi fært mér ágæta aðlögunarhæfni auk getunnar til að hugsa út fyrir rammann. Þessi vöxtur kostaði mig þó að vissu leyti listina því ég hreinlega gaf hana upp á bátinn um tíma. Mér fannst ég misheppnaður listamaður, ég gat ekki sinnt listinni sem skyldi og sjálfmynd mín sem listamanns dofnadi um leið og ég eflaði mig sem kennara og síðar sem rannsakanda. Ég sá það ekki þá en ég sé það núna að innst inni var ég í rauninni að leita farsældarinnar, ég sóttist eftir traustri atvinnu og menntaði mig

með það í huga þegar ég fór í kennsluréttindanámið, en kennsla er ekki starf sem lýkur í lok dags. Kennsla er starf sem yfirtekur líf fólks – hvort sem okkur líkar það betur eða verr – en ég sóttist eftir meiru. Mér fannst kennarastarfið of mikilvægt til þess að láta það mig ekki varða í stóra samhenginu og það er í anda þess sem bæði Kristján Kristjánsson (2020) og Eikeland (2006) skrifa um tilgang mannlífsins, sjálfsmýnd og sjálfsvirðingu en ekki síður það sem Hafþór Guðjónsson (2002) skrifar um stofnanamenningu (Tyack og Tobin, 1994) og þær áskoranir sem kennarar standa stöðugt frammi fyrir í þeim efnum. Hvernig má mennta kennara þannig að þeir geti látið sköpunarkraft sinn og hugmyndaauði njóta sín í starfi? Þarna finn ég rætur þess að ég hef gerst kennarakennari og nýt þess starfs. Til þess að öðlast skilning á öllu þessu fór ég í doktorsnám og hélt að ég gæti gengið að niðurstöðunni vísri; maður gæti unnið með menntun á fyrirsjáanlegan hátt, en það sem ég hafði treyst á, mælanleikinn, sveik mig og leiddi mig að upphafsreit. Ferðalagið hefur samt breytt mér og ég get sáttur horft í augu við óvissuna í anda Aristótélískra hygginda og trúað því að sérhvert álitamál þurfi að ígrunda með hliðsjón af aðstæðum.

Looking back: An artist, teacher, and researcher reflects on his professional development

This study aims to shed light through Aristotelian action research on the importance of long-term introspection and self-understanding for teachers. Education is the foundation of modern society in which teachers play a crucial role. There is, however, often a tension between a teacher's personal views and experiences on one hand and society's expectations on the other, creating a tension between systemic ideas about the role of education and personal existential ideas. Hafþór Guðjónsson (2002) argues that despite the creative approaches to teacher education, an institutional culture takes over when new teachers start their professional careers. Despite the school's environment being fixed, it does not apply to organic and independent entities as human beings: students and teachers. Therefore, teachers must find a middle ground through constant reflection. Teaching can never be fully mastered, but it is a continuous developmental process that resembles the artist's profession.

In this personal and reflective account, the author describes his career exploration to better understand his journey on a lifelong path of being an artist, teacher, and researcher. The researcher's theoretical foundation is, among other things, based on Maxine Greene's (1973) ideas about the moral value of teaching and the importance of teachers' consciousness of their multifaceted roles, meeting challenges with clear intentions and meaning (Greene, 1973, p. 69). The individual must seek the virtues to achieve this goal, especially the virtue Aristotle called "phronesis", or practical wisdom, which he defines as an intellectual virtue that possesses unique qualities connecting other intellectual virtues (such as knowledge and curiosity) and moral virtues (such as justice and temperance). Aristotle (2011) considered happiness to be the highest goal of human life. A crucial part of happiness is virtue, which can be found in moderation. The contemporary interest in Aristotle's virtue ethics stems from recognising that we must acquire knowledge and skills to help us confront life's challenges virtuously. Individuals must make decisions that align with their inner life, emotions, and self-understanding instead of deciding right and wrong based on pre-determined, rigid methods.

Data were gathered through writings in a research journal where anecdotes, memories, and reflections played a crucial role, in addition to interviews with critical friends. In the conclusion section, the author places his developmental process in context and delineates the evolution of his identity from an artist to a teacher and, subsequently, to a researcher. The journey ultimately leads the author back to the starting point, where he describes how the artist once again takes the steering wheel and invites the teacher and the researcher to join, hoping they will contribute to the journey. The findings suggest the importance of teachers reflecting on their professional lives while simultaneously

contributing to their multifaceted roles and being dedicated to their work. Furthermore, teachers should seek ways to engage in fruitful discussions about their challenging work with other teachers and researchers.

Keywords: action research, flourishing, teaching, practical wisdom, self-understanding, professional development

Um höfund

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage (ingimar@lhi.is; iow1@hi.is) er listmálari, heimspekikennari, lektor við listkennsludeild Listaháskóla Íslands og doktorsnemi við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands.

About the author

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage (ingimar@lhi.is; iow1@hi.is) is a visual artist, philosophy teacher, assistant professor at the Department of Art Education at Iceland University of the Arts, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Iceland.

Heimildir

- Aristóteles. (2011). *Síðfræði Níkomakkosar*: Fyrra bindi (Svavar Hrafn Svavarsson þýddi). Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.
- Arthur, J., Harrison, T., Carr, D., Kristjánsson, K. og Davison, I. (2014). *Knightly virtues: Enhancing virtue literacy through stories*. Research report. University of Birmingham, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. <https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/KnightlyVirtuesReport.pdf>
- Eikeland, O. (2006). Phronêsis, Aristotle, and action research. *International Journal of Action Research*, 2(1), 5–53. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-356898>
- Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger: Educational philosophy for the modern age*. Wadsworth.
- Guðrún Ingibjörg Þorgeirsdóttir. (2008, 17. apríl). Eru unglingar vitlausir? *Morgunblaðið*, bls. 28. <https://timarit.is/page/4187972#page/n27/mode/2up>
- Hafðís Guðjónsdóttir. (2011). Rýnt í vinnubrögð starfendarannsóknna: Ólíkar leiðir við gagnaöflun. *Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2011*. <https://netla.hi.is/serrit/2011/menntakvika2011/010.pdf>
- Hafðís Guðjónsdóttir og Svanborg R. Jónsdóttir. (2012). Háskólakennarar rýna í starf sitt: Þróun framhaldsnámskeiðs í kennaramenntun. *Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2012*. <https://netla.hi.is/serrit/2012/menntakvika2012/008.pdf>
- Hafþór Guðjónsson. (2002). *Teacher learning and language: A pragmatic self-study* [doktorsritgerð, University of British Columbia]. <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0054798>
- Hafþór Guðjónsson. (2011). Kennarinn sem rannsakandi. *Ráðstefnurit Netlu – Menntakvika 2011*. <https://netla.hi.is/serrit/2011/menntakvika2011/011.pdf>
- Ingimar Ólafsson Waage. (2023). Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland. *Journal of Moral Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2290977>
- Kolbrún Þ. Pálsdóttir og Kristján Kristjánsson. (2023). Farsæld sem markmið menntunar: Ákall um aðgerðir. *Tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*, 32(1-2), 83–106. <https://doi.org/10.24270/tuom.2023.32.5>
- Kristján Kristjánsson. (2005). Er kenning praxis?: Nokkrar aristótelískar efasemdir um ný-aristótelisma í menntamállum. *Uppeldi og menntun*, 14(1), 9–27. <https://timarit.is/page/5009260#page/n8/mode/2up>
- Kristján Kristjánsson. (2020). Er unnt að kenna og mæla „fronêsis“ kennara? *Skólaþræðir – Tímarit Samtaka áhugafólks um skólaþróun*. <https://skolathraedir.is/2020/11/26/er-unnt-ad-kenna-og-maela-fronesis-kennara/>

Lög nr. 95/2019, um menntun, hæfni og ráðningu kennara og skólustjórnenda við leikskóla, grunnskóla og framhaldsskóla.

McCall, C. C. (2009). *Transforming thinking: Philosophical inquiry in the primary and secondary classroom*. Routledge.

Óvarleg alhæfing. (2008, 18. apríl). Morgunblaðið, bls. 52. <https://timarit.is/page/4188068#page/n51/mode/2up>

Pillay, D., Cullinan, M. og Moodley, L. (2019). Creative nonfiction narratives and memory-work: Pathways for women teacher-researchers' scholarship of ambiguity and openings. Í K. Pithouse-Morgan, D. Pillay og C. Mitchell (ritstjórar), *Memory mosaics: Researching teacher professional learning through artful memory work* (bls. 113–131). Springer.

Platón. (2006). *Síðustu dagar Sókratesar* (Sigurður Nordal þýddi). Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag.

Reglugerð nr. 1355/2022, um hæfniramma með viðmiðum fyrir almenna og sérhæfða hæfni kennara og skólustjórnenda við leik-, grunn- og framhaldsskóla.

Shagoury, R. (2011). Crystallization: Teacher researchers making room for creative leaps in data analysis. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 4(2), 297–306. <https://doi.org/10.36510/learnland.v4i2.401>

Stevenson, M. (2022). *Education for human flourishing*. Centre for Strategic Education.

Tyack, D. og Tobin, W. (1994). The „grammar“ of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), 453–479. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1163222>



Ingimar Ólafsson Waage. (2023).

Horfít um öxl: Listamaður, kennari og rannsakandi rýnir í eigin vegferð og þroskaferil í námi og starfi.

Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun: Sérít 2023 – Menntavika 2023.

Sótt af http://netla.hi.is/serrit/2023/menntavika_2023/09.pdf

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2023.23>

Paper V

Paper V

Moral education through dialogue on artworks

*This is a peer-reviewed, copy-edited, and accepted version of an invited chapter for **Nordic Perspectives in Moral and Citizenship Education**, edited by Kirsi Tirri and published by Brill in 2025.*

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage

Iceland University of the Arts
University of Iceland

Abstract

In this chapter, I discuss the role of the visual arts in moral education. Drawing on educational and philosophical resources, I explore the importance of actively engaging with artworks through dialogue to foster transformative experiences rather than mere passive observation. This highlights the necessity of conscious participation and reflection in aesthetic encounters. The concept of Virtue Literacy serves as a framework for implementing character and moral education through an approach built on Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), using selected artworks spanning various themes and styles. Artworks can spur philosophical dialogue by encouraging deeper insights into moral aspects of human life by prompting self-reflection and advocating an “other-regarding” attitude by helping students put themselves in someone else’s shoes.

Keywords

Visual literacy, visual arts, visual thinking, moral education, virtue literacy

Introduction

Throughout the ages, the visual arts have had a distinctive role in education, knowledge, and understanding of human life. As early as in ancient Greece, Aristotle argued in *The Politics* that the arts can inspire morality, describing how representations can evoke a sense of reality. To illustrate his point, he explained that if the sight of a sculpture pleases an onlooker, seeing the original would also be pleasant to him (Aristotle, 1988, p. 309). The same would apply, obviously, to the opposite emotions. In *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote:

For imitating is innate to men from childhood. Men differ from other animals in that they are the most imitative, and their first learning is produced through imitation. Again, all men delight in imitations. ... For we delight in contemplating the most exact likeness of things which are in themselves painful to see, e.g. the shapes of the most dishonoured beasts and corpses. The cause of this is that

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix 1

Questionnaire A with photos of artworks and evaluation sheet



#

Rannsóknarverkefni um myndlist og
mannkostamenntun

Spurningar A



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hér merkir þú heftið

Nafn: _____

Kennitala: _____

Skóli: _____

Bekkur: _____

#

Til nemanda

Við þökkum þér fyrir að taka þátt í þessari könnun.

Enginn mun sjá svör þín nema fólk við Háskóla Íslands sem fer yfir könnunina. Eina ástæðan fyrir því að þú ert beðin(n) að merkja þetta hefti með nafni þínu er að svörin sem þú skrifar núna verða borin saman við svör þín við svipuðum spurningum í annarri könnun sem lögð verður fyrir þig síðar. Ef þú vilt skrifa lengri svör en komast í línurnar bendum við þér á að skrifa á aukalínurnar aftan á könnuninni.

Í sumum spurningum er spurt um mannkosti eða dygðir. Þessi tvö orð merkja nokkurn veginn það sama. Þau eru notuð um eiginleika sem einkenna gott fólk. Hjálpssemi og heiðarleiki eru dæmi um slíka eiginleika.

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, Atli Harðarson dósent og Ólafur Páll Jónsson prófessor

Spurning 1

Veldu orð af orðalistanum og settu í eyðurnar. Eyðurnar eru tíu en orðin eru fimmtán svo þú notar ekki öll orðin. Reyndu samt að nota sem flest af þeim frekar en að setja sama orð í margar eyður.

Þú sýnir _____ og _____ með því að gefa vinum þínum góðar gjafir.

Hógværir menn eru sjaldan með _____ eða _____.

Að laumast til að stela þegar enginn sér til er dæmi um _____.

Sjálfsagi felur að minnsta kosti stundum í sér _____ og _____.

Það getur verið til marks um _____ eða _____ að vilja ekki fyrirgefa.

Ef fólk er of ákaft í að eignast meira en það þarf þá skortir það _____.

Orðalisti:

gjafmildi

hófsemi

mont

sáttfýsi

visku

hefnigirni

hroka

nísku

seiglu

þrautseigju

heift

illgirni

óheiðarleika

tillitssemi

örlæti

Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um málverkið sem er merkt A1 á spjaldinu sem fylgir könnuninni. Skoðaðu málverkið vandlega áður en þú svarar þeim.

Þetta málverk heitir „Vandamálið sem við búum öll við“ eftir bandaríska listamanninn Norman Rockwell. Málverkið er táknrænt fyrir réttindabaráttu bandarískra þegna af afrískum uppruna. Myndin sýnir þegar hin sex ára gamla Ruby Bridges fór í skólann í fylgd hermanna eftir að lög voru sett sem afnámu kynþáttaaðskilnað í New Orleans. Þetta hafði í för með sér að öll börn óháð kynþætti fóru í sama skóla en áður höfðu eingöngu hvít börn sótt þennan skóla.

Spurning 2

Hvaða mannkosti (eða dygðir) sýnir litla stúlkan í málverkinu? Færðu rök fyrir máli þínu.

Spurning 3

Hvaða mannkosti (eða dygðir) sýna hermennirnir í málverkinu? Færðu rök fyrir máli þínu.

Spurning 4

Hvaða spurningar vakna hjá þér þegar þú skoðar þetta málverk? Skrifaðu nokkur orð um það hvað þér finnst þér athyglisvert eða forvitnilegt í málverkinu. Hvaða áhrif það hefur á þig og hvaða skoðun þú hefur.

Spurning 6

Útskýrðu með þínum eigin orðum hvað orðið *hugrekki* þýðir og nefndu (raunverulegt eða ímyndað) dæmi um hugrekki.

Aukalínur

Hérna geturðu skrifað meira um listaverkin eða spurningarnar ef þú vilt. Mundu að setja númer spurningarinnar framan við.

Þessi könnun er hluti af doktorsrannsóknarverkefni sem nefnist „Myndlist og mannkostamenntun“. Könnunin er að verulegu leyti byggð á sambærilegum könnunum sem voru búnar til af sérfræðingum við The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues við háskólann í Birmingham á Englandi og könnun Atla Harðarsonar og Ólafs Páls Jónssonar á tengslum bókmennta og siðferðismenntunar. Ég þakka þeim fyrir að leyfa mér afnot af efni sem þeir hafa unnið.

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, doktorsnemi við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands og aðjúnkt við Listaháskóla Íslands.



Painting A1

Norman Rockwell. The problem we all live with. 1964. Oil on canvas. 91x150 cm. Norman Rockwell Museum. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Problem_We_All_Live_With



Painting A2

Edward Munch. The sick child. 1885–1886. Oil on canvas. Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo, Norway..

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child_\(Munch\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sick_Child_(Munch))

#	Dags.	Unnið af:	Matsblað A
---	-------	-----------	-------------------

Spurning 1: ½-10 þ stig alls:

Þú sýnir <u>Gjafmildi</u> og <u>ör læti</u> með því að gefa vinum þínum góðar gjafir.			
Hógværir menn eru sjaldan með <u>hroka</u> eða <u>mont</u> .			
Að laumast til að stela þegar enginn sér til er dæmi um <u>óheiðarleika</u> .			
Sjálfsgafi felur að minnsta kosti stundum í sér <u>seiglu</u> og <u>þrautseigju</u> .			
Það getur verið til marks um <u>heift</u> eða <u>hefnigirni</u> að vilja ekki fyrirgefa.			
Ef fólk er of ákaft í að eignast meira en það þarf þá skortir það <u>hófsemi</u> .			
Orðalisti:			
1 <u>gjafmildi</u>	4 <u>hófsemi</u>	7 <u>mont</u>	10 <u>sáttfýsi</u>
2 <u>hefnigirni</u>	5 <u>hroka</u>	8 <u>nisku</u>	11 <u>seiglu</u>
3 <u>heift</u>	6 <u>illgirni</u>	9 <u>óheiðarleika</u>	12 <u>tillitssemi</u>
			13 <u>visku</u>
			14 <u>þrautseigju</u>
			15 <u>ör læti</u>

Spurningar 2-6 og heildarsvipur (H)

Fl.	Nr.	1 stig	2 stig	3 stig
Þ	2	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar og útskýrðar eða rökstuddar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir eru útskýrðar eða rökstuddar á sannfærandi hátt.
Þ	3	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa er nefndar og útskýrðar eða rökstuddar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestir eða hugmyndir eru útskýrðar eða rökstuddar á sannfærandi hátt.
L	4a	Ber fram spurningu um eitthvað í listaverkinu sem vekur forvitni.	Spurningin gefur vísbendingu um einfalda gagnrýna hugsun um siðferðilegt inntak verksins.	Spurningin gefur vísbendingu um dýpri gagnrýna hugsun um siðferðilegt inntak verksins.
V	4b	Lýsir áhrifum sem verkið hefur, skoðun sinni á því eða hugsun um inntakið.	Lýsir áhrifum verksins, skoðun sinni eða hugsun um inntakið með rökstuðningi eða útskýringum.	Lýsir áhrifum verksins, skoðun sinni eða hugsun um inntakið með sannfærandi rökstuðningi eða útskýringum.
Þ	5a	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst (og sem til sanns vegar má færa).	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst, útskýrt nánar eða rökstutt.	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst, útskýrt nánar eða rökstutt og sett í stærra tilvistarlegt samhengi.
L	5b	Sett er fram trúleg og einföld kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna.	Kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna sem er útskýrð nánar eða rökstudd.	Kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna er sett í stærra og flóknara samhengi.
V	5c	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur.	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur, ígrundar þær eða reifar.	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur og setur í samhengi við eigin reynslu eða viðhorf.
L	5d	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess.	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess og er reifuð eða útskýrð.	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess og er reifuð eða útskýrð á sannfærandi hátt.
Þ	6a	Útskýring á orði á vel við.	Útskýring á orði á mjög vel við.	
L	6b	Dæmið má í sumum tilvikum heimfæra upp á hugtak.	Dæmið á vel við.	Dæmið er mjög gott.
V	H	Svörin bera þess merki að nemandinn leggi sig fram um að svara af samvisku-semi án þess að leggja of mikið í svörin.	Svörin bera þess merki að nemandinn leitast við að rökstyðja mál sitt eða nota dæmi.	Nemandinn notar rökstuðning og dæmi og sýnir í alla staði áhuga á að glíma við spurningarnar.
				42

Skýringar á flokkum

Þ	Skilningur á siðferðilegum hugtökum >> Þekking (Sama og B(s) í Laxdæluverkefninu)	12 stig
L	Beiting siðferðilegra hugtaka >> Leikni (Sama og B(b) í Laxdæluverkefninu)	3 stig
Þ	Meðvitund, þekking og skilningur >> Þekking	9 stig
L	Rökhugsun og samhengi >> Leikni	9 stig
V	Persónuleg ígrundun, tilfinningar og eigið líf >> Viðhorf	6 stig
V	Vilji til að leggja sig fram og reyna skilja siðferðilegt inntak listaverksins >> Viðhorf	3 stig
Þekking: 21 stig // Leikni: 12 stig // Viðhorf: 9 stig // alls:		42 stig

Sjá nánari leiðbeiningar og skýringar í handbók.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire B with photos of artworks and evaluation sheet



#

Rannsóknarverkefni um myndlist og
mannkostamenntun

Spurningar B



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hér merkir þú heftið

Nafn: _____

Kennitala: _____

Skóli: _____

Bekkur: _____

#

Til nemanda

Við þökkum þér fyrir að taka þátt í þessari könnun.

Enginn mun sjá svör þín nema fólk við Háskóla Íslands sem fer yfir könnunina. Eina ástæðan fyrir því að þú ert beðin(n) að merkja þetta hefti með nafni þínu er að svörin sem þú skrifar núna verða borin saman við svör þín við svipuðum spurningum í annarri könnun sem lögð verður fyrir þig síðar. Ef þú vilt skrifa lengri svör en komast í línurnar bendum við þér á að skrifa á aukalínurnar aftan á könnuninni.

Í sumum spurningum er spurt um mannkosti eða dygðir. Þessi tvö orð merkja nokkurn veginn það sama. Þau eru notuð um eiginleika sem einkenna gott fólk. Hjálpssemi og heiðarleiki eru dæmi um slíka eiginleika.

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, Atli Harðarson dósent og Ólafur Páll Jónsson prófessor

Spurning 1

Veldu orð af orðalistanum og settu í eyðurnar. Eyðurnar eru tíu en orðin eru fimmtán svo þú notar ekki öll orðin. Reyndu samt að nota sem flest af þeim frekar en að setja sama orð í margar eyður.

Hófsamt fólk er yfirleitt laust við _____ og _____.

Sá sem lætur hvorki fordóma né sérhagsmuni ráða afstöðu sinni sýnir _____.

Sá sem reynir að græða með því að blekkja viðskiptavini kemur fram af _____.

Lítillátar manneskjur eru sjaldan með _____ eða _____.

Sá sem forðast að beita blekkingum sýnir _____ og _____.

Að halda ró sinni og gera það sem skyldan býður þó hættur steðji að getur verið til marks um _____ og _____.

Orðalisti:

auðmýkt

græðgi

hroka

meðaumkun

sannsögli

ágirnd

heiðarleika

hugrekki

sanngirni

óþolinmæði

grobba

hjálpsemi

ókurteisi

óheiðarleika

æðruleysi

Næstu þrjár spurningar fjalla um málverkið sem er merkt B1. Skoðaðu málverkið vandlega áður en þú svarar þeim.

Þetta málverk heitir „Frelsisgyðjan leiðir fólkið“ eftir franska listmálarann Eugene Delacroix. Málverkið er málað 1830 til að minnast Júlí-uppreisnarinnar 1830 í Frakklandi þegar Karli tíunda konungi Frakklands var steipt af stóli. Delacroix tók ekki sjálfur þátt í uppreisninni en skrifaði bróður sínum að hann vildi leggja sitt af mörkum til uppbyggingar samfélagsins með þessu málverki. Hugmyndina um frelsisgyðjuna má sjá víða en Frelsisstytta í New York er byggð á svipaðri hugmynd, en hún var einmitt gjöf Frakka til Bandaríkjamanna.

Spurning 2

Hvaða mannkosti (eða dygðir) sýnir frelsisgyðjan í málverkinu? Færðu rök fyrir máli þínu.

Spurning 3

Hvaða mannkosti (eða dygðir) sýna aðrar persónur í málverkinu? Færðu rök fyrir máli þínu.

Spurning 4

Hvaða spurningar vakna hjá þér þegar þú skoðar þetta málverk? Skrifaðu nokkur orð um það hvað þér finnst þér athyglisvert eða forvitnilegt í málverkinu. Hvaða áhrif það hefur á þig og hvaða skoðun þú hefur.

Spurning 6

Útskýrðu með þínum eigin orðum hvað orðið *hófsemi* þýðir og nefndu (raunverulegt eða ímyndað) dæmi um hófsemi.

Aukalínur

Hérna geturðu skrifað meira um listaverkin eða spurningarnar ef þú vilt. Mundu að setja númer spurningarinnar framan við.

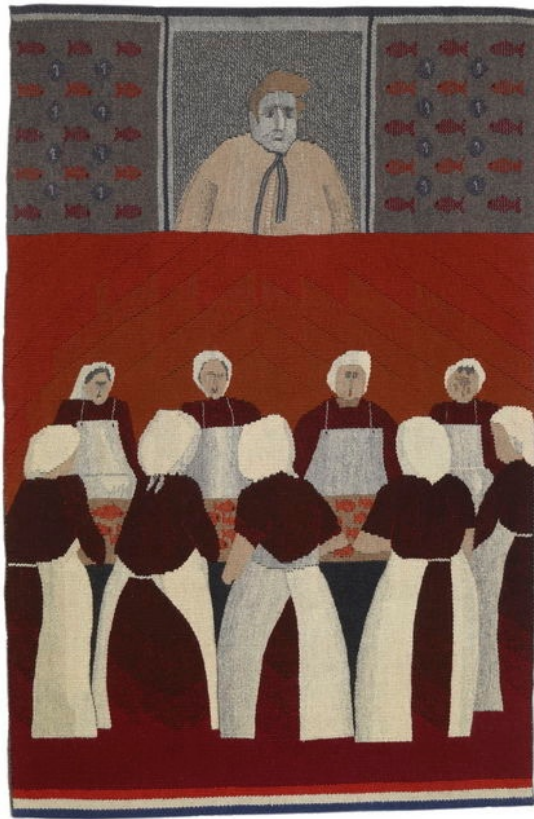
Þessi könnun er hluti af doktorsrannsóknarverkefni sem nefnist „Myndlist og mannkostamenntun“. Könnunin er að verulegu leyti byggð á sambærilegum könnunum sem voru búnar til af sérfræðingum við The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues við háskólann í Birmingham á Englandi og könnun Atla Harðarsonar og Ólafs Páls Jónssonar á bókmenntun og siðferði. Ég þakka þeim fyrir að leyfa mér afnot af efni sem þeir hafa unnið.

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, doktorsnemi við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands og aðjúnkt við Listaháskóla Íslands.



Painting B1

Eugène Delacroix. Liberty leading the people. 1830. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris, France.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Leading_the_People



Artwork B2

Hildur Hákonardóttir. Fiskikonurnar [The Fisherwomen], 1971. Textile. Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Iceland. <https://www.arkiv.is/art/878>

#	Dags.	Unnið af:	Matsblað B
---	-------	-----------	-------------------

Spurning 1: ½-10 þ stig alls: _____

Hófsamt fólk er yfirleitt laust við _____ <u>græðgi</u> og _____ <u>ágirnd</u> .			
Sá sem lætur hvorki fordóma né sérhagsmuni ráða afstöðu sinni sýnir _____ <u>sanngírni</u> .			
Sá sem reynir að græða með því að blekkja viðskiptavinum kemur fram af _____ <u>óheiðarleika</u> .			
Lítilátar manneskjur eru sjaldan með _____ <u>grob</u> eða _____ <u>hroka</u> .			
Sá sem forðast að beita blekkingum sýnir _____ <u>heiðarleika</u> og _____ <u>sannsögli</u> .			
Að halda ró sinni og gera það sem skyldan býður þó hættur stéðji að getur verið til marks um _____ <u>hugrekki</u> og _____ <u>æðruleysi</u> .			

Orðalisti:

1 auðmýkt	4 <u>græðgi</u>	7 <u>hroka</u>	10 meðaumkun	13 <u>sannsögli</u>
2 <u>ágirnd</u>	5 <u>heiðarleika</u>	8 <u>hugrekki</u>	11 <u>sanngírni</u>	14 óþolinmæði
3 <u>grob</u>	6 hjálpssemi	9 ókurteisi	12 <u>óheiðarleika</u>	15 <u>æðruleysi</u>

Spurningar 2-6 og heildarsvipur (H)

Fl.	Nr.	1 stig	2 stig	3 stig
þ	2	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar og útskýrðar eða rökstuddar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir eru útskýrðar eða rökstuddar á sannfærandi hátt.
þ	3	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa eru nefndar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir sem til sanns vegar má færa er nefndar og útskýrðar eða rökstuddar.	Mannkostir, dygðir, lestrir eða hugmyndir eru útskýrðar eða rökstuddar á sannfærandi hátt.
L	4a	Ber fram spurningu um eitthvað í listaverkinu sem vekur forvitni.	Spurningin gefur vísbendingu um einfalda gagnrýna hugsun um siðferðilegt inntak verksins.	Spurningin gefur vísbendingu um dýpri gagnrýna hugsun um siðferðilegt inntak verksins.
V	4b	Lýsir áhrifum sem verkið hefur, skoðun sinni á því eða hugsun um inntakið.	Lýsir áhrifum verksins, skoðun sinni eða hugsun um inntakið með rökstuðningi eða útskýringum.	Lýsir áhrifum verksins, skoðun sinni eða hugsun um inntakið með sannfærandi rökstuðningi eða útskýringum.
þ	5a	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst (og sem til sanns vegar má færa).	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst, útskýrt nánar eða rökstutt.	Því sem virðist vera gerast er lýst, útskýrt nánar eða rökstutt og sett í stærra tilvistarlegt samhengi.
L	5b	Sett er fram trúleg og einföld kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna.	Kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna sem er útskýrð nánar eða rökstudd.	Kenning um aðstæður eða samband persóna er sett í stærra og flóknara samhengi.
V	5c	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur.	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur, ígrundar þær eða reifar.	Lýsir tilfinningum, hugsunum eða hugmyndum sem verkið vekur og setur í samhengi við eigin reynslu eða viðhorf.
L	5d	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess.	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess og er reifuð eða útskýrð.	Sett er fram einföld túlkun á umhverfi og litum í listaverkinu eða samhengi þess og er reifuð eða útskýrð á sannfærandi hátt.
þ	6a	Útskýring á orði á vel við.	Útskýring á orði á mjög vel við.	
L	6b	Dæmið má í sumum tilvikum heimfæra upp á hugtak.	Dæmið á vel við.	Dæmið er mjög gott.
V	H	Svörin bera þess merki að nemandinn leggi sig fram um að svara af samvisku-semi án þess að leggja of mikið í svörin.	Svörin bera þess merki að nemandinn leitast við að rökstyðja mál sitt eða nota dæmi.	Nemandinn notar rökstuðning og dæmi og sýnir í alla staði áhuga á að glíma við spurningarnar.

42

Skýringar á flokkum

þ	Skilningur á siðferðilegum hugtökum >> Þekking (Sama og B(s) í Laxdæluverkefninu)	12 stig
L	Beiting siðferðilegra hugtaka >> Leikni (Sama og B(b) í Laxdæluverkefninu)	3 stig
þ	Meðvitund, þekking og skilningur >> Þekking	9 stig
L	Rökhugsun og samhengi >> Leikni	9 stig
V	Persónuleg ígrundun, tilfinningar og eigið líf >> Viðhorf	6 stig
V	Vilji til að leggja sig fram og reyna skilja siðferðilegt inntak listaverksins >> Viðhorf	3 stig
	Þekking: 21 stig // Leikni: 12 stig // Viðhorf: 9 stig // alls:	42 stig

Sjá nánari leiðbeiningar og skýringar í handbók.

Appendix 3

Lesson plans

Appendix with lesson plans for an article in the Journal of Moral Education

Ingimar Ólafsson Waage:

Cultivating virtue literacy in visual arts classes: Reflection on a fine-arts intervention aimed at moral education in a lower-secondary school in Iceland

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2290977>

	Lesson plans for a project aiming for developing virtue literacy in visual arts classes
Subject	Visual arts: 8. grade, 2x55 minutes once a week. 8-week program.
Materials and methods	Any appropriate materials and methods allowed.
Week 1: Lessons: 1–2	Pupils participate in discussions about artworks presented in PowerPoint slides. The artworks were chosen according to Aristotle's three components of friendship: 1) Reciprocal friendship where the friends love each other for the sake of each other, 2) Friendship that is rooted in common interest or happiness, 3) Friendship that is based on mutual interests. Pupils discuss these artworks and make arguments for their observations and thoughts. Since artworks allow for many interpretations, it can be a source of discussion. Pupils are invited to reflect on their own experiences of friendship and start sketching their ideas. Any expressive form allowed.
Week 2: Lessons: 3–4	Pupils continue to develop their ideas from the preceding week and eventually start working on their artworks. Teachers have the opportunity to discuss with pupils individually. In this lesson, pupils have ample time to work on their projects.
Week 3: Lessons: 5–6	Pupils continue to work on their artworks aiming for finishing them. At the end of the lesson, an open discussion about the artworks takes place, where concepts and ideas are articulated by the teacher.
Week 4: Lessons: 7–8	Selected parts from Pixar's Up screened, focusing on the unconditional love of the main characters and how that gave meaning to their lives. Pupils are invited to choose one scene, make a drawing of it and describe in text why they have chosen the scene and articulate appropriate virtues and emotions.
Week 5: Lessons: 9–10	The virtue of courage introduced by looking at selected paintings and artworks. Pupils discuss these artworks and make arguments for their observations and thoughts. Since artwork allow for many interpretations, that can be a source of discussion. Pupils investigate Briton's Riviere "Daniel in the lions' den and write short texts about their thoughts about the courage Daniel displayed in this Biblical story. Pupils are invited to reflect on courage, especially if they feel that they have displayed courage in their life. If pupils are reluctant to be too personal, they are allowed to reflect on what courage constitutes in general. Pupils are invited to start sketching their ideas on courage, preferably based on personal experiences.
Week 6: Lessons: 11–12	Pupils continue to develop their ideas from the preceding week and eventually start working on their artworks. Teachers have the opportunity to discuss with pupils individually. In this lesson, pupils have ample time to work on their projects.
Week 7: Lessons: 13–14	Pupils continue to work on their artworks aiming for finishing them. At the end of the lesson, an open discussion about the artworks takes place, where concepts and ideas are articulated clearly by the teacher.
Week 8: Lessons: 15–16	A final lesson for finishing unfinished artworks and give written arguments about their artworks and the virtues and emotions that the artworks were intended to express. At the end of the lesson, an open discussion about the artworks takes place, where concepts and ideas are articulated by the teacher. Also, a general discussion about the project takes place.

Appendix 4

Information letter to parents and children with letter of consent

Kópavogi, 1. ágúst 2018

Kæru foreldrar/forráðamenn

Ég undirritaður Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, myndlistar- og heimspekikennari við Garðaskóla og doktorsnemi í Menntavísindum við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands, vinn að ramnsókn á síðferðilegu gildi listgreinakennslu. Leiðbeinendur mínir eru Atli Vilhelm Harðarson og Ólafur Páll Jónsson.

Heiti ramnsóknarinnar er Listir, geðshræringar og dygðir: mannkostamenntun í gegnum myndlist. Í ramnsókninni, sem er ihlutunarverkefni, skoða ég hlutverk myndlistarkennslu við eflingu dygdalæsis og hvernig efla megi síðferðilegan hugtakaskilning.

Ihlutunarverkefnið mun taka sjö vikur og fara fram í myndmenntartímum í 8. bekk. Helmingur nemenda í árganginum mun taka þátt í ihlutuninni en hinn helmingurinn mun vera í samamburðarhópi. Þeir nemendur sem munu taka þátt í ihlutuninni eru þeir nemendur sem verða í myndmennt fyrir áramót en skiptingin ræðst af stafrófsröð í hverjum bekk.

Ihlutunin felur í sér að nemendur taka þátt í heimspekilegum samræðum um valin listaverk með áherslu á samspil sjónrænnar framsetningar og innihalds. Í framhaldinu munu nemendur fá tækifæri til að skapa listaverk á grunni síðferðilegra hugtaka á borð við hugrekki og vináttu. Vinnan við listaverkin gefur tækifæri þess að greina betur hvað felst í hugtökunum; hvað vináttu eða hugrekki feli í sér. Nemendur munu einnig skrifa hugleiðingar í tengslum við sín eigin listaverk auk valinna listaverka eftir þekktu listamenn.

Fyrir og eftir ihlutunina verða spurningalistar lagðir fyrir þátttakendur. Þessum spurningalistum er ætlað að kanna hvort ihlutunarverkefnið auki skilning þátttakenda á síðferðilegum hugtökum og dygdalæsi í tengslum við myndefni og listræna sköpun nemenda. Að lokinni ihlutuninni mun ég óska eftir því að nokkrir nemendur taki þátt í rýnihópaviðtölum til þess að heyra þeirra sjónarmið og fá innsýn í þeirra reynslu af verkefninu.

Nemendur setja þau listaverk sem þeir skapa og þá texta sem þeir skrifa í sérstaka vinnubók. Ég mun afrita þessi gögn og afhenda nemendum vinnubækumar eigi síðar en í desember 2018. Gögnunum verður síðan eytt þegar ramnsókninni lýkur. Við úrvinnslu gagna, skrif á niðurstöðum og kynningu á ráðstefnum mun í einhverjum tilvikum vera nauðsynlegt að birta verk eftir nemendur og vitna til orða þeirra. Nöfn þátttakenda eða persónugreinanlegar upplýsingar munu hvergi koma fram við birtingu niðurstaðna.

Samkvæmd persónunefndarlögum sem tóku gildi á Evrópska efnahagssvæðinu 25. maí sl. er ramnsókn af þessum toga hvorki leyfis- né tilkynningaskyld en ramnsóknin hefur fengið umsögn Vísindasiðanefndar Háskóla Íslands. Athugið að í þessu ramnsóknarverkefni er ekki er um að ræða öflun viðkvæmra persónuupplýsinga af neinu tagi.

Þessu bréfi er ætlað að upplýsa forráðamenn um verkefnið og fá samþykki þeirra fyrir þátttöku barna þeirra í verkefninu að því tilskildu að börnin sjálf séu reiðubúin til að taka þátt í henni. Barni ykkar er heimilt að hætta þátttöku í ramnsókninni hvenær sem er.



Ef þið samþykkið að barn ykkar taki þátt í verkefninu, vinsamlega fyllið út meðfylgjandi seðil og skilið til skólastjóra Garðaskóla, Brynhildar Sigurðardóttur, fyrir 20. ágúst 2018. Einnig er hægt að fylla blaðið út rafrænt og senda það í tölvupósti á netfangið brynhildur@gardaskoli.is eða iow1@hi.is.

Ykkur er velkomið að leita nánari upplýsinga um verkefnið hjá mér í síma 6983875 eða í tölvupósti: iow1@hi.is.

Kær kveðja,
Ingimar Ólafsson Waage,
myndlistar- og heimspekikennari í Garðaskóla í Garðabæ
og aðjúnkt við Listaháskóla Íslands

Ingimar Waage

Garðabæ, _____ 2018

Ég, undirritaður forráðamaður,

(nafn nemenda)

hef lesið kynningarbréf um rannsóknarverkefnið og samþykki þátttöku hans/hennar í rannsóknarverkefninu **Listir, geðshræringar og dygðir** sem unnið verður kennslustundum í Garðaskóla í myndmennt í ágúst, september og október 2018.

(undirritun foreldris/forráðamanns)

Appendix 5

Request to University of Iceland's committee on ethical conduct in research with the committee's reply.

Beiðni um umsögn til vísindasiðanefndar Háskóla Íslands

Ábyrgðarmaður rannsóknar:

- 1.1. Nafn: Ólafur Páll Jónsson
1.2. Kennitala: 190869-4909
1.3. Starfsheiti: Prófessor og deildarforseti Uppeldis- og menntunarfræðideildar Háskóli Íslands
1.4. Stofnun: Háskóli Íslands
1.5. Deild eða svið innan stofnunar: Menntavísindasvið
1.6. Aðsetur: Skipholt 37, 105 Reykjavík
1.7. Netfang: opj@hi.is
1.8. Ferilskrá: velja skrá CV Olafur_Pall_Jonsson-1-page.pdf

Aðrir umsækjendur rannsóknar:

2. Verkefnastjóri rannsóknar (ef annar en ábyrgðarmaður): sömu upplýsingar og í lið 1.1-1.8. Hengið ferilskrá við.

- 2.1. Nafn: Ingimar Ólafsson Waage
2.2. Kennitala: 031166-5789
2.3. Starfsheiti: Doktorsnemi
2.4. Stofnun: Háskóli Íslands
2.5. Deild eða svið innan stofnunar: Menntavísindasvið
2.6. Aðsetur: Skipholt 37, 105 Reykjavík
2.7. Netfang: iow1@hi.is

Ingimar_Olafsson_Waage_CV_2018.pdf

2.1. Aðrir umsækjendur: sömu upplýsingar og í lið 1.1-1.8. Hengið ferilskrá við.

- 2.1. Nafn: Atli Vilhelm Harðarson
2.2. Kennitala: 060160-4229
2.3. Starfsheiti: Dósent
2.4. Stofnun: Háskóli Íslands
2.5. Deild eða svið innan stofnunar: Menntavísindasvið
2.6. Aðsetur: Skipholt 37, 105 Reykjavík
2.7. Netfang: ativh@hi.is

Atli_Hardarson_CV_150617.pdf

Verkefnisupplýsingar:

3. Heiti verkefnis: Beiðni er um fullt heiti rannsóknar, íslenskt eða erlent eftir atvikum

Arts, Emotions and Virtues: Character Education through Visual Arts.

Listir, geðshræringar og dygðir: Mannkostamenntun í gegnum myndlist.

3.1. Tilgangur rannsóknar og lýsing í hnotskurn:

This research project is aimed at developing educational methods and materials for visual arts education in lower secondary schools (age 13 to 16) which serve to educate virtue literacy among the pupils. The increased interest in the field of character and moral education reflects the urgency of expanding those dimensions in education (Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; Sanderse, 2012; Carr & Harrison, 2015). Similar "socio-moral" objectives are consistently expressed throughout the recent Icelandic National Curriculum Guide, implying a holistic and pluralistic educational paradigm (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014).

The project described here involves a seven-week classroom intervention, using specifically designed pre- and post-tests to evaluate pupils' progress. In addition, a mixed-method design will be used by inspecting participants' portfolios, by means of focus-groups, interviews with participating teachers, and logbooks.

The main research question that will guide the research is: "In what ways can visual arts contribute educationally and morally to the cultivation of virtue literacy?"

4. Fjármögnun og styrktaraðilar: hér skal greina frá stofnunum og fyrirtækjum, innlendum og/eða erlendum sem styrkja eða fjármagna rannsóknina.

Rannsóknasjóður/stofnun/fyrirtæki:	Heimilisfang:	Fjárhæð kr.:
N/A		0
N/A		0
N/A		0
N/A		0

5. Verkaskipting samstarfsaðila. Hér skal tilgreina hvaða aðilar hafa umsögn með einstökum verkþáttum rannsóknarinnar og vinnuframlagi.

1

6. Þátttakendur. Tilgreinið fjölda þátttakenda svo og á hvaða forsendum úrtakið verður helst fólgið.

The research project will include 170-180 students (8 classes) in 8th grade (13-14 years old) in Garðaskóli, Garðabær. Garðaskóli is an upper-elementary school (8th to 10th grade), with 530 pupils. It will be carried out in the visual arts classes; a convenience sample. Traditionally, only half of each class

participates in the visual arts each semester; the first half in the autumn semester and the second half in the spring semester. Usually the group is divided by an alphabetical order. While half the students are participating in the intervention project, the other half serves as a control group. Before the intervention, the participants will be presented with pre-tests. After the initial pre-test, half of the students will participate in 6 weeks' intervention programme incorporating art, creativity, deliberation and moral reflection. After the intervention, a post-test is applied to the whole group, allowing for analysis of the effects of the intervention. Three teachers participating in the project will be interviewed after the intervention.

0

7. Ávinningur/Áhætta. Tilgreinið í hverju ávinningur jafnt sem áhætta þátttakenda í rannsókninni verður helst fólgin.

1

8. Öflun upplýsts samþykkis. Tilgreinið hvernig upplýsts samþykkis þátttakenda er aflað, þ.m.t. hvaða aðili muni leita til þeirra eftir slíku samþykki. Athugið að ef afa á upplýsinga frá börnum þarf samþykki frá foreldri eða forráðamanni. Afri af upplýsingum og samþykkisblöðum skulu fylgja umsókninni.

The project will be introduced to parents in a letter in which they will be asked to give an informed consent for the inclusion of their child in the project. The letter will be sent by the school's principal and she will collect the letters of consent. Parents and children are free to decline participation at any time without any consequences.

0

9. Rannsóknargögn. Tilgreinið hvers konar gögnum fyrirhugað að safna vegna rannsóknarinnar. Einnig hvaða aðilar hafa aðgang að þeim gögnum. Koma þarf fram hver hefur umráðrétt yfir gögnum að rannsókn lokinni. Skýrið frá hvaða öryggisráðstarfarnir verða gerðar og hvernig trúnaði við þátttakendur verður haldið.

Portfolio with students artworks; drawings, paintings, photos, and textual reflections. Recordings from focus-group interviews. Written responses to questionnaires. Half-open interviews with teachers participating in the intervention. Access to data will be restricted to Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, Atli Vilhelm Harðarson and Ólafur Páll Jónsson. Questionnaires will be secured at Menntavísindastofnun. Digital data will be secured on a password-protected folder on an external drive.

10. Siðfræðilegt álitamál. Hér skal greina frá helstu álitamálum af siðfræðilegum toga sem rannsókna verða.

Ethical considerations and issues are two-fold: (a) They concern practical implementation regarding acceptable ethical research conduct. This entails the sensitive position of minors as vulnerable subjects in educational research and necessitates special attention and care when conducting the research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2009). (b) The research subject is moral in itself. Educating character is a moral task; dealing with emotions and their relationship to moral growth and virtues.

The project will be introduced to parents in a letter in which they will be asked to give an informed consent for the inclusion of their child in the project. Parents and children are free to decline participation at any time without any consequences.

11. Vísindalegt gildi. Gerið stuttlega grein fyrir þeim vísindalega ávinningi sem rannsóknin hefur í för með sér.

The project aims at developing educational methods and material for visual arts education in lower secondary schools (age 13 to 16) which serves to cultivate virtue literacy among the students and helps them to develop moral character. The increased current interest in the field of character and moral education reflects the urgency of expanding those dimensions in education (Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015; Sanderse, 2012; Carr & Harrison, 2015). Similar "socio-moral" objectives are consistently expressed throughout the recent Icelandic National Curriculum Guide, implying a holistic and pluralistic educational paradigm (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014). In the section about the visual arts in the Curriculum Guide, these aims emerge through the focus on personal and social skills, self-knowledge, and general understanding of society as a dynamic construct (pp. 151-152).

This present intervention project is original in many ways. It seeks to address the lack of teaching materials and methods by developing comprehensive lesson plans. This will be done by joining together the forces of the visual arts, philosophical dialogues and ethics, aiming for a holistic and pluralistic educational paradigm which is reflected in Aristotelian character education.

12. Fræðigrunnur rannsókna. Lýsa skal fræðilegri þekkingu á rannsóknarsviðinu og öðrum bakgrunni rannsóknarinnar.

A strong connection between the visual arts and moral education has existed through the ages (Gaut, 2007; Carr, 2010), and the visual arts were considered educative in the broadest sense (Eisner, 2002; Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1973; Carroll, 2003; Langer, 1957). Aristotle (1962, 1988) claimed that the educative elements of the arts to resided in imitation (mimesis), which consequently appealed to the emotions through the rhetoric qualities of the arts (Duncum, 2014). The beholder is informed about the life and experiences of those depicted in an artwork by arousing emotional responses which, in turn, appeal to his concerns. Hence, artworks promote quasi-experiences through imitation, providing moral knowledge through collective and personal deliberation on the respective artwork. These can also be addressed through the imitation or reconstruction of moral considerations and issues in personal artistic creation (Eisner, 2002; Cupchik, 2016). However, to avoid indoctrination, the rhetorical qualities of the arts must be accompanied by critical thinking and metacognition (Duncum, 2014). Through the

subconscious filing of visual experiences and by occupying an elevated place in memory, which is readily available for recollection, the visual arts retain oppositional capabilities, allowing us to contest and negotiate cultural norms and values (Leavy, 2015, p. 225).

Research in the field has been promising; The Knightly Virtues Project, developed by the Jubilee Centre of Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham (<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk>), suggests that the encounter with literature, and procedures of critical thinking, can be favourable for conceptual understanding of moral issues by enriching vocabulary and virtue literacy (Carr & Harrison, 2015). This implies recognition of moral salience and discernment of dispositions towards suggested moral actions and emotions.

The theoretical basis of the Jubilee Centre is grounded in Aristotelian Character Education (ACE). Central to ACE are Aristotelian Virtue Ethics; securing the necessary moral conditions for comprehensive character education (Kristjánsson, 2015). The primary concern of virtue ethics is the question of how to live a good life (Hursthouse, 1999). Aristotle (1955) maintained that the good life involved the exercise of *arête* (excellence or virtue) and *phronesis* (practical or moral wisdom) which eventually would lead to *eudaimonia* (flourishing). Therefore, flourishing requires excellence that is fostered by the integration of reason and the emotions through practical wisdom (Hursthouse, 2013). Rational cultivation of the emotions is a prerequisite for further personal development; the emotions serve as a compass in directing our desires and actions (Kristjánsson, 2007, 2015).

The development of a virtuous individual is a life-long project; virtues are emerging human traits of character. Virtue literacy provides pupils with moral concepts for further moral cognition and deliberation - assisting them to relate to own life to the end of increased moral sensitivity. Although virtue literacy does not in itself guarantee moral conduct, it may nevertheless be considered necessary for it (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderson & Wright, 2017).

The Jubilee Centre's componential account of virtue is a work in progress by James Arthur, Kristján Kristjánsson, David Carr and others at the Jubilee Centre. Each virtue (e.g. compassion, honesty) is analysed in terms of seven components: virtue knowledge, virtue perception, virtue emotion, virtue identity, virtue motivation and virtue reasoning - all of which are regarded as informing virtue literacy - and, lastly, virtue practice. These components can, in my belief, be addressed explicitly through the visual arts as an artwork can reflect one or more of these components, allowing for deeper conceptualization through emotional arousal and cognitive reflections.

In general, these assumptions are in line with educational theories such as those of Jerome Bruner (1990) who emphasized the importance of meaning in education, a proposition which resonates in the importance of meaning in artistic appreciation. Theorist and art educator Paul Duncum (2014) maintains that visual literacy is grounded in the rhetoric qualities of the arts; emphasizing emotional responses and personal concerns in artistic appreciation and interpretation. According to theorist Gunther Kress (2010), literacy is a multimodal phenomenon which relies on complex semiotics, resulting in unexpected readings. German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (2013) makes the case for the "play" between the artist and the beholder as an platform for interpretation.

13. Rannsóknaraðferðir. Gera skal grein fyrir aðferðafræði og aðferð rannsóknarinnar. Taka skal fram hvort ætlunin sé að afla upplýsinga frá öðrum en þátttakendum sjálfum s.s. að notast við upplýsingar úr gagnaböndum. Koma þarf fram til hvers er ætlast af þátttakendum s.s. hvers konar upplýsinga verður aflað. Þessum lið má skila á sérblaði eða vísa í ítarlega í rannsóknaráætlun sem þá skal fylgja umsókn.

Research design is Mixed Method. This research will only collect data directly from the participants. The data will not come from any data-bases. Students will participate in six week intervention project in visual-art classes.

The qualitative part consists of (1) students' artworks inspired of moral concepts associated with emotions and virtues, (2) short vignettes in response to specific artworks, and (3) focus-group interviews with students. The quantitative part of the research aims at discerning with pre/post testing if the intervention results in a measureable impact on virtue literacy. The pre/post tests are written responses in a questionnaire. Data in questionnaires will be analysed with content analysis, focus group interviews and vignettes with thematic analysis and artworks with thematic analysis and sematic analysis.

14. Úrvinnsla gagna. Tilgreinið hvers konar úrvinnslu (t.d. tölfraeðileg) verður gerð. Þessum lið má skila á sérblaði eða vísa í ítarlegri rannsóknaráætlun sem þá skal fylgja umsókn.

Data in questionnaires will be analysed with content analysis; discerning if participants display higher levels of virtue literacy (the ability to recognize and use concepts associated with virtues). Focus group interviews and vignettes will be analysed with thematic analysis and artworks with thematic analysis and sematic analysis.

15. Rannsóknartímabil. Tilgreinið hvenær áætlað er að rannsókn hefjist og hvenær henni ljúki.

The intervention will take place during a seven weeks period from August to October 2018. Analysis and writing of the results from November 2018 - December 2019.

16. Niðurstöður rannsókna. Gerið grein fyrir fyrirhugaðri nýtingu og/eða birtingu/kynningu á niðurstöðum rannsókna.

The results will be published as four papers in peer-reviewed open access journals. Two in Icelandic and two in English in international outlets.

Paper 1: The visual arts and the fundamental pillars of education. [Icelandic]

Paper 2: Artworks, emotions and moral virtues. [English]

Paper 3: Visual literacy and virtue literacy [Icelandic]

Paper 4: Artworks, experience and moral character. [English]

In addition to the four academic papers, the research project will generate a variety of teaching materials and teacher guides and sources. Those will be published under open access policy on a website dedicated to the advancement of art education and moral education within schools.

17. Flutningur gagna. Ef fyrirhugað er að flytja gögn rannsóknarinnar úr landi verður að tilgreina í hvaða tilgangi og formi það verði gert, svo og til hvaða stofnunar og lands gögnin verði flutt. Jafnframt ber að tilgreina hver á viðkomandi stofnun hafi umráðarétt yfir gögnunum og/eða beri ábyrgð á þeim.

1

18. Varðveilsa gagna. Hvar verða rannsóknargögnin varðveitt
Data from the questionnaires will be secured at Menntavísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands. Photos and scans of students work will be secured in a password-protected folder on an external drive.

19. Samnýting gagna. Tilgreinið hvort fyrirhugað sé að samkeyra upplýsingar rannsóknarinnar við aðrar skrár eða samnýta upplýsingar við aðrar rannsóknir. Ef svo er greinið þá frá helti viðkomandi rannsóknar og ábyrgðarmanni.

1

20. Greiðslur vegna þátttöku. Tilgreinið hvort greitt verði fyrir þátttöku í ransókninni og þá jafnframt hvers eðlis og hversu háar þær greiðslur verði.

1

21. Hefur rannsóknin verið tilkynnt til Persónuverndar eða hefur verið fengið leyfi ef við á?

0

1

0

22. Fylgiskjöl með umsókn. Starfságrip/ritaskrá ábyrgðarmanns, svo og upplýsinga- og samþykkið vegna þátttöku í ransókninni skulu ávallt fylgja umsókn til vísindasiðanefndar.

1

0

1

0

0

0

1

0

0

23. Athugasemdir umsækjenda. Hér er hægt að koma á framfæri athugasemdum eða skýringum sem ekki komust fyrir annars staðar í umsókninni
The Icelandic Data Protection Authority (conversation with Gunnar Ingi Ágústsson, May, 2nd 2018 by telephone) has informed me, according to nature of this research project, that after the validation of the new General Data Protection Regulation May 25th 2018, a notification to the IDPA will no longer be required.

24. Staðfesting umsóknar:

Vinsamlegast hakið í boxið að neðan til staðfestingar!

Verði einhverjar breytingar á rannsóknaráætluninni ber ábyrgðarmanni að tilkynna þær án tafar til vísindasiðanefndar.

1



Ólafur Páll Jónsson
prófessor

15.5.2018

Vísindasiðanefnd HÍ hefur fjallað um beiðni um umsögn á verkefninu „*Arts, emotions and virtues: Character Education through visual arts. Listir, geðshræringar og dygðir: Mannkostamenntun í gegnum myndlist.*“ sem er beiðni nr. 18-016 um umsögn.

Umsögn nefndarinnar er jákvæð. Bent er á að ekki kemur alveg skýrt fram í sjálfri umsagnarbeiðninni hvort og hvenær gögnum verði eytt.

Sólveig Anna Bóasdóttir
Formaður Vísindasiðanefndar HÍ