

# E-Journal of Philosophy of Education

*International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan*

## Symposium

*Competence*

*A Critical Approach to Contemporary Education*

## Thematic Research

*Rethinking Teaching*

*Toward the Reconstruction of (Philosophy of) Education*

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# **Dewey's Resistance to Totalitarianism: Focusing on The Relationship Between the Theory of Esthetic Experience and Politics in His Works of the 1930s**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the relationship between Dewey's theory of "esthetic experience" and his political thought in the 1930s. Mainly, this paper focuses on Dewey's resistance to totalitarianism based on the issue of passionate mobilization to totalitarianism by using art which W. Benjamin claimed. In the 1930s, Dewey criticized the use of art in totalitarian states. In *Freedom and Culture* (1939), Dewey says that a totalitarian regime controls the whole life of all its subjects by its hold over feelings, desires, emotions, as well as opinions through propaganda. However, on the other hand, Dewey writes that works of art are the most compelling of the means of communication by which emotions are stirred and opinions formed. For Dewey, art is in an unstable position. His concept of art cannot be separated from the theory of esthetic experience, which he also developed in the 1930s. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss whether Dewey's theory of esthetic experience and thought of art might aid in his resistance to totalitarianism. To elaborate this, this paper is arranged into three sections. First, we will look at two points: On the one hand, Dewey's thought in the 1930s suggests the importance of culture, especially art, as a response to totalitarianism. On the other hand, Dewey's theory of esthetic experience contains within it the danger of working in affinity with totalitarianism. The second section will claim that esthetic experience includes dimensions of both the mediacy and immediacy of art by focusing on the making and appreciation of works of art. In addition, between both dimensions of esthetic experience, there is the chance for the "leap", a chance for the creation of new possibilities. Finally, the leap of esthetic experience will be interpreted as a counter to totalitarianism's encompassing of life. The major focus of this paper is the importance of communication brought about by the mediacy of esthetic experience.

## **Keywords**

aesthetics and education, aestheticizing of politics, life, immediacy and mediacy, culture, democratic socialism

## Introduction

This study examines the relationship between Dewey's theory of "esthetic experience" and his political thought in the 1930s. Mainly, this study focuses on Dewey's resistance to totalitarianism. In the 1930s, Dewey defined both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as totalitarian states and, in particular, criticized the use of art in these two states. However, to date, there have been few works that discuss the relationship between Dewey's theory of esthetic experience, which he also developed in the 1930s, and his resistance to totalitarianism. Therefore, this study discusses whether Dewey's theory of esthetic experience might aid in his resistance to totalitarianism.

In finding that it does aid resistance, the discussion then turns to W. Benjamin's concept of the "aestheticizing of politics."<sup>1</sup> Benjamin claimed that aesthetics also carries the risk of being used to advance a totalitarian regime.<sup>2</sup> In addition, this study looks ahead to more contemporary discussions about "aesthetics and education" that have been carried out since the 1990s in Japan.<sup>3</sup>

This discussion shows the signification of aesthetics: that it can propose "something that brings the indivisible, which reason cannot measure" (Suzuki 1999: 163–164). This discussion also informs what the task of aesthetics is. T. Nishimura claimed that, since modern aesthetics has led to an "easy identification with the absolute" (Suzuki 1999: 163–164), "we must object to the complicity between modern education and aesthetics in their specifically modern meanings" (Nishimura 2010: 98). Aesthetics, as non-rational, has the potential to puncture purposive rationality, which designates the limits of modern education. However, it is necessary to avoid the unification of aesthetics and absolutism.

This paper is arranged in three sections. First, we will look at two points: On the one hand, Dewey's thought in the 1930s suggests the importance of culture, especially art, as

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin takes up art, especially films, to set human beings free through training them "*in the apperceptions and reactions needed to deal with a vast apparatus whose role in their lives is expanding almost daily*" on the premise of the loss of the "aura" that secures the authenticity of works of art (Benjamin 1986: 382; Benjamin 2008: 26; emphasis in original). In contrast, according to Benjamin, fascism "sees its salvation in granting expressions to the masses—but on no account granting them rights" (Benjamin 1986: 382; Benjamin 2008: 41). This is the famous confrontation between the "*aestheticizing of politics*" and the "*politicizing of art*" (Benjamin 1986: 382; Benjamin 2008: 42; emphasis in original).

<sup>2</sup> This study considers the issue of passionate mobilization to totalitarianism by using art, and Benjamin's concept of the "aestheticizing of politics," through an examination of Dewey's theory of esthetic experience. Y. Imai points out the similarity of Dewey's and Benjamin's aesthetics from the perspective of "the response to the modern condition of the poverty of experience" (Imai 1998: 156). However, Imai criticizes the structure of purposive rationality in Dewey's theory of esthetic experience.

<sup>3</sup> T. Nishimura (2010) describes the series of discussions in "Aesthetics and Education" in the 1990s in Japan.

a response to totalitarianism. On the other hand, Dewey's theory of esthetic experience contains within it the danger of working in affinity with totalitarianism. Not dwelling on this last point, the second section will move on to examine the relation between the immediacy and mediacy of esthetic experience, which will reveal that there is a "leap" in Dewey's theory of esthetic experience. Furthermore, this leap creates unprecedented possibilities. Finally, this paper argues through an analysis of Dewey's treatment of totalitarianism that the points of employing his theory of esthetic experience against totalitarianism are social change, accomplished through the communication that art provides, and the creation of unprecedented possibilities.

## 1. Dewey in the 1930s

### 1-1. Dewey's Political Thought in the 1930s

Today, studies about Dewey's political thought in the 1930s, which was responding to economic and political situations such as the Great Depression and the eve of World War II, have been gaining increased attention.

As M. Sato (2012) and R. Westbrook (1991) pointed out, in the 1930s Dewey became sympathetic with socialism after he visited the Soviet Union and came to identify his political thought as "democratic socialism."<sup>4</sup> Dewey's "democratic socialism" has deepened through the struggle against the "three social systems that branched off after the economic depression: the state socialism of Stalinism; the state capitalism of the New Deal; and the totalitarianism of the fascist states" (Sato 2012: 106). A problem common to these three social systems is the tendency to "reduce the development of free individuality by enhancing state function" (Sato 2012: 112). In contrast, Dewey's idea of social democracy targets the development of individuality through interaction and communication with one's surrounding environment. This is different from the "old individualism" that divided individuals. Dewey calls it democracy as "a way of living" (CD: 226).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dewey's series of articles about his visit to the Soviet Union was published in the *New Republic* and later published in book form as *Impression of Soviet Russia* in 1928 (ISR). According to Morita, Dewey "found a spectacular social experiment trying to create a collaborative humanity" in the Soviet Union. While initially evaluating the experience positively, Dewey later realized that "the principles of people's spontaneous cooperation are incompatible with dogmatic Marxism, a government-certified ideology" (Morita 2004: 99). Thereafter, Dewey criticizes the intensification of Stalin's dictatorship in the Soviet Union and the communist's support of violent revolution. Additionally, Dewey became convinced of this critical position after the Trotsky trials (Inoue 2008).

<sup>5</sup> R. Bernstein (2000) emphasizes the sense of the time when he reinterprets Dewey's article "Creative Democracy" (1939). Bernstein also points out that Dewey expressed disappointment at the strengthening of Stalin's dictatorship

The main focus of this study is on Dewey's resistance to totalitarianism. H. Morita recognizes Dewey as "anticipating Arendt" in his criticism not only of Nazism but also the Soviet Union after Stalin, which represented an intensification of the totalitarian regime (Morita 2004: 98). It is noteworthy that Dewey became the honorary chair of the Committee for Cultural Freedom, which was established to resist the advancement of totalitarianism. The manifest of the committee warned of the risk that the suppression of cultural freedom under a totalitarian regime might also occur in the United States and declared that securing the sphere of the free creativity of culture could defend democracy (Hook 1987: 248–274). Dewey's stance against totalitarianism can be understood as a defense of "cultural freedom," as a defense of the free development of the individuality (Inoue 2008: 194).<sup>6</sup>

## 1-2. The Defense of Political Freedom and the Emancipation of Individuality

Dewey made cultural freedom and cultural creativity the key points of *Individualism, Old and New* (1930), *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935), and *Culture and Freedom* (1939), written as a response to the social situation at the time. Dewey says that culture is located "outside of political institutions," and it is a "complex of conditions which tax the terms upon which human beings associate and live together" (FC: 67). The problem is, then, "to know what kind of culture is so free in itself that it conceives and begets political freedom as its accompaniment and consequence" (FC: 67).

In order to defend cultural freedom, it is necessary to rethink social and economic systems and technology that restrict individuals' actions. However, Dewey does not insist on removing them. For Dewey, protecting the potential for individuality is required. Individuality consists of the interaction between individuals and the environment, which includes social and economic systems and technology. In addition, this argument links the discussion to societal reform through communication. For Dewey, art became critical to thinking about communication.

In *Art as Experience* (1934), Dewey claims that "individualization" is the process by which a work of art becomes unique. Moreover, Dewey says that the individuality of artists punctuates "a mannerism" by opening up "a unique manner of acting in and with a world of objects and persons" (ION: 122; 121). Dewey emphasizes communication as

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as well as the rise of Nazi Germany in "Creative Democracy" (Bernstein 2000: 216).

<sup>6</sup> The concept of "culture" is one of the main concerns of Dewey's later thought up until his last years. For example, Dewey wanted to change the title of *Experience and Nature* (1925), which is one of the main works of his later period, to *Nature and Culture* in 1951 (Dykhuisen 1973: 318).

mediated by works of art:

In the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit the community of experience. (AE: 110)

Dewey says that art emancipates individuality, and the communication mediated by art fosters social reform. The political power of art does not belong to “the personal political intent of the artist” but to the creativity of art and its capacity for communication (AE: 347).

### **1-3. The Risk of Connecting the Theory of Esthetic Experience and Dewey's Political Thought**

While his political thought deepened, Dewey published *Art as Experience* in 1934 based on a series of lectures in 1931. In this book, Dewey developed his conceptions of art and esthetic experience. Although Dewey argued that art responded to current political situations, as previously mentioned, few studies have discussed the relationship between his political thought and his theory of esthetic experience. Recently, however, such studies have begun to appear.

M. Ueno (2010) discovers the relationship between Dewey's political thought and theory of esthetic experience by looking at the concept of communication and expanding his discussion to the issue of the publicness of education. However, Ueno does not focus on Dewey's resistance to totalitarianism. Also, Ueno is not cognizant of how Dewey makes it difficult to talk about a dimension of communication involving multiple actors because Dewey's theory of esthetic experience underpins personal and direct experience.<sup>7</sup>

T.M. Alexander (1987) values the “immediate or qualitative meaning” of experience (Alexander 1987: 57), but he also discusses communication and community as mediated by art. He says that “[t]o grasp the origin of art it is also necessary to grasp the origin of the community of shared experience” (Alexander 1987: 189). Art can be the media through which a community can share experiences. Therefore, for Alexander, art “unites the metaphysics and political aspect of Dewey's philosophy” (Alexander 1987: 186). However, Alexander's argument is not cognizant of Dewey's thinking about

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<sup>7</sup> Such criticisms are pointed out in B. Croce (1948) and C. Pepper (1989).

politics in the 1930s.

As previously mentioned, aesthetics, as non-rational, has the potential to puncture purposive rationality. This is the reason for the recent attention given to Dewey's aesthetics.<sup>8</sup> However, as Benjamin shows, aesthetics harbors the risk that it may bolster a totalitarian regime. The connection between immediacy and mediacy in Dewey's theory of esthetic experience contains the risk that irrational and harmonious direct experiences will be of absolute and uncritical value. In other words, there is the risk that the absolutization of immediate experience, working as the central dogma of communication, has a high affinity with a totalitarian unity.<sup>9</sup> Dewey also describes the risk of art being used as "propaganda for special views which are dogmatically asserted to be socially necessary" (FC: 169). On the one hand, the non-rationality of art bears the conception of social reform, but on the other hand, it can pander to totalitarianism. Art is in an unstable position.

The problem with Dewey's proposals for resisting totalitarianism through art is that they may vacillate between immediacy and mediacy. If immediacy and mediacy are separate in the first place, Dewey's trust that the creativity of art and communication will break through "mannerism" should fail. Despite their connection, if immediate experience becomes the absolute and central value of communication, the risk that it may bolster a totalitarian regime is unavoidable. In the following, this study examines the connection between mediacy and immediacy of the esthetic experience.

## 2. Dewey's Theory of Esthetic Experience

### 2-1. The Immediacy of Esthetic Experience

At first, this study shows a feature of the aspect of immediacy of esthetic experience. According to Dewey, esthetic experience "is esthetic in the degree in which organism and environment cooperate to institute *an experience* in which the two are so fully integrated that each disappears" (AE: 254; emphasis added). About "an experience," Dewey says:

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<sup>8</sup> For example, N. Saito focuses on Dewey's "esthetic experience" to "release him from the framework of conservative criticism such as instrumentalism, scientism, and optimism" (Saito 2009: 8).

<sup>9</sup> For example, Imai criticizes Dewey's concept of direct experience as defenseless against the politics of aesthetics through the use of media that "penetrates the phase of pre-activity of self and incorporates certain tendencies of perception" (Imai 2015: 34).

[W]e have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience from other experiences. [...] Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. (AE: 42; emphasis in original)

“An experience” has a specific “quality” and is fulfilled through the interaction between an organism and its environment. In other words, “an experience” is a united experience. In addition, a unique quality of “an experience” is that it is retrospective: “we say in recalling them, “that *was* an experience”” (AE: 43; emphasis in original).

Dewey says that esthetic experience is based on “an experience,” but not all experiences are esthetic.<sup>10</sup> We have an esthetic experience when life becomes conscious of and realizes the “rhythm of loss of integration with environment and recovery of union” (AE: 20–21).<sup>11</sup> Dewey says that this rhythm is experienced as a process of interaction. Therefore, Dewey claims that the artist does not “shun moments of resistance and tension” (AE: 21).

There are three points that show the character of immediacy in esthetic experience. (1) Esthetic experience arises from the activities of a living organism. (2) Esthetic experience has its root in “an experience,” with the specific “quality” that we say of it retrospectively that “it was an experience.” (3) Most importantly, for “an experience” to become an esthetic experience, there must be a “(re)union” within the interaction, in other words, within the rhythm of conflict and integration.

## 2-2. The Mediacy of Esthetic Experience

It is clear that esthetic experience is based on immediate experience. However, when esthetic experience acquires a “form” as a work of art, therein lies the mediacy of esthetic experience.<sup>12</sup> In what follows, we will examine the aspect of the mediacy of esthetic

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in a study that illustrates the importance of discussing the differences between “an experience” and “esthetic experience,” M. Hayakawa writes, “an experience is just the primitive form of the esthetic experience, and it can only be called an esthetic experience when it has become more sophisticated and fulfilling through the works of discrimination and reflection” (Hayakawa 1998: 99).

<sup>11</sup> Dewey’s concept of direct experience was affected by W. James’ concept of “pure experience.” This is clear in *Experience and Nature*. Dewey says, “primary experience” (pure experience) is given as “vital modes” and “given in an uncontrolled form” (EN: 21; 24). Dewey considers “secondary experience” to be as important as primary experience. Dewey says that the objects one attains in secondary experience as reflective experience “*explain* the primary objects, they enable us to grasp them with *understanding*” (EN: 16; emphasis in original).

<sup>12</sup> Dewey criticizes the dichotomy of form and matter and says that “form is always integral with matter” in works

experience by describing the making and appreciation of works of art.

### (1) Making

According to Dewey, an “impulsion” of an organism makes a work of art along with rhythmic interaction with a medium (AE: 66). Dewey says that “the expression of the self in and through a medium, constituting the work of art, is *itself* a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions” (AE: 71; emphasis in original).

Therefore, the activity of expression is not “the direct and immaculate issue” of the natural impulse and tendencies of the artist (AE: 70), but is the creation of works of art that generate the form in and through the medium.

In addition, “[t]he quality of a work of art is *sui generis*” because the interaction of the artist and the environment occurs at each point in time (AE: 113; emphasis in original). The work of art expresses esthetic experience as “an idiom that conveys what cannot be said in another language and yet remain the same” (AE: 111). Dewey also says that “the self assimilates that material in a distinctive way to reissue it into the public world in a form that builds a new object” (AE: 112). Therefore, in making works of art, esthetic experience, which implies a direct and nonlinguistic experience in and through a material, becomes public by acquiring a distinctive form.

For Dewey, creating a new narrative from esthetic experience and throwing it back into a public sphere is as vital as the beginning of esthetic experience, in which a “direct and unreasonable impression comes first” (AE: 150).

### (2) Appreciation

In the appreciation of works of art, esthetic experience arises within the interaction between viewers and works of art. Dewey says that “[t]he esthetic or undergoing phase of experience is receptive” and “involves surrender” (AE: 59). However, “[w]hen we are only passive to a scene, it overwhelms us and, for lack of answering activity, we do not perceive that which bears us down. We must summon energy and pitch it at a responsive key in order to *take in*” (AE: 60; emphasis in original). In this way, perception and appreciation are trying to respond to works of art while being overwhelmed by them. In other words, perception and appreciation are the activities in which the passive and active are united. At that time, the past experience of viewers becomes their reference point.

According to Dewey, “in order to perceive esthetically, he [the perceiver] must

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of art (AE: 315).

remark his past experience so that he can enter integrally into a new pattern" (AE: 143). Viewers' perception and appreciation recreate past experiences by working on objects that overwhelm them (AE: 60). Then, when a viewer "exercises his individuality, a way of seeing and feeling that in its interaction with old material creates something new, something previously not existing in experience" (AE: 113).

In appreciation, the creation of new experience is done through "criticism," which analyzes and defines the direct impression given by works of art (AE: 308–309). In other words: "Criticism is a search for the properties of the object that may justify the direct reaction" (AE: 312). Analysis and definition in criticism neither describe the feeling itself nor explain or interpret works of art "on the basis of factors that are incidentally inside them" (AE: 319). They mean to create a new experience and "[t]he critic, because of the element of venture, reveals himself in his criticisms" (AE: 312).

To summarize the discussion of the making and appreciation of works of art, both are based on esthetic experience as a direct experience. However, there is an aspect of mediacy between the making and appreciation of works of art. This means that a work of art is a re-creation of the experiences of the artist that in turn recreate the viewers' past experiences.

### **2-3. The Leap of Creative Intelligence**

It is imagination that plays an essential role in the recreation of experience. Dewey says the "first intimations of wide and large redirections of desire and purpose are of necessity imaginative" (AE: 352) and "[o]nly imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual" (AE: 348). Imagination is the ability to share experiences "far beyond the scope of the direct personal relationship" and is a power of awareness to create a culture that previously did not exist (AE: 350). Imagination "involves a dissolution of old objects and a forming of new ones in a medium" (EN: 171).

Also, Dewey calls the intelligence associated with imagination "creative intelligence" (AE: 351). Dewey defines the work of intelligence in esthetic experience as the "perception of [the] relationship between what is done and what is undergone" (AE: 52). In the production of art, intelligence operates between what has already been produced and what is to come next. In appreciation, intelligence operates between accepting the work of art and criticizing it. Therefore, creative intelligence combines what is done and what is undergone and brings out new possibilities from this combination. N. Saito defines creative intelligence as "a mode of thinking while taking on the 'accidental'

in the unpredictability and uncertainty of life and speculating it forward” (Saito 2015: 56). According to Saito, such intelligence depicts the “movement of the leap” within uncertainty (Saito 2015: 65).

Dewey emphasizes that the first stage of esthetic experience is a feeling of “seizure” (AE: 150), an impact beyond understanding and language. “Not only, however, is it impossible to prolong this stage of esthetic experience indefinitely, but it is not desirable to do so” (AE: 150). The experience of “seizure” will have meaning for later critical responses.

The feeling of “seizure” is a momentary feeling. Responding to it and recreating such experiences is reflective and requires time. Within that time, the immediacy of esthetic experience moves to mediacy. This duality is neither disconnected nor concentrically connected. Both are connected by a “leap” to the creation of unpredictable new possibilities. That leap in both the making and appreciation of art depicts a different movement than putting direct experience in an absolute and central position.

### **3. Esthetic Experience as Resistance to Totalitarianism**

#### **3-1. Totalitarianism and Art**

How does this leap resist totalitarianism? To begin to answer this question we must locate the place of art in Dewey’s argument against totalitarianism.

In *Freedom and Culture*, written in the same year as the conclusion of the German–Soviet Nonaggression Pact (1939), Dewey wrote that “works of art [...] are the most compelling of the means of communication by which emotions are stirred and opinions formed” (FC: 70). However, a totalitarian regime controls the emotions of the masses through works of art: “A totalitarian regime is committed to controlling the whole life of all its subjects by its hold over feelings, desires, emotions, as well as opinions” (FC: 70).

Dewey argues that totalitarianism results from a simplification of theory, which it states “in absolute terms” (FC: 116). According to Dewey, there are two types of such theories of absolutism. One is German idealism, especially the Hegelian simplification, which was used to support the Nazis. The core of this thought is “found in its attempt to find a ‘higher’ justification for individuality and freedom where the latter is merged with law and authority, which *must* be rational since they are manifestations of Absolute Reason” (FC: 149; emphasis in original). The second is the Marxist simplification. Dewey writes that Marxist simplification “combines the romantic idealism of earlier social revolutionaries with what purports to be a thoroughly ‘objective’ scientific analysis,

expressed in formulation of a single all-embracing 'law,' a law which moreover sets forth the proper method to be followed by the oppressed economic class in achieving its final liberation" (FC: 119).

These two absolutized rational theories control human life including desires and emotions. Against them, Dewey argues that social events occur as the result of interaction between individuals (who have desires and emotions) and external environmental factors. He claims that within desire and emotion are "non-rational and anti-rational forces" (FC: 162). For Dewey, art's key role in the resistance to totalitarianism is to create new things while accepting the non-rational and anti-rational aspects of human beings.

In addition, the problem of totalitarianism cannot be taken as the problem of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union alone. Dewey found the risk of totalitarianism sprouting in the division of individual activities within laissez-faire liberalism of the United States at that time. The problem derives from the loss of the emergence of individuality that occurs through interaction with one's environment, for which "[q]uantification, mechanization and standardization" were chiefly to blame [ION: 52].

Such problems cannot be overcome either by the denial of economic activity (national socialism) or by the control of people's economic activity through national intervention (national capitalism).<sup>13</sup> Instead, economic activity must be recaptured as an opportunity that enables the individualization of individuals and an opportunity for "the development of a shared culture" (ION: 57). To do that, it is necessary to liberate collective intelligence through "the rise of the scientific method and technology" (LSA: 53). Dewey envisions democratic socialism as going beyond the division of individuals brought about by economic individualism and seeks to foster individuality through the creation of culture, rather than a totalization of America. The breakthrough that democratic socialism might accomplish is founded on Dewey's concept of communication, which makes up the core of his thought.

### 3-2. Communication Mediated by Art

Communication goes beyond economic lubricants. According to Dewey, nonverbal expressions such as "[g]estures and cries are not primarily expressive or communicative" (EN: 138–139). Moreover, "[l]anguage, signs and significance" as communicative things

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<sup>13</sup> Dewey criticized the New Deal. It represented an intensive model of government intervention in the market. Thus, it seems, at first glance, to be in line with Dewey's argument. However, Dewey points out that the New Deal is a reaction to the Great Depression and evidence of "the growth of exacerbated Nationalism" (EBNS: 316).

“come into existence not only by intent and mind but by overflow, by-products, in gestures and sound” (EN: 139). Where do such “by-products” exist? Dewey states:

So too man’s posture and facial changes may indicate to other things which the man himself would like to conceal, so that he “gives himself away.” “Expression,” or signs, communication of meaning, exists in such cases for the observer, not for the agent. (EN: 140)

In nonverbal expressions, the observer brings meaning to communication.<sup>14</sup> According to Dewey, verbal communication is also inherently impossible unless it is shared by the recipients.

For Dewey, nonverbal communication is the work of creating an expression, which can only be transmitted and accepted as a nonverbal sensation, into a unique meaning. All communication is inherently creative and indeterminate, verbal and nonverbal communication alike. Therefore, no prior meaning has been established for communication. Instead, that uncertainty becomes a space for creation.

Especially in artistic expression, “[i]f the artist desires to communicate a special message, he thereby tends to limit the expressiveness of his work to others” (AE: 110). Rather, the “unexpected turn, something which the artist himself does not definitely foresee, is a condition of the felicitous quality of a work of art” (AE: 144).

Artworks are offered to the recipient as open media and create unexpected meaning. It is communication mediated by art for which Dewey argues.

### **3-3. Esthetic Experience Resisting Totalitarianism**

Works of art as representations of the artist’s experience recreate viewers’ past experience, and they demonstrate their uniqueness through the mutual relationship between the artist and the viewer. This is what communication through art means. In addition, both production and appreciation include the chance of the leap resulting from creative intelligence.

This movement of the leap in the mutual relationship between making and appreciation bring about the reorganization of the activities of “quantification,

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<sup>14</sup> In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey discusses “meaning” as an overlap of “sense” and “signification” (EN: 200). Sense is grasping a direct and sensory quality and “signification” is indicative meaning. This study cannot discuss the multiplicity of Dewey’s semantics in detail, but it should be pointed out that “meaning” implies both immediacy and mediacy, an important issue in his theory of esthetic experience as well.

mechanization and standardization” and repel the absolutization of theory. Here, the contrast between art used to strengthen and maintain the existing political system and social order and art used to reorganize them is clear.

However, such a restructuring process does not rebuild the political system and social order from the ground up. For Dewey, seeking a fundamental reconstruction of the social order by means of a simplified theory means abandoning intelligence for “credulous faith in the Hegelian dialectic” (LSA: 60). The outcome of this would be the violent creation of different governing structures. On the other hand, Dewey's democratic socialism, conceived from a perspective critical of totalitarianism, promotes a continuous transformation of the political system and social order through the movement of the leap. The driving forces for such transformations are communication via art and creative intelligence, which suggests possibilities that previously did not exist. “The future is always unpredictable” (ION: 122).

However, Dewey also said “that art itself is not secure under modern conditions” (AE: 347). To be able to secure the creative potential of art, “the material for art should be drawn from all sources whatever and that the products of art should be accessible to all” (AE: 347). Art is not something that is praised as being placed on a “far-off pedestal,” such as is found in museums (AE: 12).

Dewey insisted that works of art are created out of “ordinary experience” (AE: 17). According to him, the vital activity at the root of the aesthetic quality is ordinary experience. However, as mentioned before, there is also the risk that everyday life may be involved in totalitarianism through the dimensions of sense, desire, and emotion. The theory of esthetic experience embraces life's continuous transformation toward an unknown future, hoping to foster opportunities for the leap in the interaction between life and the environment, with the necessity of starting with the vitality.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

This study examined the theory of esthetic experience as a response to totalitarianism in Dewey's works in the 1930s. First, this study confirmed that, in the 1930s, Dewey conceived of his notion of “democratic socialism” and signaled the

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<sup>15</sup> This argues against R. Rorty's (1989) concept of the “liberal ironist” who distinguishes between the public and the private. R. Shusterman (1997) advocates a “somaesthetics” based on Dewey's theory of esthetic experience. According to Shusterman, awareness of the physical senses and their control could be cultural-critical because it results in both an adaptation to civilization and awareness of how power works on the body. Shusterman criticizes Rorty for ignoring Dewey's concept of experience, including esthetic experience. The issue with Rorty is that he neglects the political potentiality of action in a nonpolitical sphere.

importance of culture in response to the circumstances of the time, including totalitarianism. Also, it was pointed out that, although Dewey emphasized art as a part of culture, art included a risk of working in harmony with totalitarianism.

Second, this study described how the theory of esthetic experience, while it was based on immediate experience, included dimensions of both the mediacy and immediacy of art by focusing on the making and appreciation of works of art. In addition, between both dimensions of esthetic experience, there is the chance for the leap, a chance for the creation of new possibilities. To show that, this study focused on the concept of creative intelligence included works of the imagination. Therefore, the theory of esthetic experience and communication does not treat immediate experience as absolute and central.

Finally, this study clarified that, according to Dewey, the leap of esthetic experience, which is based on vitality can be interpreted as a counter to totalitarianism's encompassing of life, including day-to-day life. The major focus of this study was the importance of communication brought about by the mediacy of esthetic experience.

How does Dewey's theory of esthetic experience connect with his educational thought? In other words, how does it connect to the issue of "aesthetics and education?" Focusing on the concept of creative intelligence, the educational significance of the esthetic experience is its capacity to create something that did not exist previously: "art becomes the incomparable organ of instruction, but the way is so remote from that usually associated with the idea of education, it is a way that lifts art so far above what we are accustomed to think of as instruction, that we are repelled by any suggestion of teaching and learning in connection with art" (AE: 349). This is resonant with two concepts discussed in *Experience and Education* (1938): interaction and continuity.

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey shows the importance of interaction between individuals and their environment and the continuous recreation of community through education by discussing "individual freedom and social control," the overlapping themes of Dewey's political thought (EE: 31). Based on the argument of this study, this interaction creates new possibilities, and the continuous recreation is uncertain because nobody can tell the future perfectly. Dewey desired to protect the opportunity for social reform by designing schools that could produce this kind of interaction and continuity.

The theory of esthetic experience is significant because it also aids in a reconsideration of Dewey's purposive rationality. However, the non-rationality of life in opposition to the rationality of the absolutization of theory can easily lead to

totalitarianism, as long as it is a mere liberation of life.<sup>16</sup> Against that, Dewey provided conceptual tools for opposing totalitarianism in his discussion of creative intelligence, which would find the possibility that previously not exist in non-rationality. Therefore, the key to integrating his educational thought and his resistance to totalitarianism through aesthetics lies in the concept of creative intelligence.

What follows from this is to consider the leap, through creative intelligence, as a node of the non-rational movement and as the intelligence of life. It will be necessary to consider this in light of recent attention to Dewey's concept of "life."<sup>17</sup>

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### Abbreviations

EN = *Experience and Nature* (1925 LW1)

ISR= *Impressions of Soviet Russia* (1928 LW3)

ION= *Individualism, Old and New* (1930 LW5)

AE = *Art as Experience* (1934 LW10)

LSA= *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935 LW11)

EE= *Experience and Education* (1938 LW13)

FC= *Freedom and Culture* (1939 LW13)

EBNS= "The Economic Basis of the New Society" (1939 LW13)

CD= "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us" (1939 LW14)

### Other Works

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<sup>16</sup> For example, S. Suzuki says, "thought based on the universalism of 'life,' for the most part, has a totalitarian tendency and is easily connected to totalitarianism, which sacrifices individuals for the whole" (Suzuki 1995: 13).

<sup>17</sup> Recently, a study of Dewey's conceptualizations of life and the vital is being conducted, focusing on *Taisho-Shin-Kyoiku* (New Education in the Taisho Era). M. Hashimoto indicates the "possibility of the historical linkage between Dewey's concept of 'life' and Bergson's concept of '*la vie*'" (Hashimoto 2013: 221). Also, S. Tanaka argues that "Dewey's thinking on education is based on the concept of 'nature' that tacitly leads to Christian 'Agape,'" which is inseparable from Dewey's concept of "life" (Tanaka 2015: 36–37). Both of their suggestions reinterpret Dewey's thought from the viewpoint of vitalism.

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# **The Concept of “Subject”**

## **in the Philosophy of the Kyoto School:**

### **Focusing on the Thinking of Motomori Kimura and Masaaki Kosaka**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the meaning of the word “subject” in the philosophy of the Kyoto School in order to reconsider ideas about developing human beings. After the acceptance of so-called postmodern thinking, we now face the difficulty of describing the universal aim of educating children. Recent studies in pedagogy have tried to overcome the concept of an autonomous or independent subject, by accepting Western thinking about “transcendence” and “otherness.” Against the backdrop of this intellectual situation, this paper focuses on the thinking of three philosophers from the Kyoto School: Kitaro Nishida, Motomori Kimura and Masaaki Kosaka, who discussed a lot of issues about subjects and subjectivity in the 1930–40s. In today’s studies on pedagogy, while the thinking of Kimura has contributed various potential ideas for overcoming modern concepts, the thinking of Kosaka has been criticized for a long time because he acted as a chief editor of the report entitled “the Expected Image of the Japanese.” Although they both discussed how education could cultivate subjectivity, few studies have focused on this aspect. We examine the intellectual correlation between them, focusing on their thoughts about cultivating subjects, in their words, the “world’s historical subject.” By examining this concept, this article tries to suggest ways of considering the “subject” not as the absolute aim of forming independent humanity, but as a particular way of existing with history and the universe.

#### **Keywords**

Kyoto School, Subject, World History, Cultivating Individuals, “the Expected Image of the Japanese”

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The purpose of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to reconsider the concept of a “subject” in the philosophy of education. Some might say this has already been done, because in recent years the modern concept of subject has come under radical criticism. Various studies in the field of education have tried to overcome this, as well as the conventional frameworks of “education” or “human development,” especially following postmodern trends of thinking, and we are now trying to create other ways of talking about education and human development (see Tanaka, 1999; Katayama 2009; Yano 2009). These studies have tried to re-examine the goals of education by discussing them without looking at modern concepts like development or autonomy, and instead focusing on new ideas, for example, “otherness” and “transcendence.” As Itani (2010) mentioned, we have lost a sense of the strict aim of educating human beings, and we now feel the impossibility of making universal images of what a “subject” is.

But on the other hand, as stated in the new “Basic Act on Education,” which was amended in 2006, education still has the aim of “cultivating people who make up a nation and society.” Furthermore, the national curriculum guidelines or textbooks for education always insist on the importance of subjectivity and the identity of children. In spite of the postmodern thinking regarding pedagogical philosophy, people still commonly use the word “subject.” It is likely that talking about education as cultivating subjective individuals is still binding us together.

Against the backdrop of this intellectual premise, this paper attempts to reconsider the idea of the subject through the philosophy of the Kyoto School. After accepting postmodern thinking, we need to face the difficulty of describing the universal ideal of human beings, and how to deliver the aim of educating children. As mentioned above, recent studies have tried to overcome the concept of autonomous subjects or the idea of human development, through Western thinking regarding otherness and transcendence. However, if you have paid attention to past discussions regarding the subject in Japanese philosophy, you might know that we already have various ideas regarding that concept which we use to overcome traditional ideas of education. In particular, Japanese philosophers from the Kyoto School have discussed many issues about the subject since the 1930-1940s. Therefore, this article aims to figure out the meaning of the word “subject” in the philosophy of the Kyoto School, and also to describe thinking as regards education in terms of that concept.

## 1.2. The educational philosophy of the Kyoto School

In the post-war educational setting, the thinking of the Kyoto School has been understood in connection with the famous report called “the Expected Image of the Japanese,” delivered by the Ministry of Education in 1966, because a central member of the school, Masaaki Kosaka, acted as chief editor of this report (Yamada, 2015). As the document proposed an ideal image of man, once the plans were released, a lot of teachers and educators strongly criticized it. People were concerned about the huge political pressures from the government of the time.

It should be considered more carefully whether this document intended to impose strict ideals on people or not. However, it is clear that the report tried to explore certain perspectives of human beings as independent subjects. The document mentioned that education entails activities that cultivate human beings to become “subjects,” and the Ministry of Education also said that “the Expected Image of the Japanese” tried to describe what an independent subject meant in Japan at that time (Monbusho, 1966). As mentioned above, we should focus on the fact that Kosaka, the chief editor of the document, had exactly the same concerns about forming subjective individuals. As referred to in recent studies, Kosaka cared about these issues of “subject” from the 1930s, then again after World War II, his philosophical interest expanded into ways of cultivating people who can develop themselves and wider society as well (Yamada, 2014).<sup>1</sup>

The observation that Kosaka made, arguing that education used the concept of subject, is now widely accepted. In his articles, the word “subject” does not refer to an independent individual, and moreover, although he certainly wrote a document, “the Expected Image of the Japanese,” he did not believe that he could describe the absolute image of human beings. He always considered a subject to be a “historical subject” meaning people who can cultivate themselves continuously in relation to history, through dialectic discussion of the world and history (see Yamada, 2014; Aoyagi, 2016). On the basis of his theory about historical subjects, this paper additionally focuses on the intellectual relationship between Kosaka and two other philosophers belonging to the Kyoto School, Kitaro Nishida and Motomori Kimura.

Contrary to criticism regarding Kosaka’s thinking, recent studies have actively evaluated the philosophy of Nishida and Kimura, focusing on its potential to overcome

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<sup>1</sup> In the first year of being in the faculty of education at Kyoto University, Kosaka had a lecture entitled “The ideal image of human beings for the Japanese of modern times.” (Kyoto University, 1957)

traditional ideas about educating children. Yano (2013), for example, proposed a substantial connection between the anthropology of the Kyoto School around the 1920s and the early pedagogical situation in Japan. In addition, Tanaka (2012) suggested the term, the “pedagogy of the Kyoto School” in order to promote further research about their theory of education. According to Tanaka, “the pedagogy of the Kyoto School” has argued about education in relation to the original concern regarding ideas of entirety and pure experience. And moreover, Onishi (1999) regards Kimura’s thinking regarding education as worth re-discovering. He claims that the philosophy of Kimura is filled with potential and originality that we should take in, and it can offer a significant alternative to the post-war theory of education.

However, we should remember the fact that Kosaka has also been mentioned as an important member of the Kyoto School, and this fact is now widely accepted. Why is the thinking of Kimura now evaluated for its potential, while the thinking of Kosaka has been criticized for a long time? The serious problem is that few studies referring to the educational thinking of the Kyoto School examine any intellectual connections between the thinking of Kosaka and that of Nishida and Kimura, which are given opposite evaluations by today’s pedagogical standards. How can we evaluate the thinking of the Kyoto School, when we regard these three philosophers as having the same philosophical ideas of “the Kyoto School?” Therefore, in the following section, we examine the intellectual correlation between them, focusing on their thoughts regarding cultivating the “subject” and “subjectivity.”

In order to accomplish these issues, this paper investigates the meanings of “subject” in the thinking of Nishida and Kimura in relation to Kosaka’s discussion which I have already treated in other articles (Yamada, 2014; Yamada, 2015). Second, we focus on the idea of “history” in Kimura and Kosaka’s writings, because it is necessary to grasp their thinking regarding “subject.” By these examinations, this study tries to suggest ways of considering “subject” in educational theory, not as an absolute aim of forming independent human beings, but as the particular ideals of each individual who maintains inter-determination with the historical situations in which they live.

## **2. What does the “subject” mean in the philosophy of the Kyoto School?**

### **2.1. The meaning of the individual in Nishida’s thinking**

In this section, we investigate Nishida’s thinking regarding individuals, with reference to his two articles “*Watashi no zettaimu no jikaku-teki gentei to iumono*”

[*Theory about Self-consciousness and Nothingness*] (1931), and “*Watashi to sekai*” [*The Self and The World*] (1933). First, we should focus on the fact that Nishida denies a way of thinking about the self through an intellectual point of view.<sup>2</sup> According to his theory, the self is never formed by an intellectual process such as cognition through rationality or morality, rather it will just happen through an awareness and consciousness of a world of nothingness surrounding all individuals.

In the article “*Theory about Self-consciousness and Nothingness*,” Nishida says that when people truly have a consciousness, they are just seeing their own “self,” which means they are just grasping things that don’t exist (Nishida, 1931). Self-consciousness means that the universe which transcends the individual realizes the universe itself, in his words, it means that “the place of the universe directly gives determinations to the place itself.”

“Our consciousness is nothing but the consciousness of the fact that people stand in a particular place of their own. If people have consciousness through their ego, it cannot be the true meaning of consciousness. When you are released by your intellectual self, and you determine yourself by just feeling the place and the universe without any intention, you, for the first time, can genuinely reach self-consciousness” (Nishida, 1931, p.117).

It is crucially important that consciousness is not only the act of individuals, but also the act of the universe, or “the place” itself, in Nishida’s thinking. Therefore, we should now focus on his concept of place and understand when individuals become conscious of themselves. According to him, the bottom of the universe must be entire “nothingness,” and moreover, individual and universal consciousness exists in this nothingness simultaneously, during the process of self-consciousness.

In his philosophical essay, “*The Self and The World*,” Nishida also mentions about individuals not having an independent existence, but they are inter-acting continuously with other existences (Nishida, 1933a). He considers that individuals can reach self-consciousness, and determine themselves as “I,” only by realizing the nothingness of the universe and also recognizing that in themselves. He says:

“When we think about such interaction between individuals, it should not be enough to assume just the interaction of existence itself. We must reach the concept

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<sup>2</sup> To help understand Nishida’s philosophy, I mainly refer to Kosaka (1971), Koyama (2007) and Itabashi (2008).

of the place which transcends our experiences and determines our whole existence and the world itself. I notice the way of such interactions, because I believe in the importance of determination carried out in the place itself. . . . We consider our world as a determination itself, conducted by beings with each other, and only through these innumerable determinations, the world continues to determine itself infinitely” (Nishida, 1933a, p.109).

Through this view of inter-determination between the individual and the universe, we can now understand his view on education. In his thinking, an individual cannot exist as an individual without having an actual connection to the universe. He calls it “*basho*, the place,” which covers the whole of existence in the world, and human beings can be recognized as individuals only in relation to the place and the self simultaneously.

Therefore, when he talks about education as cultivating human beings, he does not assume any absolute ideals to which every human being has to aspire to. Although one cannot deny the fact that education is one of the main activities for bringing up children to become self-determining individuals, in his thinking, there is no individual existence without a connection to the social and historical world in which they live. Because we all are standing in “the place” of the universe, education should form an essential way to not only develop human beings but also the world itself.

In his article “*Kyoiku-gaku ni tsuite*” [*About Education*] (1933), Nishida describes the idea of forming human beings as a process of circulation which the social and historical world determines dialectically. Therefore, according to him, the practice of forming people will only be accomplished when people see themselves in relation to the universe, and participate in the act of determining the world (Nishida, 1933b). As mentioned above, an individual can never be considered without this inter-determination of the world, in his thinking. Because each individual existing in this historical world is just a factor of that, education is the means to make people realize the fact that they are participating in the formation of the universe itself. From such a point of view, Nishida suggests the particular mission of the educator as not only helping in the formation of human individuals, but also supporting the formation of the universe itself (Nishida, 1933b, p.92).

Based on his educational thinking about the individual and the universe, in the following section, we examine the educational thinking of Kimura, focusing on his famous theory of “*hyogen-ai*” meaning “the love of expression.”

## 2.2. The idea of the “expressive subject” in Kimura’s thinking

Various studies regarding his work “*Hyogen-ai*” [*The Love of Expression*], published in 1939, commonly insist that Kimura discusses an interactive relationship between the inner and the outer, or subjective individuals and the world around them (see Onishi, 2012). In Kimura’s thinking, the world is consistently structured by the interaction between the subject having an idea and what is produced by the representation of that idea. He says that the significance of a subject is to determine the outside world expressively, by hearing the voice of the universe and also by giving responses to the universe (Kimura, 1939, p.24). As well as Kosaka’s discussion of “*gyaku-gentei*,” meaning inter-determination, Kimura also considers the interaction between the representation of individuals and the actual world they live in.

However, on the other hand, this representation of the subject is considered not just as an interaction with one’s surroundings, but also as a determination of the greater universe which transcends both the subject and the world, in Kimura’s discussion. He says:

“The idea of expression seen through personal experience, at the time one is looking inward, is not organized by the mere self-determination of that person, but springs from an abyss of the expressive universe itself, which transcends every existence in the world and also envelops all subjects and objects that dialectically conflict in this world” (Kimura, 1939, p.31).

In his thinking, the inter-determination between the subject and the object plays a substantial part in the formation of the world, in addition to the thinking of Kosaka. However, in addition, Kimura assumes a greater expression of the universe which relates to the real world we live in. That is to say, he describes the world in the following two phases: one is the historical world formed by the inter-action of both living existence and nature, and the other is the expressive universe springing from the more dialectical relation between the historical world and the great will of lives that embrace the whole of the historical world itself.

In his consideration described above, we can find a strong similarity with Nishida’s thinking regarding the view of the dialectical expression of the universe itself. According to Kimura, the entire existence in this world is consistently expressing the great will of the universe; he calls it “the idea of the expressive world,” and by this act of expression, we, the existence, can participate in the great movement of this natural and historical

world’s inter-determination (Kimura, 1939, p.31). He says “human individuals are, therefore, the beings that have the great mission of forming the expressive universe itself consciously, even though they exist inside the universe which continues its self-expression eternally” (Kimura, 1939, p.57).

From the above discussion, we can now suggest the intellectual peculiarity that Kimura shared with the Kyoto School, especially Nishida and Kosaka. The point is that Kimura considered human beings as inter-determining subjects who express their inward desire constantly against their surroundings, i.e. the natural and historical world. This is similar to Kosaka’s thinking about the substratum of the history and the world (see Yamada, 2014). Furthermore, this inter-contradiction of subject and environment is composed by an expression of the greater universe; this is clearly analogous with the thinking of Nishida, discussed in the previous section. That is to say, in Kimura’s thinking, whereas an individual always has to be the subject of expression which continues to present their innate will against the objective world, that expression of the subject is, in fact, a self-determination of the great universe, which transcends all existences. It transcends the whole of our historical world itself.

Therefore, in his thinking on education, even though Kimura defines the act of education as cultivating human beings as subjective individuals, it is clear that he never assumes any autonomous subjects which seem to be completely independent of their surroundings, just like the philosophy of Nishida (Kimura, 1941). Because he describes the subject as simply “the place for self-determination of the expressive universe,” individuals should be merely elements of the social and historical world which is composed dialectically by the more dynamic universe.

Kimura says that education must be the act of the subject becoming a subjective individual in the concrete historical world, and he also strongly insists that developing subjectivity should make people realize that the voice of the universe transcends us, and understand the ideas coming from the contradictory world and its history (Kimura, 1941, p.45). That is why Kimura repeatedly says that education is the activity of contributing to the self-determination of the universe, by contributing to the cultivation of human beings as nothing but the subject of the universe’s expression (Kimura, 1941, p.51).

### **2.3. The concept of “subject” in the educational thinking of the Kyoto School**

It has been shown how Nishida and Kimura argued about the point of education, in comparing them with the thinking of Kosaka. We can suggest some remarkable points in their thinking as follows:

First is the fact that they consider the subject as a being, expressing itself all the time against the universe, not as a being who is closed away or fastened by any absolute means. In their thinking, a being can exist as a subject only by hearing the voice of the universe and responding to it, and this interaction between subject and universe determines both the subject and the universe simultaneously. The second point is that they talk about the subject in terms of individuals who are not totally independent from the context of the world and history. Beings always exist in the greater universe of expression, and the relationship with the universe is essential and fundamental for them to be a subject. And the last point we can suggest is that, in their thinking regarding education, they discussed the act of education as not merely bringing up each child or person to be an independent individual, but rather as cultivating a human being that is able to act as one of the elements of the formation of the great universe itself. For them, education is, in particular, a way of forming the universe and history through the effort to form people as subjects who can develop and organize world history.

Now we can give some answers to the first question we proposed at the beginning of this study. That is to say, the concept of “subject” suggested by the Kyoto School is nothing but the individual having a concrete relationship with the universe which envelops the whole of existence in the historical world transcendentally. Therefore, when they describe education as the act of forming a subject, the subject does not mean someone completely independent or autonomous, and they never assume anything like “absolute ideals” of human beings. The continuous inter-determination between subject and universe was the most substantial part of their philosophy. Thus, in order to understand their thinking in more detail, we should examine the idea of the universe which expresses itself as a historical world.

As mentioned repeatedly, in their thinking, the inter-determinative universe can appear as nothing but the historical world, so the concept of the “world’s history” has crucial meanings for their consideration of “subject.” Therefore, in the following section, we investigate the meaning of world history, which the Kyoto School, as Kimura and Kosaka argued about frequently in the 1930s and developed during the war as the theory of so-called “*Sekai-shi no tetsu-gaku*, [*the philosophy of world history*].” What does world history mean in their philosophical thinking, and why do they have to focus on it when developing their thinking regarding “subject?”

### **3. The concept of history in the thinking of the Kyoto School**

#### **3.1. What does “world history” mean in Kosaka’s thinking?**

Because of his consideration of world history during the war, Kosaka seemed to stand at the right side of the Kyoto School for a long time after the war, as mentioned at the beginning of this study. The most substantial work which gave such an evaluation was the article summarizing symposiums "*Sekaishi-teki tachiba to nihon*" [*The World's Historical Position and Japan*], which appeared in a popular magazine "*Chuo Ko-ron*" from 1942 to 1943 (published as Kosaka, 1943). This series of symposiums was held among four philosophers, Iwao Koyama, Keiji Nishitani, Shigetaka Suzuki and Kosaka, who were all colleagues at Kyoto Imperial University. The aim of this meeting, Kosaka said, was to search for the direction that Japan should take in the context of the world war, and suggest how Japan could overcome the situation (Kosaka, 1943).

However, in order to understand his concept of subjectivity, we examine the topic, not using this symposium, but the article "*Sekaishi-kan no ruikai*" [*The Type of the World's Historical Viewpoint*], written by Kosaka alone and published in 1944, because the discussion regarding the symposium was too affected by the reality of Japan's situation in order to fully understand his philosophical thinking on that concept (see Sugimoto, 2008). Then, let us investigate his philosophical considerations regarding world history.

In the article, he conclusively defines it as "the history of human beings, struggling and trying to solve various problems of the world," or "the continuous effort of doing it." He begins his discussion by criticizing the traditional understanding of world history, which does not give enough significance to individuals (Kosaka, 1944, p.94). According to him, the traditional thinking of historical philosophy has regarded human individuals not as truly independent subjects of the world, but as beings bound tightly to land and tradition, or simply beings handled by the absolute will of something, as Hegel proposed. Against this tendency, he proposed a different view of historical individuals by emphasizing the crucial meaning of human effort in resolving the world's historical problems. And moreover, we should focus on his emphasis of the significance of human irrationality in forming the rationality of world history.

According to Kosaka, a human being is not just an irrational existence, but an individual who can rationalize himself or herself consistently by placing themselves in particular relationships with the world and history. He says: "It is not rationality formed by subsuming the individual into the rationalized universe, but the historical symbol of rationality formed by subsuming the universe into individuality and specificity, that is to say, the rationality formed through the individual's recognition and acceptance for the particularity of the universe, on the contrary" (Kosaka, 1944, pp.94-95). Human beings

should realize their subjectivity which makes them rational and practical by placing them in the objective world and history, and on the other hand, this realization of being a subject also can rationalize the universe itself and determine it as a particular historical universe. He also says “the universe can determine itself as a universe only through the act of being a subject, and the subject can realize itself as a subject only through deconstructing and constructing the universe historically” (Kosaka, 1944, pp.96-97).

“Without continuous construction, the historical world has to be completely frozen, and on the other hand, the subjective individual has no choice but to get lost in its meaning and disappear into the great universe. Only historical transcendence can truly develop the world, and in fact, there is some kind of dynamism and great energy in the historical universe for morality and rationality. Therefore, the history of the world can remain a particular symbol of the destiny of human existence, and it may hold a particular symbolism regarding the fate of human individuals.” (Kosaka, 1944, p.97)

From the above discussion, we can now understand the meaning of world history in terms of Kosaka’s philosophical thinking. As seen in the philosophy of Nishida, Kosaka maintained the continuous inter-determination between the individual and the universe as well, and he said that world history is continuously formulated through this inter-determination. This means that the history Kosaka considered does not seem to imply any power of something resembling absolute oneness. The fundamental root of world history has to be the continuous movement of the world itself, and everlasting action and practice done by both subject and object simultaneously. In his thinking, it might be considered as absolute nothingness, which is the concept the Kyoto School commonly proposed and developed. Only particular acts of each individual can transform the world and its history, as Kosaka maintained.

### 3.2. What does “world history” mean in Kimura’s thinking?

In previous studies, little is known about the fact that Kimura has treated the issue of world history, especially during the war.<sup>3</sup> Compared to the case of Kosaka, it is certainly true that Kimura does not seem to approve of any direct action in terms of Japan pushing forward with the world war, but in fact, in one of his remarkable works, “*Kokka*

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<sup>3</sup> Many studies admit the fact, but they seem to avoid discussing it in detail (e. g. Murase, 2001).

*ni okeru bunka to kyoiku*" [*Culture and Education of the Nation*]," published in 1947, we can for sure find his serious effort to establish a theory named the "love of expression for world history," as well as the other Kyoto School members. So, in this section, we try to investigate his theory about world history using his book "*Culture and Education of the Nation*," in order to reveal why Kimura did focus on the problem of history in reaching his deeper philosophy called the "love of expression."

Firstly, we should focus on his reflections regarding his previous work, as stated in the book. According to him, his previous writing about expression does not have enough perspective for species lying between individual and universal. He says: "If we fail to notice the importance of various species necessarily lying between individual and universal, or if we believe the direct connection of the two, we grasp only the abstract side of the relation between subject and universe" (Kimura, 1947, p.208). Human beings are all living with certain facts of historical reality, and they are not living in a place devoid of concreteness or specificity of the world and history. In particular, this specificity should encompass the fact of nationality, Kimura says. To consider a subject of expression concretely, it is necessary to take into consideration the nationality of an individual, which is the most substantial one of any concept of species, and because of this observation, conceiving the issue of world history should become unavoidable for him.

Then, what does world history mean according to Kimura? In conclusion, the essential concept of mediation was to not allow particular nations to get absolute independence. He says "nationality gains its individuality only when it exists inside a relationship between other nationalities. If they fail to achieve the concept of intermediation, they cannot exist as particular nations" (Kimura, 1947, p.213). He calls it the "world's historical universality," which involves both the concepts of time and space. In his theory, world history does not mean any historical reality of the world we live in. It is rather the idea of universality which makes nationalities exist as subjective nations of the world and of history, and also develops them as particular "world historical nations."

Kimura also says that the idea of world history is, in fact, coming from the concept about the place of nothingness which Nishida examined. People can form a particular nation only when they realize the absolute nothingness of history and the universe, and moreover, understanding their own nothingness is the only way for each nation to achieve individuality in world history. He says "the meaning of world history is a principle of negation functioning between nationalities and species, and because it is just a function without any concrete formation, we should call it just 'the nothingness' as an eternal and universal movement" (Kimura, 1947, p.226). As previously mentioned, in Kimura's thinking, world history means not the concrete phenomenon of history, but the concepts

of nothingness and universality which keep the world moving and negotiating infinitely.

### 3.3. Dynamism between history and subject

In this section, we examine the concept of “world history” in the philosophy of Kosaka and Kimura, focusing on whether they assume absolute canon or not, which binds and restricts individuals transcendentally. The facts we found are twofold: first, in Kosaka’s thinking, human individuals were given a significant role in the formation of world history, and indeed human irrationality played a substantial part in its construction. He considered world history not as the development of a great rationality, like in Hegel’s philosophy, but as the continuous effort and practice of human beings to live in the reality of history and the universe.

Second, we understand how Kimura discussed world history. From his point of view, world history means not concrete facts and the reality of the historical world, but a fundamental concept of individuality and the subjectivity of nations and species. Only when realizing the concept of world history can human beings gain a particularity and specificity, and all nationalities can exist as “individual nations.” As the principle of history is nothing but the will of movements, it is never fastened by anything.

Therefore, it is clear that they do not assume any principle which operates the universe and the individual transcendentally. The fundamental point of history is, in fact, nothingness which envelops everything and enfolds every existence in the world. In their philosophical thinking, subject and history determine each other in a field of nothingness, and this infinite inter-determination is the only way to construct both subject and history. That is why they consider educating human beings as not only civilizing individuals, but cultivating history and the world as well.

However, we should also indicate unexpected problems that their theory of “nothingness” encounters. Firstly, looking at Kimura’s thinking, the notion of “*koku-tai*,” which means the imperial system of the Japanese, has serious incoherencies. As mentioned above, Kimura considered world history as a universal principle to mediate negotiations between all nations and species living in the world in real-life situations. Therefore, in his discussion, a distinction between both aspects of history, one where we practically live, and the other where we realize the universe as a medium, is completely unclear. Because of this obscurity, all beings existing in the world are directly accepted as the “world’s historical subjects” and are fundamentally aware of their morality and principles (Kimura, 1947, p.293). That is to say, he failed to make clear the connection between the reality and the concept of “world history”. It causes a more serious problem

regarding the theory of "koku-tai," especially because of the particular situation of Japan during the war.

In his work, *"Culture and Education of the Nation"* published in 1947, Kimura admitted fundamental absoluteness in a praxis of construction to build nations, and he said that Japanese "koku-tai" is "the absolute root of whole national activity," "the creative springs of our development," and also "the eternal absolute canon of our complete livingness" (Kimura, 1947, p.298). Although he considered "nothingness" as the root of the universe, he eventually saw it in the historical supremacy of Japanese "koku-tai." Because it is difficult to find a border between reality and notions, we cannot clearly understand what "koku-tai" is. It must be assessed as the commendation of nationality. Hereafter, we should investigate why he had to refer to this uncertain and implicit concept in more detail.

Second, we point out the problem in Kosaka's discussion. According to him, the most substantial issue for each individual was admitting the way in which they recognize the world historical situation and problems, and how they practically struggle with these issues. However, we should note that the idea of "individual" that he espoused was not meant to denote separate individuals, but a particular group of ethnicities. It is ethnicity connected by not only land or blood but also of the same nationality and forming the same nation. He says "an individual without awareness of ethnicity can never be a subjective individual of history, and without the awareness of forming a nationality, people can never reach the profound dynamism of the historical universe" (Kosaka, 1944, p.95).

The beginning of his discussion about history and subjectivity certainly made an effort to find the innate role of human individuals in world history, but at the same time, he required that individuals must be aware of themselves as members of a particular ethnic force which organizes and composes specific nations. In his thinking, people can conduct themselves as "subjects" only when they recognize their traditional spirit of place and blood ties, and also have a consciousness of their national and cultural situation. His thinking regarding ethnic subjectivity more or less resulted in the modern theory of the state and the usual assertions of nationalism, which he had tried to overcome.

As Furuta (1965) criticized Nishida's philosophy, both Kimura and Kosaka discussed their historical philosophy insisting on the practical situation of their own lives as Japanese. Their thinking could not reach a position of anti-nationalism and it did not have any power to deny and overcome the idea of nation and ethnicity. Although the root of their thinking was the concept of nothingness, they seemed to accept the crucial meaning of "koku-tai" and the ethnicity of Japan forming a nation. In order to investigate

the limits of their thinking more specifically, we must examine the concept of “formation,” which they referred to as an act of inter-determination. We should investigate carefully how subject and object recognize each other, through the act of so-called “formation.”

In the previous paragraph, we indicated Kimura’s confusion between reality and the theory of history; the notion of “formation” holds a key to solving this problem. In order to make clear the whole thinking of the Kyoto School, especially the idea of nothingness, we must understand the relation between subject and universe, and the relation between the two aspects of human activity, recognizing nothingness and participating in the formation of world history. Based on the discussion this paper has proposed, from now on, we should continue to study their thinking by focusing on the notion of formation.

#### **4. Analysis and Conclusion**

This paper attempted to analyze the meaning of “subject” in the educational thinking of the Kyoto School. Although they treated education as cultivating subjectivity, few studies have focused on that fact until today. In conclusion, they considered a subject as an individual who continuously negotiates with the dynamic movement of history and the universe and never stops working even if he realizes the nothingness of the world and the self. Kosaka said that all human beings should take responsibility for awakening their own historical subjectivity and should also struggle against the subject as a subjective individual. Their philosophical idea of nothingness requires all people to keep considering, practicing and expressing permanently, because the world of their thinking expresses itself as nothing but the historical world.

That could be the reason why Kimura sought the ideal image of a world historical nation, and on the other hand, Kosaka attempted to analyze types of human beings historically through the document called “The Expected Image of the Japanese” (see Kosaka, 1966). For them, it was not a fallacy or surrender of their philosophy, rather a positive way of discovering their thinking more concretely. They took heavy responsibilities for their act of defining the world’s historical subject, in the turbulent situation of Japan at the time. Their philosophy of nothingness invites all human beings to continuously seek nothingness.

This study looked at today’s unclear connection between the pedagogy which tries to overcome using the concept of subject, and the actual situation of educating children, which emphasizes the importance of cultivating subjectivity. Through the thinking of the Kyoto School, this paper suggests an alternative discussion of today’s situation, and also suggests a framework to discuss this problem.

Until today, few studies have noticed the importance of the discussion regarding dialectical relations, in their words, inter-determinative relations between reality and theory. This does not concern the relation between the method of educating children and the actual activity of educating in schools, which has been of substantial concern for a long time. What we need to consider now is the fundamental understanding regarding our praxis of educating human beings, and on the other hand, the actual realization about the historical moment where we stand. As the Kyoto School proposed, we have to give a historical place to our theory of educating children, because the act of education should be the development of the universe’s history through cultivating human beings.

Nishida insists that pedagogy must above all choose historical philosophy as its foundation. We have to understand the inconsistent connection between seeking the principle of education and responding to various requirements from historical reality. The most substantial work we have to try to accomplish is to analyze the historical situation we are living in, and in addition, to again question the role of “educating” based on its historical analysis. Our study contributes a small step to this continuous search, as a dedication to the Kyoto School.

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# **Education Without Consideration of Human Inquiry: Flaws in Arguments on Competencies**

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## **Abstract**

Since the end of the twentieth century in many countries around the world, education has sought to foster competencies, including those referred to by the MEXT in Japan as “the three pillars of qualities and abilities.” This presentation will indicate some serious flaws inherent in the usual arguments on competencies. At the heart of my presentation are the questions: where and in what way do competencies exist? How can they be learned? Current mainstream educational theory and practice is based on frameworks such as “thinking consists of knowledge, skills, and character,” or “learning is divided into passive learning and active learning.” What I attempt here, however, is to present another view on thinking, inquiry, and learning in a way that follows a new scientific-philosophical trend, which has an affinity with the ontology or knowledge theory of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and pragmatism. Based on the view that criticizes the reductionist idea that considers knowing and thinking to be the inner workings of the mind and brain, and claims the idea to recognize action, perception, and thinking as one continuous whole, education, which seeks to foster competencies without taking into account the inherent character of human inquiry, may have serious limitations and deficiencies.

## **Keywords**

Competencies, Inquiry, Learning, Pathos (Passion), Preunderstanding

## **Introduction**

In a globalizing society, the future is everywhere increasingly unforeseeable, uncertain, and complicated. It is expected that labor, which a knowledge-based economy needs and AI (artificial intelligence) cannot defeat, will be required further and that unknown social problems will arise one after another from now on. Responding to such

near-future situations in a rapidly changing world is forcing the vision and principles of education to be revised. In Japan, education aims to foster competencies referred to by the MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) as “the three pillars of qualities and abilities (Shishitsu / Nōryoku)” : “working ‘knowledge and skills’,” “ability to think / make decisions / express oneself and so on,” and “ability geared toward learning / human nature.” Furthermore, the way to achieve such aims of education is called “proactive, interactive, and deep learning.” It goes without saying that since the end of the twentieth century, educational policies to foster competencies have been introduced in countries around the world, including Japan.

There is some room for doubt in such education; for example, there is the possibility of placing an excessive burden and hardship on the individual. Although, we admit here that in the future people who can manage and solve unknown problems will be needed more than ever before. However, even if we recognize the need for education to place high importance on inquiry, creation, dialog, collaboration, and knowledge, we cannot but say that arguments regarding competencies such as “qualities and abilities” have many serious flaws. In this presentation I focus on the issues considered to be the most essential among such flaws and, in particular, those related to philosophical arguments.

## **1. Competencies and Learning as Global Standard**

At the heart of my presentation are the questions: where and in what way do the “qualities and abilities” of competencies exist? How can they be learned? Researches to elucidate the characteristics of human ability, thinking, knowing, and learning have recently been advanced by cognitive science, psychology, brain science, robotics, biology, anthropology, etc. And philosophy also plays an important role in advancing those researches. However, as the researches have just begun and are only now in progress, there are many issues still in the midst of controversies. Reflecting on the restrictions which stem from these controversies, it appears that arguments on educational policies at a global level are trying to incorporate only the minimal flame of the most common achievements of these researches, but this seemingly neutral stance can cause serious problems.

The frameworks of competencies proposed by the OECD, etc., on which arguments on “qualities and abilities” are based, consist of the components of human abilities and character considered necessary for achieving the goals demanded by a future society. Those components are usually divided into three parts such as “knowledge, skills, and character,” or “knowledge, (cognitive and social emotional) skills, and attitudes and

values,” whose parts roughly correspond to each of “the three pillars of ‘qualities and abilities’.” Moreover, each component is divided into subcomponents, including communication skills, creativity, collaboration, metacognitive skills, resilience, and so on. Thus, in the “OECD 2030 Framework,” competencies are regarded as the whole of the interaction or the interrelationship between these components (although how these components or subcomponents are to be understood depends on each responsible agent of education). What is knowledge or character? What kinds of communication skills are required? These are open questions for each responsible agent of education or educational practitioner. At the same time, it is assumed that a better practice will be discovered and theory will be revised when we challenge new practices based on a certain learning theory and verify whether they succeed or not based on evidence.

Next, thinking is supposed to be a manipulation of symbols using certain skills, accompanied by ideas of two-step learning consisting of both passive learning (acceptance of knowledge) and active learning (utilization and creation of knowledge), which are based on the dichotomy between knowledge and skill. Thinking is regarded as utilizing existing knowledge or creating new knowledge by combining symbolized representations and data appropriately, while making full use of generic skills, driven and promoted by character or attitudes, and directed by values.

In cognitive science or AI research in recent years, however, a trend of thought is emerging that rejects modern Western mainstream frameworks such as “thinking consists of knowledge, skills and character” or “learning is divided into passive learning and active learning.” It is a trend that has an affinity with the ontology or knowledge theory of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and pragmatism<sup>1</sup>. What I attempt in this presentation is to present another view on thinking, inquiry, and learning in a way that follows a new scientific-philosophical trend to criticize the reductionist idea that regards knowing and thinking as the inner workings of the mind and the brain, namely, to recognize action, perception, and thinking as one continuous whole. The issues I discuss here are limited to the basic frameworks and ideas of human abilities, thinking, inquiry, and learning. However, if the view I present is correct, education based on arguments on competencies, including the idea of “qualities and abilities” may have serious limitations and deficiencies.

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<sup>1</sup> For some examples of this recent trend of thought derived from the ideas of James J. Gibson and / or Francisco Varela, and so on, see below. Clark, A., *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*, A Bradford Book, 1997. Noë, A., *Action in Perception*, MIT Press, 2004. Barrett, L., *Beyond the Brain: How Body and Environment Shape Animal and Human Minds*, Princeton University Press, 2011. Dreyfus, H. and Taylor, C., *Retrieving Realism*, Harvard University Press, 2015.

## 2. Inquiry Embedded in Preunderstanding

How do human beings think and inquire? We can summarize the characteristics of human inquiry as follows, which is closely connected with what lies at the base of human life and is different from a search conducted by AI.

Much of human daily life is automated by following routines or habits. Lives that follow them are in a steady flow of things. A human being who gets accustomed to a given environment usually lives in a constant rhythm and tempo in such a flow, maintaining balance, without thinking of “what should I do?” or “I am the agent of action.” The world around her moves by itself.

When this steady flow is disturbed and interrupted and you realize that you are being pulled apart from the world, you are forced to stop and think. It is an occurrence of situations to which you cannot respond by following existing expectations or prospects about the world. Then, encountering *the unfamiliar* or *the other* obstructs the steady flow of life, shakes up your existing anticipations and prospects, and inspires “pathos (passion).” When you aim to mitigate or settle the “pathos” (wonder, resentment, pain, sorrow, joy, and so on) in a convincing manner while responding to the environment, a question arises and an inquiry is triggered. What is needed to deepen the question and develop the inquiry is nothing but a thought as reflection that involves symbolic manipulation and information processing.

When the flow of your life is steady and stable, you acquire some expectations or prospects, namely, an outlook or perspective about the future of the state of things you confront. In general, these are tied to certain concepts or symbolized representations, but these expectations or prospects emerge as implicit or tacit knowledge; *in their original form* they are not the knowledge connected with a certain concept or representation. Since they are knowledge which is *brought about* by collaboration between the body-brain and the environment, and not knowledge *about* the environment, it is possible for expectations or prospects of the environment not to require any concepts or representations. Here I refer to this kind of understanding, which does not necessarily require concepts or representations as “preunderstanding” (Vorverständnis)<sup>2</sup> by using the term hermeneutics.

In this presentation, I explain the structure of preunderstanding by using the concept

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<sup>2</sup> Here I got suggestions from Hubert Dreyfuss and Charles Taylor's ideas of “preunderstanding” and “the preconceptual” (Dreyfus, H. and Taylor, C., *Retrieving Realism*, Harvard University Press, 2015) rather than “Vorverständnis” derived from Heideggerian hermeneutics.

of “tacit knowledge” (Michael Polanyi) and “perceptual experience” (Alva Noë) as a clue. According to both, the whole or the invariant can be understood implicitly without representation or judgment. The recognition of wholeness or invariance cannot be attained by the accumulation or combination of parts or elements but *emerges* in an unexpected way from interactions among parts or elements. Namely, according to Polanyi, a “comprehensive entity” emerges from “dwelling in” the relationship of elements<sup>3</sup>; according to Noë, as a result of moving around with “sensorimotor skills” in the environment, a “sensorimotor profile” of “appearance” or “how things appear” that varies according to movement is obtained, while at the same time, “how things are” that does not vary with movement is “enacted.”<sup>4</sup>

The preunderstanding is, as it were, an understanding of the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole, the specific and the general, or the particular and the universal; so, it allows us to foresee or anticipate the whole from parts. When looking at it from this point of view, we can understand inquiry as an endless process in which the existing preunderstanding becomes unstable when a new part or element is introduced and therefore jumps to another new stable preunderstanding discontinuously through emergence.

If the above explanation is correct, even primordial preunderstanding that does not include any representations or judgments can be regarded as a product of dynamic cognitive activity, which could be called *proto-inquiry*. It can be said that the *proto-matrix* of inquiry is embedded in preunderstanding, where the general is understood directly from the specific processes moving around the environment skillfully; in other words, where new understandings and actions can emerge in an unpredictable way from the interaction between the whole and parts in the environment. By virtue of that type of *proto-inquiry*, the acquisition of mother language, the understanding of another person’s physical or emotional expressions, the acquisition of various kinds of physical skills / techniques / arts, and so on can be attained.

### 3. Education That Promotes / Hinders Inquiry

When we turn our eyes onto human inquiry by taking what is *invisible* in human life into consideration, we can see that we actually follow a framework that can be put into the form of “preunderstanding (with the *proto-matrix* of inquiry) leads to inquiry (with

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<sup>3</sup> Polanyi, M., *The Tacit Dimension*, Routledge, 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Noë, *op. cit.*, chapter 3.

thinking) through pathos” instead of that of “thinking consists of knowledge, skills and character,” which is accepted by arguments of competencies worldwide. So, what kind of education is required to promote inquiry (with thinking)? According to the former framework, it is necessary to nurture a fertile preunderstanding before anything else in order to promote inquiry. Nurturing preunderstanding means having the opportunity to move around in the environment freely, namely, to meet various and unknown people, things, and events, and *entrusting* yourself to the emergence of knowledge and skills.

Although it is possible for preunderstanding to not include any representations or judgments, it is necessary to expand the scope and deepen the substance of preunderstanding by connecting it with various kinds of symbols and concepts in order to promote and advance the inquiry. What is necessary for a question to arise is to be shaken into preunderstanding by *encountering unfamiliar* people, things, and events. But then if preunderstanding has richness and profundity a significant question can arise even when you encounter trivial information, and consequently inquiry can endure. In contrast with the case when preunderstanding is shallow and narrow, even an unprecedented experience will only bring *ad hoc* fun or shock instead of enduring questions, and will not lead you to inquiry or investigation. In today’s society, if your preunderstanding lacks broad and profound conceptual understanding, you cannot foresee distant consequences of social occurrences where politics, economics, and science have a great influence while being intertwined with each other. Therefore, due to the lack of expectations or prospects, your passion is not likely to be stirred up easily, and questions about many social issues will seldom arise. It is indispensable to read a wide variety of linguistic texts to acquire knowledge and information in order to advance inquiry and elaborate on the ideas obtained in the inquiry. Furthermore, *walking around* what Ivan Illich called the “vineyard of the text” is important in order to *initiate* as well as deepen the inquiry.

To continue the inquiry it is also essential for the inquirer to keep asking the question by not only thinking of the question as meaningful or significant but also accepting responsibility for others or things. To that end, it is necessary to interact constantly with the environment and participate in the community of inquiry which shares similar interests or questions. In other words, what you need in order to continue the inquiry is to maintain *dialog*, namely a calling-responding relationship with people, things, events, texts, etc. and constantly reflect and correct your understanding. Dialog is not just talking here. Dialog is a symbolic expression of the way in which we face others and things, or the attitude toward the world surrounding an agent.

Turning to the other question: what kind of education hinders or impedes inquiry? It is one that keeps the preunderstanding in an immature or narrow state. Examples we

often find today include: education that is eager to arrange tools or equipment in order to effectively and efficiently lead learners' thinking and behavior to goals, or that reduces learning to information processing or the operation of signs while pursuing the rationality of education and which turns even the *encountering* of the other or the *dialogs* into the manipulation of symbols or information. Under the type of education just cited the learning of concepts and information does not lead to a deepening of preunderstanding, so the ability to foresee the consequences of circumstances and inquire about unknown facts or truths remains poor or premature. The result is that those who lack such abilities are likely to feel anxious about themselves and tend to be afraid of others and unknown society. The more society becomes uncertain, the more the disease of the education that hinders inquiry will become apparent.

#### 4. Perversions and Mistakes of Arguments on Competencies

If we seek to equip learners with competencies without taking account of the inherent character of human inquiry as described so far, we may get to a destination which is completely different to the one we originally aimed at. Scenes of the wrong destination we may arrive at can be summarized as follows.

1. When following the framework of “thinking consists of knowledge, skills and character” or “learning is divided into passive learning and active learning,” on which arguments on competencies including the idea of “qualities and abilities” are based, thinking and learning are likely to be reduced to symbolic manipulation or information processing so as to produce the visible outcome expected by educational administrators. In this case, however, no matter how hard you provide learners the opportunity for the “proactive, interactive and deep learning,” your attempts will turn to the “education that hinders inquiry,” because the learning will lose its substance, preunderstanding will remain shallow, and encounters with the unfamiliar will be eliminated.<sup>5</sup>

2. There is no problem *representing* what you have acquired as a result of constant inquiry *as* the “ability to think / make decisions / express oneself and so on.” The notion that knowledge, skills, and character play important roles in inquiry is not necessarily wrong. However, the notion will fall into false consciousness brought about by the so-

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<sup>5</sup> See also, Matsushita, R., “Shutaiteki / taiwateki de fukai mnabi” no hakarishirenai konnan: Miushinawareta kanōsei wo motomete (The Incredible Difficulties of the “Proactive, Interactive and Deep Learning”; In Search of Lost Possibilities), Group Didactica ed., *Fukai manabi wo tsumugidasu: kyōka to kodomo no siten kara (Spinning out the Deep Learning: From the Viewpoints of School Subjects and Children)*, Tokyo: Keisōshobō, 2019.

called “reification,” when you consider as follows; knowledge, skills and character are the abilities and qualities which belong to an individual and exist separately as they are named; acquiring each can be set as educational objectives respectively, and therefore each objective can be attained rationally through stepwise and effective teaching methods that have been adopted away from the context of inquiry. In other words, the idea of “qualities and abilities” comes to connect with a fictional view of education, which affirms the teaching of what *cannot be learned* in such a way.

3. Competencies including “qualities and abilities” are not representations of what really exist but the symbolized representations of what education should equip children with so that they can be comprehensible and accountable for educators or stakeholders. Nevertheless, if you assume that the learning and teaching of each component and its subcomponents is possible by rational educational methods and attempt to verify success or failure of learning and teaching by means of evidence, you will find the contradiction that the educational objectives as *fiction* are not only *attained* but also *verified*. Education goes beyond *fiction* and turns into *fake*.

4. Moreover, when components and their subcomponents of competencies are regarded as the real entity that exists exactly as named, education can have a serious misunderstanding about the interpretation of those components / subcomponents. For example, regarding “self-control”<sup>6</sup>; when education attempts to equip learners with social and emotional skills by rational methods, it is likely to equip them with the skills of “emotion management,” by which you can purposely conceal your real emotions and forge appropriate expressions for the scene while calculating the effect you will have on others, instead of acquiring the self-discipline necessary for inquiry by practicing inquiry. With such misunderstanding, your pathos (passion) will be pushed beneath your consciousness and questions that lead to inquiry will not arise.

The problems concerning competencies are not limited to what I explained above. Along with a more detailed explanation of human inquiry, I would like to discuss them again on another occasion.

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<sup>6</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ed., *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*, 2015, chapter 3.

# Possibilities and Pitfalls of Competency-Based Education

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## 1. Introduction

The new National Curriculum Standard has implemented with various features, one of which is its unique reviewing process. It took over a 10-month long period to establish subcommittees and working groups for individual school subjects since the first meeting of consultation of ministers.

Over this period, all discussions were intensively carried out by the Special Committee on Curriculum Planning. The committee members undertook a radical review of the current National Curriculum Standard, clarifying such fundamental questions as what an ideal school of the future should be like, what academic ability all children need to develop, and how the curriculum improvement should be made in order to help children develop academic ability. The *Summary of Issues* released by the Special Committee on Curriculum Planning explains the reason why the committee took this steps as follows: “Before we begin to discuss the individual content of what to teach, we first need to look at competencies to be developed from the children’s viewpoint as a learner and define the competencies in light of ‘what children will become able to do’ through learning across the curriculum and/or individual subject. Then, we can examine ‘what children need to learn’ or the necessary individual contents of the instruction and construct ‘how children learn’ each content imagining the specific children’s learning behavior” (Special Committee on Curriculum Planning, 2015, pp.7-8).

The concept of ‘what children will become able to do’ is the “competencies” as an idea of academic ability under the new National Curriculum Standard.

The *Summary of Issues* continues to state that “the direction of the committee’s discussion is supported by the accumulation of the findings of the scientific research on ‘learning’ or ‘knowledge,’ which has been trying to demonstrate ‘what it means to learn’

or ‘what knowledge is’” (Special Committee on Curriculum Planning, 2015, 8).

In the *Summary of Issues*, Special Committee on Curriculum Planning raises at least three important points.

First, as the basis of this reviewing process, it is clearly stated that there is a sense of values that new curriculum standard has a perspective of children as a learner.

Secondly, as a result of reviewing the curriculum from the viewpoint of children, ‘what children will become able to do’ or the argument of academic ability was placed at the top as a goal, and then ‘what children learn’ and ‘how children learn,’ which is the argument of educational content and method was positioned as means of achieving the goal.

Third, to support the discussions as mentioned above, there is a clear awareness of the accumulation of scientific findings on ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge.’

In the traditional discussions on the curriculum, the focus of discussion tended to be on listing the knowledge and skills that the children needed to acquire for the individual subject from the perspective of adults as a teacher. However, it is more important to clarify how knowledge and skills are developed in each child and help their lives. Unless this process becomes evident, it is concerned that the children can not effectively utilize the knowledge and skills taught by the adults. In this sense, it is revolutionary in the history of curriculum policymaking that, before examining specific content of education, the special committee began with discussing what national curriculum standard means from the perspective of children’s competencies and how their competencies can be extended and refined.

For future discussion, it is essential to organize the concrete curriculum based on the above-mentioned new principle and implement the educational practice. Toward this goal, it is necessary to achieve a rich creation of the new curriculum collaborating with other scholars and practitioners from various fields of study of education.

## **2. Research on *competence* and some related questions**

### **(1) White’s concept of competence**

As described in the *Summary of Issues*, the concept of competency and the idea of education based on it have been developed through scientific research on ‘competence’ such as ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge’ of human beings. Competency has its roots in several studies, but at first, we should discuss Robert White's work (White, 1959, 1963).

Based on observations of infants and young children, White argued that human beings have a natural tendency to engage actively to the environment surrounding themselves, this natural tendency brings children the interaction with the environment,

and children expand and refine the effective ways to interact with the environment. This whole process is as White called competence.

In his discussion, White defined competence as an innate motivational factor and the relational and cognitive capability to interact effectively with the environment.

Interestingly, in his definition of competence, 'knowing' does not simply mean knowing the name or understanding the concept, but it also implies being 'able' to effectively 'interact' with an object according to its characteristics, and acquiring and refining generic skills of 'interaction' through 'knowing' and 'interacting' the individual object.

In other words, White proposed competence as a holistic concept that includes the motivational factors driving 'knowing,' the mechanisms of 'knowing,' and the way to 'interact' with an environment that expands and refines by 'knowing' both qualitatively and quantitatively.

## **(2) McClelland's concept of competence**

While paying attention to White's claims, it was David McClelland, who allowed us to develop or downsize competence into meanings widely used today (McClelland, 1973, 1993).

McClelland demonstrated with concrete facts that traditional intelligence tests, school grades, and certificates of qualification, which examine possession and understanding of domain-specific knowledge, do not predict job performance or success in life. In his discussion, he emphasizes affective factors such as motivation and emotional self-regulation, positive self-concept and self-reliance, and skills related to interpersonal adjustment and communication.

McClelland defines competence as the factors that are necessary and sufficient to achieve high-quality problem solving for the various challenging situations faced in real life. Of course, knowledge was also included in the competence category, but its weight remained relatively small in his definition of competence.

The discovery by McClelland, as a natural consequence, will have a significant impact on corporate personnel management and organizational management, as well as on the curricula and evaluation of higher education institutions that supply human resources to companies.

## **(3) Expectations for dialogue and collaboration between factual and normative science**

For White, 'competence' means becoming able to interact effectively with a different

environment. McClelland, on the other hand, defines ‘competence’ as a criterion for professional achievement and success in life. Although both definitions have certain things in common in terms of whether they can individually and creatively carry out appropriate problem-solving actions according to the situation, the directions of their discussion are the opposite. White starts his discussion from the innate tendencies of human beings, whereas McClelland starts from social needs and practical benefit.

McClelland proposed to define competence as the factors necessary and sufficient to guide success in life, but it is necessary to rigorously examine what success is in life and who decides it. If this is neglected and the dominant values of society are easily adopted, then education will serve to stabilize and reproduce the current social order and political and economic systems, and eventually become a social device to strengthen them.

Content-based education which aimed to select and teach knowledge and skills from cultural assets such as academia, science, and art, may have had structural difficulties in connecting with social reality, but that is why it was also ‘safety.’ On the other hand, competency-based education from the perspective of curriculum tends to be society-centered. In the competency-based education, the condition and function of education depend on the two principles over the relationship between education and society: which is whether education will follow social change (social efficiency) or whether it will generate social change through supporting the development of the child who will be the subject of social construction (social reconstruction).

As seen above, the concept of competency-based makes it possible for education to be closely related to the real world, but it also has greater risks. In this sense, the competency-based education can cut two ways, so that it needs to be carefully examined.

Also, it should be noted that the idea of competency-based has arisen from scientific research centered on psychology. As seen in White’s study, it provides many suggestions for the creation of education based on what children’s ‘learning’ is and what ‘knowledge’ means. This is a significant achievement in changing the principle of curriculum development, which has been apt to focus on examining from the viewpoint of adults.

At the same time, in the competency-based education, it is more necessary than the content-based education to carefully and extensively discuss the values and the social engagement that we need to aim for; however, science does not have sufficient methodology to refer to the values. This shows that there are limitations and perils of science studies in the creation of education, which raise expectations for the leadership role of normative science centered on educational philosophy.

Furthermore, what can be done, and what cannot be done in the factual sciences such as psychology and learning science? What can be done, and what cannot be done in

normative studies centered on philosophy? It is hoped that these issues will be thoroughly examined and that the two academic fields will continue to interact and collaborate with each other closely.

### **3. Is generic skills substance or capability?**

Competency-based education aims to enable children to individually and creatively carry out problem-solving activities appropriate to the situation. It has been believed that the core of these efforts is the development of generic skills that go beyond individual subjects. However, generic skills do not exist generically and noumenally as a separate thing from the domain-specific knowledge taught in each subject.

For example, psychologists believe that thinking skills refer to the function of an enormous amount of domain-specific knowledge that is semantically and functionally linked to various situations and contexts and is highly refined so that it can be freely delivered as needed. When we see children able to solve problems through the unique and creative delivery of appropriate knowledge and skills in response to situations, contexts, and problems, we believe that they have a high level of thinking skills, but in reality, it is the specific knowledge that exists and functions within the children.

As Gilbert Ryle has pointed out, it is wrong to believe that there is a substantive power that produces a characteristic behavior behind itself (Ryle, 1987). Practically speaking, it is impossible to teach thinking skills itself directly, and through each knowledge and skills, generic thinking skills (or action or state that appears to be thinking skills) has always been realized.

In recent years, in light of an academic ability argument and curriculum, there have been some cases where teachers have tried to teach generic skills one by one into children, but they have fallen into the same error. Moreover, this idea turns competency into new contents, which is almost impossible but also extremely dangerous and annoying because it spreads misunderstandings about competency-based education.

Instead, the practical goal is to improve the quality of domain-specific knowledge and promote its elaboration. In order to realize children's generic skills (or action or state that appears to be generic skills), it is necessary to provide lessons based on 'a discipline-based epistemological approach,' and it is even more urgent to reinstate and expand subject content research.

Interestingly, the same idea has been already evident in White's concept of competence. Moreover, according to White, every child innately owns the emergence of

competence and the developing mechanisms of competence, so even the expression ‘developing the children’s competencies’ may not be appropriate. We probably should refer to ‘facilitate to become evident of competencies,’ ‘prepare a learning environment in order to enhance and refine competencies’ may be appropriate. From this point of view, it is possible to define what teaching each subject means in the new National Curriculum Standard as facilitating children’s ‘competence’ more tangible, enhanced, and refined in light of ‘a discipline-based epistemological approach.’

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# Teaching for the Possibility of Being Taught: World-Centred Education in an Age of Learning

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## 1. Introduction: The need for a recovery of teaching

Over the past twenty years a rather common critique of teaching has emerged in many research publications and policy documents. Again and again we hear that so-called ‘traditional’ teaching – where the teacher speaks and students are supposed to listen and absorb information – is bad and outdated, and where something allegedly more modern, focused on the facilitation of students’ learning is seen as good, desirable and ‘of the future.’ While the opposition between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ is itself already a bit stale, we should also not forget how traditional the critique of traditional teaching itself actually is. John Dewey already made the point, as did many educators in many countries around the world before and after him. The critique of traditional teaching is also not entirely valid, because even in classrooms where teachers speak, and students sit quietly, a lot of things are actually happening. In this regard I agree with Virginia Richardson’s observation that “students also make meaning from activities encountered in a transmission model of teaching” (Richardson, 2003, p. 1628).

It is also ironic that some of the most popular technology-mediated forms of education – such as TED talks, MOOCs and the numerous professional and amateur instructional videos on YouTube – are all staged in traditional ways, with someone talking and explaining so that others can watch, listen and learn. This begins to suggest that there actually may be something wrong with the *critique* of traditional teaching rather than with traditional teaching itself. Yet making this point and trying to establish a more general case for the recovery of teaching is fraught with difficulties because nowadays the most vocal arguments in favour of teaching come from the conservative end of the political spectrum, aimed at re-establishing the kind of order and control that apparently is lacking in modern society and modern education (for a different take on this issue see

Meirieu, 2007). This seems to suggest that the only *progressive* alternative lies in the demise of the teacher and a turn towards learning; a turn where the teacher only exists as a facilitator of otherwise ‘autonomous’ learning processes.<sup>1</sup>

The problem here has to do with the binary construction of options, that is, with the idea that the only meaningful response to authoritarian forms of teaching – teaching as an act of control – lies in the abolition of teaching and a turn towards learning. What remains remarkably absent is the exploration of a third option that focuses on the reconstruction of our understanding of teaching along progressive lines. Yet it is in such an option – which relies on the idea that freedom is not an escape from external influences but rather has to do with establishing a ‘grown up’ relationship with what may have authority in our lives – that we can see the beginnings of an entirely different response to authoritarian forms of teaching.

In my book *The Rediscovery of Teaching* (Biesta 2017) I have tried to make the case for such a third option, beyond teaching as control and beyond learning as freedom. This has involved discussion of a range of topics, including the question what it means to exist as subject in and with the world; how much learning education actually needs; what teaching may have to do in emancipatory education; and what all this means for the work of the teacher. In this presentation I will focus on one particular thread of the bigger argument that brings together two key questions of the wider discussion, namely the question whether teaching is necessarily a limitation of the student’s freedom and whether learning is automatically an expression of this freedom.

In what follows I start from the contention that to the extent to which the critique of traditional teaching is a critique of teaching as control, this critique is valid as it highlights that under such conditions the student can only appear as object of the teacher’s intentions and interventions, but not as a subject in its own right. (This is also the central point in Paulo Freire’s critique of ‘banking education’ – see Freire 1993, pp.52-53.) I then argue that the suggestion that we can overcome this problem by turning to students and their learning and, more specifically, their acts of sense making and comprehension, is not really a way out, because such acts of sense making emanate from the self and return to the self and thus run the risk that the self remains to itself rather than that it is drawn out of itself, towards the world. In more philosophical terms I suggest, pursuing a line of thought from Emmanuel Levinas, that our subject-ness is precisely *not* constituted through acts of signification but is rather called forth from the ‘outside,’ in response, so

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<sup>1</sup> I use ‘autonomous’ here to refer to the idea that these processes are supposed to be going on anyway, irrespective of the presence of the teacher.

we might say, to the event of ‘being addressed.’ It is in this event that a different meaning of teaching manifests itself and it is this meaning that I seek to recover in this presentation.

## 2. Education and the ego-logical worldview

Central to Levinas’s work is his attempt to overcome what, after Levinas (1969, p. 35), we might call the ego-logical view of the world, that is, the way of thinking that starts from the assumption of the existence of the self, in order *then* to thematise everything outside of the self. Levinas’s thought is, however, not a simple reversal of this gesture but comes closer to what elsewhere (Biesta 2008) I have referred to as an “ethics of subjectivity.” This expression indicates that Levinas seeks to approach the question of human subjectivity through ethics rather than through knowledge. In his work there is, in other words, no theory about the subject, no truth-claim about what the subject *is*, but rather an attempt to identify the situation where the self begins to *matter*, or, more precisely, where *I* matter, where it matters that I am I and not just anyone.

When Levinas writes that he “describe[s] subjectivity in ethical terms” (Levinas, 1985, p.95) he seeks to highlight that he sees responsibility as “the essential, primary and fundamental structure of subjectivity” (ibid.). He emphasises, however, that responsibility here “does not supplement a preceding existential base” (ibid.). It is not that the subject first exists – as a self-sufficient ego or subject – and only *then* encounters a responsibility or decides to take on a responsibility or to become responsible. It is rather, as Levinas puts it, that “the very node of the subjective is knotted in ethics understood as responsibility” (ibid.). Responsibility, in the helpful formulation from Zygmunt Bauman (1993, p.13) is thus to be understood as “the first reality of the self,” the first ‘moment,’ the first ‘situation’ where the self begins to matter.

To suggest that responsibility is the first reality of the self – or more precisely: that the *encounter* with responsibility is the moment where the self is called to be a self – is very different from how contemporary educational theories and practices conceive of the student. In such theories and practices the student is depicted crucially as a learner, that is, as someone who is trying to ‘make sense’ of the situations he or she encounters. The turn from teaching to learning, and the encompassing ‘learnification’ of educational discourse and practice (for the latter term see Biesta 2010), rejects the idea that it is possible for teachers to give anything to their students – and it particularly rejects the idea of teaching as the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student. It argues, instead, that students are continuously engaged in processes of sense making and

interpretation, and that the task of teachers is to construct learning environments in which such sense making can take place and, through, facilitate students' learning in and through such environments.

In my book I have used the image of the robot vacuum cleaner to show what such a learner-centred approach to education entails, also in order to make clear what is fundamentally *lacking* in this set up. Robot vacuum cleaners are indeed able to perform their task – cleaning the floor – autonomously, that is, without the need for help from the outside. What is even more interesting is that, over time, robot vacuum cleaners can become more efficient at performing their task. If at first the pattern they follow is guided by the particular algorithm they were programmed with, over time they become more adjusted to the environment in which they are operating, moving around tables, chairs and other objects, rather than bumping into them. This shows that robot vacuum cleaners can learn or, more precisely, that they can adapt to their environment in an intelligent way. While their learning is autonomous in that it occurs without any intervention from the outside – without any direct intervention from a teacher, so we might say – this does not mean that their learning cannot be influenced. The way to do this is by putting the machine in a different environment so that it needs to adapt to differing enviroing conditions. While such learning remains a lifelong task – each new situation requires adjustment and adaptation – the machines may nonetheless become more skilled and efficient at adapting to new situations.<sup>2</sup>

I believe that the way in which robot vacuum cleaners work, provides us with a remarkably accurate picture of *a*, and perhaps even *the* prevailing contemporary educational imaginary. This is an imaginary that sees education as a learner-centred endeavour, where it is ultimately for learners to construct their own understandings and build up their own skills, and where the main task of teachers is to provide arrangements in and through which such processes can happen. In this situation the teacher does, indeed, no longer transmit anything but designs learning environments for students in order to facilitate their learning. Similarly, students are not engaged in passive absorption but in active adaptive construction, and it is through this that they acquire the skills and competences that make them more able at adapting to future situations. This also shifts the meaning and position of the curriculum, which no longer exists as the content to be transmitted and acquired but becomes redefined as a set of 'learning opportunities' in and through which students, in a flexible and personalised way, pursue their own unique

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<sup>2</sup> The idea that the very aim of education is to become more effective at adaptation to changing situations is, for example, the key premise of so-called 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

learning trajectories.<sup>3</sup>

If I were to characterise the underlying view about the human being and its relationship to the world, I would suggest calling this a hermeneutical approach and, more generally, a hermeneutical worldview.<sup>4</sup> The reason for this lies in the fact that the human being is depicted here first and foremost as a sense-making being, that is, as a being who is in relationship with the world – natural and social – through acts of interpretation and meaning-making. Such acts are issued from the self and return to the self ‘via’ the world. In such acts the world thus appears as an object of our sense making.

Now one could argue that this is simply how things are. One could argue, in other words, that this worldview is *true*, that human beings are basically sense-making beings capable of intelligent adaptation to every changing circumstances, and that we should therefore build our understanding of knowledge and communication, but also of ethics, politics, and education upon this premise.<sup>5</sup> But one could, of course, also pause for a moment and ponder whether this worldview is as inevitable as it would seem, perhaps by asking what is *not* conceivable within the confines of this worldview.

There are two questions I would like to raise in this regard. One is whether in this worldview the world, natural and social, *can speak* – and whether it can do so in its own terms and on its own terms. The second is whether in this worldview we can be *spoken to*, that is, whether we can be *addressed* (which actually is the question about the very possibility of teaching). The hermeneutical worldview – or if one wishes: the worldview of intelligent adaptation – seems to preclude these two options. The reason for this lies in

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<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps important to note that while this imaginary is contemporary – by which I intend to say that it is shaping contemporary educational practice in many contexts and settings – its theoretical frame is not new. We can find it, for example, in the theory of autopoietic systems, that is, of systems that are able to regenerate themselves in constant interaction with their environment – an idea that was developed in biology by Humberto Maturana and Francis Varela (see, for example, Maturana, Varela & Uribe, 1974; Maturana & Varela, 1980) and that was further developed by Niklas Luhmann in his theory of social systems (Luhmann, 1984; 1995). A key insight of Luhmann’s work is that autopoietic systems (such as, for example, human individuals) cannot participate in each other’s autopoiesis – which means, for example, that they cannot take part in each other’s adaptive activities or cognitive constructions – but that they can be in each other’s environments so as to have an indirect effect on each other’s autopoiesis. Perhaps the most famous example of the way of thinking that underlies the ideas outlined above can be found in the work of John Dewey, whose understanding of action, communication and learning is indeed based on a view of the human organism as being in constant transaction with its environment, constantly trying to establish a dynamic equilibrium through processes of doing and undergoing, to use Dewey’s phrase (see, for example, Biesta & Burbules, 2003; Biesta, 2009; and for Dewey’s philosophical account Dewey, 1925). And in Dewey’s work we can indeed find the claim that “we never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment” (Dewey, 1966, p.19).

<sup>4</sup> The reference to hermeneutics does not ‘cover’ all positions and views that go under this heading. As I will make clear later in this chapter, the use of this notion is particularly inspired by Levinas.

<sup>5</sup> I am inclined to say that pragmatism – particularly in the work of Dewey and Mead – provides one of the most developed examples of this ‘programme.’ This presentation can therefore also be read as an exploration of the limits of the pragmatic worldview and everything that has emerged from this worldview, including a theory and practice of education.

the fact that the hermeneutical worldview depicts a universe that is *immanent* to my understanding, that is *immanent* to my acts of comprehension, acts that always aim to bring the world ‘out there’ back to *me*. While such acts of comprehension do have an object – hermeneutics is not phantasy or pure construction – this object always appears as an object of *my* sense making and, in this sense, remains dependent on *my* acts of signification. It is in relation to these very questions – the question of immanence and the question of signification – that Levinas provides a rather different point of view. In the next two steps of my presentation I will briefly discuss some of Levinas’s key ideas with regard to these issues.

### 3. An opening in an opening: Levinas on signification and sense

In his essay ‘Signification and Sense’ (Levinas 2006<sup>6</sup>), Levinas explores the conditions of possibility of signification, broadly conceived as acts of sense making or interpretation. One line in the argument he puts forward concerns what he refers to as the “anti-Platonism in contemporary philosophy of signification” (Levinas, 2006, p. 18). This anti-Platonism entails the claim that “the intelligible is *inconceivable* outside the becoming that suggests it” (ibid; emph. added.). It is the idea that “(t)here does not exist any *signification in itself* that a thought could reach by hopping over the reflections ... that lead to it” (ibid.; emph. in original). Or in slightly more concrete language, it is the idea that “all the different cultures, are no longer obstacles that separate us from the essential and the Intelligible (but are) the only possible paths, irreplaceable, and consequently implicated in the intelligible itself” (ibid.).

Levinas thus describes a situation of total *immanence* where all our meaning making, all our signification, occurs *inside* culture and history and derives its meaning from such cultural and historical contexts. He characterises this as anti-Platonic because for Plato “the world of significations *precedes* the language and culture that express it” so that it remains “indifferent to the system of signs that can be invented to make this world present to thought” (ibid.) Plato, so Levinas argues, believed in the existence of “a privileged culture (that) can understand the transitory and seemingly childish nature of historical cultures” (ibid., pp. 18-19); a privileged culture that, so we might say, could give sense *to* signification and make sense *of* signification. Levinas suggests that in contemporary

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<sup>6</sup> A different English translation was called ‘Meaning and Sense, see Levinas, 2008; the original French version was published in 1964 under the title ‘La Signification et le Sens’.

philosophy of signification this option is no longer considered to be possible. What we find instead is a “*subordination* of intellect to expression” (p.19; emphasis added), that is, a situation where everything we can say or express has to be expressed in and through existing cultural and historical discourses and contexts and gains its meaning from such discourses and contexts.

For Levinas this not only poses a *philosophical* problem, which has to do with the question where signification actually gets its meaning from. It also poses a *practical* problem, which has to do with the question how communication is actually possible if it is supposed to happen entirely ‘inside’ existing cultural and historical frameworks. And it poses an urgent *political* problem, because, as Levinas puts it, this “most recent, most daring and influential anthropology keeps multiple cultures on the same level” (ibid., p.20). According to Levinas the contemporary philosophy of signification thus amounts to cultural and historical *relativism*. Because of its total immanence, contemporary philosophy of signification lacks a criterion that would allow us to make a judgement about the ‘quality’ of differing interpretations, so as to be able to distinguish between those that ‘make sense’ and those that do not ‘make sense,’ to put it bluntly. According to Levinas contemporary philosophy of signification simply “takes satisfaction [*se complaint*] in the multiplicity of cultural significations” (ibid., pp. 25-26), which – and this is important for my line of argument – manifests itself as a “refusal of engagement in the Other” (ibid., p.26). Yet it is precisely in the latter ‘movement’ that Levinas sees an ‘opening,’ that is, a way out of the predicament he sees.

There are two dimensions to how Levinas constructs his argument here, and along both lines he seeks to establish two points. The first point is that signification “is situated *before* Culture” and the second point that it is “situated *in* Ethics,” which, taken together, means that ethics is the “presupposition of all Culture and all signification” (ibid., p. 36; emph. added; capitals in original). Rather than refusing engagement in the Other it is precisely this engagement which, according to Levinas, is the origin of sense in that it provides an “orientation” (ibid., p. 26). In a first step Levinas characterises this orientation “as a motion from the identical toward an Other that is absolutely other” (ibid.). This orientation which “goes freely from Same to Other” is what he refers to as “a Work” (ibid.; capitals in original). Yet for the Work to be radically Other-centred it “must not be thought as an apparent agitation of a stock that afterward remains identical to itself” – which is Levinas’s way of saying that engagement in the Other should not leave the self unaffected or unchanged – nor must it be thought “as similar to the technique that ... transforms a strange world into a world whose otherness is converted to my idea” (ibid.) – which I read as another way of describing what, above, I have called the hermeneutical

‘gesture,’ bringing what is other into *my* understanding. That is why Levinas insists that the Work needs to be understood as “*a movement of the Same toward the Other that never returns to the Same*” (ibid., emphasis in original).

If the Work is really done without any returns, without anything coming back to us, then it is also important, so Levinas argues, that we do not think of it as something that fulfils some kind of need we would have – such as the need to do good or the need to care for the other – as in such cases the fulfilment of the need would be the ‘return’ we receive. In this context Levinas introduces the notion of desire (see ibid.). Yet here desire is not to be understood as desire for fulfilment, which is why Levinas writes that “(t)he Desire for Others – sociality – arises in a being who lacks nothing or, more exactly, arises beyond all that could be lacking or satisfying to him” (ibid.). In desire the ego goes out to the Other “in a way that compromises the sovereign identification of the Ego with oneself” (ibid.). Desire so conceived is therefore non-egological. But how should we ‘approach’ this “desire for Others that,” according to Levinas, “we feel in the most common social experience” (ibid., p.30)? Levinas observes that “(a)ll analysis of language in contemporary philosophy emphasizes, and rightfully so, its hermeneutic structure” (ibid.), that is, that our approach to the other is to be understood as an act of signification, an act through which we try to understand and make sense of the other. Levinas, however, is after a “third option” where the other is neither “collaborator and neighbour of our cultural work of expression [nor] client of our artistic production, but *interlocutor*; the one to whom expression expresses” (ibid., emphasis added).

Precisely here we find a first and crucial ‘opening,’ in that Levinas suggests that signification is precisely *not* an egological act. It is not a gesture through which the ego generates meaning, it is not self-generated expression ‘onto’ a world. Signification, in other words, is *not* hermeneutics because, as Levinas writes, “before it is a celebration of being, *expression is a relation* with the one to whom I express the expression” (ibid.; emph. added). The Other “who faces me” is precisely for this reason “not included in the totality of being that is expressed,” because in that case – and this is the crucial step in the argument – the other would only be a ‘product’ of my signification; the Other would be my construction. The Other rather arises “behind all collection of being, as the one to whom I express what I express” (ibid.). That this is so, Levinas argues, is because it is only through the presence of the Other as *interlocutor* that “a phenomenon such as signification [can] introduce itself, of itself, into being” (ibid.).

That is why, as interlocutor, as the one to whom I express the expression “and whose presence is already required so that my cultural gesture of expression can be produced,” the Other is “neither a cultural signification nor a simple given” but rather “primordially,

*sense*” (ibid., emphasis in original). Here we have to remember that ‘sense’ for Levinas is precisely that which gives our signification meaning and, going on from this, gives our life direction. Levinas emphasises that this ‘turn’ “means returning in a new way to Platonism” (ibid., p.38) because it allows to go beyond “this saraband of countless equivalent cultures, each one justifying itself in its own context” (ibid., p.37).

What Levinas is beginning to suggest, therefore, is that signification is *not* the ‘first reality of the self,’ which means that we should not think of ourselves as sense-making beings, but that sense-making only ‘makes sense’ in the encounter with the Other – an encounter which Levinas characterises as fundamentally of an ethical ‘nature.’

#### 4. A second opening: The question of communication

Before I draw this discussion to a close there is one more aspect of Levinas’s line of thought that needs to be brought in, a line which responds to the point raised above about the question how communication – or with Levinas’s term: interlocution – is actually possible. It has to do with the question how the Other actually can be an interlocutor, and it is here that I would suggest that a second ‘opening’ occurs.

While Levinas acknowledges that the manifestation of the Other is produced “in the way all signification is produced,” that is, through an act of my “comprehension of the Other” which, as Levinas emphasises, is “a hermeneutic, an exegesis” (ibid., pp. 30-31), the Other does not just come to me as a ‘product’ of my signification. After all, if that were the case then signification would remain the original event even if this signification would have an ethical ‘quality,’ for example, arising from my intention to want to do good to the other or care for the other. In addition to the appearance of the Other as *phenomenon*, as product of my signification, there is therefore also what Levinas refers to as the “epiphany of the Other” – an epiphany that bears its own significance, “independent of the signification received from the world” (ibid., p. 31), as he puts it. The Other “not only comes to us from a context but signifies itself, without that mediation” (ibid.). It is this unmediated presence which Levinas refers as ‘face’ and it is to the epiphany of the face that Levinas refers as ‘visitation’ (see ibid.). Face, so we might say, ‘breaks through’ its signification, that is, through its image. This is a process of ‘deformalization’ (Cohen, 2006, p. xxxi) where the face speaks and where this speaking “is first and foremost this way of coming from behind one’s appearance, behind one’s form; an opening in the opening” (Levinas, 2006, p. 31).

But the face does not speak in general – its speaking is not “the unveiling of the

world” (ibid.). Rather the face speaks to *me*; the face addresses me, the face summons me. It is precisely here, so Levinas argues, that “(c)onsciousness loses its first place” (ibid.) because “the presence of the face signifies an irrefutable order – a commandment – that arrests the availability of consciousness” (ibid.). Levinas emphasises that in this moment of interruption consciousness is challenged by the face, but that it is crucial to see that this challenge “does not come from awareness of that challenge” (ibid.) because in that case, again, signification would come *before* the address. That is why Levinas emphasises that it is “a challenge of consciousness, not a consciousness of the challenge.” (ibid, p. 33) This visitation is therefore “the upset of the very egoism of the Ego” (ibid.). It is important to see, however, that this does not amount to the destruction of the Ego but rather to what we might call a decentring; a decentring through which the ego gains its unique significance. As Levinas explains, the responsibility “that empties the Ego of its imperialism [rather] confirms the uniqueness of the Ego,” a uniqueness which lies in the fact “that no one can answer in my stead” (ibid.). And discovering “such an orientation for the Ego means identifying Ego and morality” (ibid.) – and hence the moral ‘origin’ of the Ego-as-subject, which is precisely what I have tried to express in the idea of an ethics of subjectivity.

## 5. The criterion, communication, and the origin of signification

I have followed Levinas’s argument in detail in order to show how this line of thought addresses the problems with the contemporary philosophy of signification, which were the question of *sense* – Where does signification get its meaning from? – the question of *communication* – How is communication possible in a radically plural universe? – and the question of the *criterion* – What makes it possible for us to evaluate systems and traditions of signification? Levinas’s line of thought provides an answer to these three questions, not so much to each of the questions separately but more in an overlapping and interlocking way.

One key insight is the observation that signification is not an egological act or accomplishment but consists of a relation with the one to whom I express an expression, the one to whom expression expresses, as Levinas puts it. Signification thus derives its sense from this particular ‘event’ or an ‘encounter’ with another being. In this relation the Other does not appear as object of my signification, but as interlocutor. That is why the ‘appearance’ of the Other is a matter of epiphany. And what appears is not an image of the Other – which again would make the Other into the ‘product’ of my signification –

but what Levinas refers to as its face.

It is important to see that just as the face is not the product of *my* signification, the epiphany of the face is also not a matter of the other's signification of me. The face does not thematise me; the face does not make me into an object of its signification. Rather the face *speaks to me*. This speech – and this is crucial as well – is not a revelation of the Other that I am just to receive.<sup>7</sup> The key idea here is that the face speaks to *me* or, to be more precise: the speech of the face addresses me (and here we need to emphasise both the fact that the face *addresses* and that the face addresses *me*, in the singular, and not just anyone, which means that this is a first person matter and not a general theory or truth).

It is an address in which my 'imperialism,' my being with myself, is interrupted, where my consciousness is challenged – "(t)he face disorients the intentionality that sights it" (ibid., p.33) – and where I am called to respond, albeit that I always have the freedom *not* to respond to this call, because the call is not an obligation but a call. It is precisely in this moment, in this ethical event, that the Ego gains its significance, precisely because it appears beyond/before/outside of any signification.

In short, then, the criterion that Levinas has been searching for appears here as ethics; communication is not a matter of the exchange of meaning(s) but has its origin in the address, in the being-spoken-to; and it is in the ethical event of being addressed that signification acquires its sense, that significant becomes possible or, with the more precise formulation Levinas offers: that signification introduces itself into being.

## 6. Teaching for the possibility of being taught

I started this presentation with critical questions about the all too common critique of traditional teaching – a critique that seems to have become the new dogma of contemporary education. I showed how this critique has led to a demise of teaching and

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<sup>7</sup> I do not have the time in this presentation to engage in detail with the distance between Levinas and Heidegger, but this is one point where this distance appears and where, in my view, Levinas crucially moves beyond Heidegger. Whereas, to put it briefly and crudely, Heidegger and Levinas both see a similar problem with signification – namely that signification is egological, that it is driven by the self and always returns to the self – Heidegger proposes that the alternative to signification is reception, where we receive what speaks to us and care for it, whereas Levinas proposes that the alternative to self-enclosed signification lies in the fact that what speaks to us addresses us, singles us out, and summons a response. Whereas pure receptivity is ultimately criterion-less – it has no criterion to 'select' or judge what it should care for – Levinas 'moves' us from receptivity to responsibility, where the question for me is not how to receive and hold, but to ask what is being asked from me (with the emphasis, once more, on me in the singular, not on anyone in general). The distance between Heidegger and Levinas is also the reason why, earlier in this presentation I identified two different problems with the hermeneutical worldview – not only the problem how the world can speak in its own terms but also how we can be spoken to.

the teacher and a turn towards learning; a turn where the teacher can only exist as a facilitator of otherwise autonomous learning processes.

The reason for the emergence of the turn towards learning seems to lie in the fact that ‘traditional’ teaching is perceived as an act of *control*. The key problem with the idea of teaching as control is that in such a relationship the student can never appear as a subject but remains an object of the teacher’s intentions and interventions. Yet what emerges from the ideas put forward in this presentation, is that the option that is proposed as a response to the idea of teaching-as-control, namely the idea of learning as meaning making or signification, suffers from the same problem in that in acts of signification the learner also cannot appear as subject.

One way to understand why this is so has to do with the fact that acts of signification are issued from the self and return – ‘via’ the world as I have put it – to the self. Signification, so we might say, keeps the self to the self; to its own frameworks of interpretation and sense-making. Another way of looking at this, is to say that in its ongoing attempts to adapt and adjust to always changing enviroing conditions the self remains an object vis-à-vis the environment it is trying to adapt to. While such acts of creative adaptation may help the self to *survive*, it never results in a possibility for the self to *exist*. The question that never arises, to put it differently, is whether the environment to which the self is trying to adapt is an environment one ought to adapt to, an environment worth adapting to. The self – and perhaps we should say: the adjusting or adaptive self – can never out of its own generate a criterion with which to evaluate that which it is adjusting to. It is thus ‘caught,’ as an object,’ by that to which it is adjusting – an issue I tried to make clear with the image of the robot vacuum cleaner.

This is where the ‘opening’ Levinas establishes has its significance, as it shows that our subject-ness is *not* constituted from the inside-out through acts of interpretation and adaptation, but is called into being from the outside, as an interruption of my immanence, an interruption of my being-with-myself, of my consciousness. This, as I have tried to show, is neither the moment where I interpret the other, nor the moment where I listen to the other, and it is also not the moment where the other makes sense of me, and in this regard, it is entirely outside of the realm of signification. It rather is *the moment where I am addressed* by the other, where the other, to use Levinas’s words, “[calls] upon the unique within me.”

Here we encounter an altogether different account of the ‘event’ of teaching, one that is precisely *not* aimed at control, at the exercise of power and the establishment of an order in which the student can only exist as object, but rather one that calls forth the subject-ness of the student by interrupting its egocentrism, its being-with-itself and for-

itself. This is not only a teaching that puts us very differently in the world. We could even say that this teaching puts us in the world in the first place. It is (a) teaching that draws us out of ourselves, as it interrupts our ‘needs,’ to use Levinas’s term, and in this sense frees us from the ways in which we are bound to or even determined by our needs and desires.

A final question this raises is whether the teacher appears in this set up as the interrupter, as the one who addresses the student, calls the student to be a self, calls upon the unique in the student – in order to use phrases that, by now, have hopefully become a little more familiar. While this *may* occur in teacher-student relationships, there are two problems we should be mindful of. One is the risk that if we task teachers with the work of interruption, we may very quickly return them to the very place from which we tried to release them – where the teacher ends up as the ‘power figure’ who ‘provokes’ the subject-ness of the student. The other problem when we think that the teacher is the one who addresses the student is the suggestion that the address can only come from the teacher which, obviously, is not true.

This is why I wish to suggest that key for the work of teachers is not to see themselves as interrupters or ‘addressers’ but rather as those who try to turn students away from their being-with-themselves and try to turn them towards ‘the world,’ that is towards what may address them. Such a world-centred approach to education can never guarantee that students will encounter an address, nor can it predict where the address may come from. But it is a teaching that at least tries to keep the possibility of the occurrence of the experience of ‘being taught’ open.

## 7. The return of teaching

We have arrived, then, at the option that seems to be absent in the current way in which the critique of traditional teaching is being formulated, where the critique of teaching-as-control immediately ends up with the idea of learning-as-freedom. In this presentation I have not only tried to argue that a different alternative *is* possible. I have also suggested that a different alternative *ought to be* possible. These ideas, then, begin to outline a non-egological approach to teaching, an approach that is not aimed at strengthening the ego, but at interrupting the *ego-object*, at turning it towards the world, so that it can become a *self-subject*.

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# Teaching for the possibility of Ignorant Citizen in the Context of Education in Japan

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## **Abstract**

Inspired by Gert Biesta's insightful category of ignorant citizen and pedagogy of interruption, I will discuss about the possibility of introducing these categories to citizenship education in Japan. The Structure of my paper consists of 4 parts. First, I will discuss about the social structure of education in post-WW2 Japan. Second, I would like to examine the transformation of post-WW2 system in Japan and refer to the shift to the political and refer to the significance of the category of Biesta's ignorant citizen. Third, based in the context mentioned above I would like to make it clarify how Biesta poses the rediscovery of teaching. Fourth, I would like to make some comments to Biesta's presentation (Biesta 2018).

## **1. Social structure of education in post -WW2 Japan**

In the first part of this paper I will discuss about the social structure of education in post -WW2 Japan.

Enrollment in upper secondary schools (high school for fifteen- to eighteen-year-olds in Japan) has risen from 50 percent in 1960 to over 80 percent in 1970, and to over 95 percent after the 1990s. Thus as Japan prospered economically, public upper secondary schools accommodated nearly all potential students in Japan. In the post-Cold War era, the social structure of education in Japan attained maturity. I believe the time is now ripe for citizenship education.

As for the structural changes in school curriculums, there are four epochs in post-WWII Japan.

First, the era of progressivism (1945–1958) saw the predominance of problem-

solving curriculums and waning of government regulation. Second, from 1958 to 1992, systematic principles and discipline-centered curriculums were dominant, and government regulation was enforced. Third, during the “pressure-free education” (yutori) period (1992–2008), the Japanese government reintroduced a problem-solving curriculum, and government regulation was partly relaxed. And fourth, the “post-pressure-free education” period, from 2009 to the present, is of particular interest, because citizenship education through curriculum innovation is required to overcome the dichotomy between the discipline-centered curriculums of the development era and the problem-solving curriculums of the current pressure-free education era.

So I think citizenship education in Japan is introduced in the very political context after the cold war era.

## 2. Shift to the political

So the question is that what is the specific structural change in the Post-Cold War era. In the second part of my presentation I will answer to this question.

In 2015 the voting age for national and local government elections was lowered to 18 from 20, starting with the upper house election in the summer of 2016. This means that eighteen years old high school students can cast their own vote for government election. It is a historical change in Japan.

In Japan, students had been sheltered from broader social and political movements and circumstances and, therefore, had not had sufficient opportunity to be active participants in the experiment of democracy. However, followed by the lowering of voting age to 18, Japanese government began to introduce a new type of political education, and many public schools are now trying to implement the education of political literacy focusing on the controversial issues, and mock election. This is a paradigm shift of political education from the sheltered system to the early exposure system.

Gert Biesta emphasizes this early exposure system by introducing the category of ignorant citizen. “The ignorant citizen is the one who is ignorant of a particular definition of what he or she is supposed to be as a “good citizen.” The ignorant citizen is the one who, in a sense, refuses this knowledge and, through this, refuses to be domesticated, refuses to be pinned down in a predetermined civic identity. This does not mean that the ignorant citizen is completely “out of order”.”(Biesta 2011:97)

Biesta challenges the traditional idea that it is possible to have a model for a good

citizen. Rather citizenship education must draw from various sources, especially practical experience, to effectively influence young individuals in becoming active citizens. According to Biesta, the ignorant citizen is a key category to break through the traditional idea of citizenship. “Learning here is not about the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies or dispositions but has to do with an ‘exposure’ to and engagement with the experiment of democracy. It is this very engagement that is subjectifying.”(Biesta 2011:97) It seems that Biesta’s “ignorant citizen” is like citizen as cocreator, which Harry Boyte(Boyte 2004:92), citizenship theorist in US, or Hannah Arendt’s natality, that means a beginning that conserves the world as new, and prevents it from being ruined.(Arendt 1958, Kodama 2006)

### **3. The condition of teaching beyond traditional idea of citizenship**

Then I’d like to make it clear that in Biesta’s theoretical framework what is the unique characteristics of rediscovery of teaching different from other two models. According to Biesta there is a kind of binary constructions of options, the first is the authoritarian and traditional forms of teaching, and second is the abolition of teaching and a turn towards learning. Then Biesta tries to pose the third option that focuses on the reconstruction of teaching along progressive line. In this section I will overview the Biesta’s formulation on these three options.(Biesta 2018)

At the first option, the authoritarian and traditional forms of teaching, teacher speaks and control students, then students are supposed to listen and absorb information.

At the second option, teacher only exists as a facilitator of autonomous learning processes. Such a learner-centered approach could be explained as the image of the robot vacuum cleaner. Like robot vacuum cleaner learners adapt to their environment in an intelligent way without any intervention from the outside, without any direct intervention from a teacher. Signification of the world by learner is, as Levinas criticizes, assumed to be an act of accomplishment by pre-existence of the ego-logical self.

A third option focuses on the reconstruction of teaching along progressive lines which is missing in both the first and second option. By introducing Levinas, Biesta redefines the role of the teacher as interlocutor. From this point of view, Signification is not an ego-logical accomplishment, but it derives its sense from the event or an encounter with another being, and Other does not appear as object of signification, but as interlocutor. Here the account of teaching is not aimed at control, at the exercise of power and the establishment of an order in which student can only exist as object, but rather

calls for the subject-ness of student by interrupting its egocentrism.

For example, in September 2018, 6th grade elementary school students from Kijima Daira elementary school in Nagano prefecture came to the University of Tokyo and made presentation of their results of comprehensive learning to University of Tokyo students. This scene could be regarded as a typical example of learner-centered model which is popular among active learning boom. But different from TED, the role of lecturer and listener is not fixed, and every participant was talking, explaining, and questioning with each other, and different from robot vacuum cleaner, students were not existing as an ego-logical self. They are interrupted from the outside of their own community, and exposed to other community and other public world. I think it is this point that Biesta's model of citizenship education as focusing on ignorant citizen encounters his rediscovery of teaching.

#### 4. Some comments

At the last section I will pose some comments to Biesta's presentation.

My first comment is who takes an initiative of interruption. According to Levinas in the moment of interruption consciousness is challenged by the face. So subject-ness as an ignorant citizen is challenged and decentered in response to Other, so initiative is not taken by subject, but by other person. On the other hand as Biesta wrote in other article (Biesta 2015), Hannah Arendt says that initiative is a key category for the beginning and renewing of the public world. So in the Arendtian view point only under the condition of plurality where action is to be understood as a combination of initiatives it is possible for everyone to act as citizens. So there is an issue of who takes an initiative at the pedagogy of interruption.

Inspired by Jacques Rancière, Biesta poses the category of teaching as dissensus. According to Biesta the idea of teaching as dissensus can be said to interrupt a logic of child's development or student growth. If so, teaching as dissensus can be understood as an example of a breakthrough of pedagogy of interruption which has a kind of problem of the subject of taking initiative. In teaching as dissensus, who takes an initiative is no longer a major problem. Rather, the problem is the heterogeneity inherent in each beginning.

Levinas tends to privilege the precedent nature of others. In contrast, Arendt tends to privilege the precedent nature of subject with initiatives. The criticism of "imperialism" of the self, brought up by Biesta, and its decentralization are going to get over these

privileges, and it is at this point that teaching as dissensus and the idea of ignorant citizen encounter with each other.

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## **Freedom, Authority, and the Experience of the Pathos: A Response to Gert Biesta’s “The Rediscovery of Teaching”**

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### **Introduction**

First, please allow me to share a personal recollection. The first time I ever saw the name of Gert Biesta was in the book *Derrida & Education* (Routledge, 2001), which he edited with Denise Egéa-Kuehne. Ever since 1997, when I was a Bachelor student, I have worked on the philosophy of Lévinas, and for the past twenty years have focused on the following two tasks. First, understanding, from a perspective that examines the Enlightenment and Romanticism as its criticism, the philosophy of the Frankfurt school (Adorno, Benjamin etc.) and Hannah Arendt as well as the philosophical endeavors of so-called post-structuralist philosophers. Second, genealogically re-interpreting twentieth century post-modern thought by connecting it historically and theoretically with German philosophy and educational thought at the turn of the nineteenth century (Kant, Schelling, Herder etc.).

Based on these interests I was engaging in a continual trial-and-error process of attempting to understand the possibilities of Lévinasian philosophy, particularly how to discuss his thought in the context of pedagogical problematics. However, Lévinas was not a very popular object of study for scholars of education at the time. Those who did focus on Lévinas understood his thought based on specific *biases*. There was therefore no research on “Lévinas and education” that could satisfy my interest, excluding Michael Wimmer’s work *Der Andere und die Sprache*. It was in this context that *Derrida & Education* appeared before my eyes. This was the year after I wrote my Master’s thesis on the realization of ethical subjectivity in the work of Emmanuel Lévinas and Martin Buber. Derridean philosophy is, of course, deeply related to that of Lévinas. At the time I thought that Derrida’s thought was an *ill fit* for pedagogy to the same extent as that of Lévinas, and this book boldly showed the possibilities of discussing Derrida’s thought as

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pedagogical problematics, giving me the courage to continue my somewhat stumbling research on Lévinas. In this sense, I am indebted to Biesta and his work, and while many years have passed, I am very happy that I can finally share my gratitude with him in person.

Here I have been assigned the task of responding to Biesta's paper on Lévinasian philosophy-inspired pedagogy. While I would like to repay my academic debt to him, from a Lévinasian perspective, this is not possible. Even so, I would like to respond to his paper by offering some comments and raising a few questions.

## 1. The Meaning of Rediscovering Teaching in the Age of Learning

Biesta discussed "the need for a recovery and the rediscovery of teaching" in his paper. When doing so, Biesta criticized the unfruitful binary that serves as the premise of discussions surrounding education: *either* so-called 'traditional' teaching and authoritarian forms of teaching *or* the abolition of teaching and 'autonomous' learning process. In his book *The Rediscovery of Teaching*, Biesta repeatedly makes clear that "teaching is not a limitation of the freedom of the student, but the very way through which the student-as-subject may emerge" (Biesta 2017: 41). Using the idea of "the experience of being addressed," he attempts to overcome an 'egological worldview' and places at the center of our understanding of teaching the awakening of students and children as subjects living in a creative relationship with the world.

I agree with this idea, and think that it provides for us philosophers of education a fundamental yet very fresh perspective on the understanding of teaching and education. I am also sure that the various ideas ushered in by his research provide courage and encouragement to parents and teachers who are struggling with difficulties related to teaching and education on a daily basis. Below, I would like to comment on aspects of his paper by which I was particularly inspired.

Biesta provides a diagnosis: autonomous learning is increasingly being strengthened while teaching is backgrounded. However, he also states, "to establish a more general case for the recovery and rediscovery of teaching is fraught with difficulties." This is because in many cases the emphasis on teaching comes "from the conservative end of the political spectrum" (ibid.: 42).

These diagnosis and assessment are very useful when thinking about contemporary Japan. For example, a Central Education Council report entitled "Improving the Quality and Abilities of School Education Teachers" (No. 184), emphasizes that teachers should

continually and autonomously learn, using phrases like “an autonomous learning orientation” and “qualities and abilities demanded by the changing times and their own career stages.” It appears that this increasing emphasis on learning can be found not only in the case of students but teachers as well. These assertions are in and of themselves certainly important—the kind of things that therefore no one would argue against. However, it appears that the spirit and principles orienting this report do not really respect teachers’ autonomous learning or creative activities.

For example, while the report highlights the need to adapt to an era of globalization, English-language education is basically the only proposed method of doing so. One does not really find any mention of addressing global problems, such as those related to poverty and the environment, or war, violence, nationalism, and colonialism. Also, judging from the report’s content, its phrase “changing times” appears to only refer to things related to new technologies: research on AI, the use of big data and ICT, and so on. What does this mean? It appears that the report’s ideal image of a teacher is one who quickly attunes themselves and adapts to societal changes. The report expects an ironic outcome: school education and teachers’ *unidirectional technical adaptation* to ‘external’ changes leading to an “autonomous learning orientation.” What is lacking is respect for the fact that schools and teachers are actors with subjectivity that produce change—that they are the source, along with students and children, of creative activities that gives rise to the new.

As we can see, it appears that it is not the case that “learning” is simply emphasized and “teaching” being done away with. A situation has emerged in which, while on the surface one finds terms related to “learning” and an emphasis on its strengthening, for all intents and purposes schools and teachers are increasingly expected to be technically attuned to the times and teaching is being further used as a method of control. While my example was about the learning of teachers, the same kind of spirit and principles are dominating student learning. In this context Biesta’s attempt to rediscover teaching shows us *what is wrong* with the spirit and principles dominating contemporary Japanese education.

## 2. Freedom as Responsibility and Relationships

There are several important points of inquiry when understanding Biesta’s idea of teaching, particularly regarding the nature of freedom and of authority. He points out the following regarding them:

“Such teaching is not authoritarian because it does not reduce the student to an object but rather has an interest in the student’s subject-ness. But it does not overcome authoritarianism by *opposing* it [...]. It does so by establishing an entirely different relationship. This is a relationship of authority, because in moving from what we desire to what we can consider desirable, we give authority to what and who is other or, with a slightly different word, we *authorize* what and who is other by letting it be an author, that is, a subject that speaks and addresses *us*” (Biesta 2017: 56).

Here, Biesta says that teaching “does not overcome authoritarianism by *opposing* it.” This follows his basic orientation of not overcoming traditional teaching by placing autonomous learning in *opposition to* it. Such a relationship would impoverish both teaching and learning and ends up reproducing an oppositional schema that is not beneficial.

Such a criticism appears to overlap with the criticism of German anti-education movement (*Antipädagogik*). The anti-pedagogical position is based on a certain mistaken understanding of the concept of freedom. In its place he proposes a third option regarding freedom: “It is in this third option — an option which relies on the idea that freedom is not the opposite of authority or an escape from authority, but has to do with establishing a “grown-up” relationship with what may have authority in our lives” (ibid.: 42).

This way of thinking is similar to the understanding of freedom that Martin Buber expressed around ninety years ago at a presentation at the New Education Fellowship (Buber, “Rede über das Erzieherische,” 1926). Buber criticized a mistaken conception of freedom that places ‘compulsion’ and ‘non-interference’ in opposition to each other based on a dualistic schema between old and new education, and said that the polar opposite of compulsion is not freedom (in the sense of non-interference or leaving alone) but rather “communion” (*Verbundenheit*). In other words, compulsion in education means “disunion” (*das Nichtverbundensein*) with others and the world, and freedom in education is the “possibility of communion” (*das Verbundenwerdenkönnen*) with others and the world (Buber 1962: 795). Here “communion” means having the responsibility to the addresses of others and devoting oneself completely to them, while working together to create reality with them. Freedom is not realized simply by being liberated from something. Rather, freedom is fully realized in accordance with how one relates to others and the kinds of relationships created in the process. Buber’s idea of freedom as communion shares aspects in common with Lévinas’s idea of “invested freedom” (*la liberté investie*) and “questioned freedom” (*la liberté mise en question*) (Lévinas 1990).

Of course, at the root of this we find traditional Jewish dialogical thought about being in a relationship in which one responds to God's call, as well as about the subject and its freedom being formed as responsibility to others. However, this is not a tradition that is the sole property of Judaism; as Biesta convincingly argues, it is an idea open to education in general that also enriches one's understanding of education.

### 3. Authority as the Capacity to “Newly Bring into Existence”

The nature of authority is just important as—and also deeply related to—the question of freedom.

As we saw in the previous quote, Biesta chooses the path of investigating a third “entirely different relationship” that deconstructs a non-beneficial binary opposition schema. Why, though, is this an “entirely different relationship”? Of course, he explains that this is because it is characterized by treating students as not objects but subjects. However, why and how do freedom and authority connect amidst relationships with subjects?

Émile Benveniste's famous etymological research provides an answer to this (Benveniste 1969). Benveniste points out that both “authority” and “author” are derived from the Latin *auctor* (creator, ancestor) and *auctoritas* (support, influence, authority), and that this etymology is normally explained in connection to *augeo* (increase). However, Benveniste continues, “increase” is “a secondary and weakened sense of *augeo*” and has the more fundamental meaning of men who can “cause something to come into being and can literally ‘bring into existence’” (Benveniste 1969: 151). While “increase” means to “make something *which existed before* bigger (*rendre plus grand quelque chose qui existe déjà*),” Benveniste says that “*augeo* denotes [...] the act of producing from within itself (*l'acte de produire hors de son propre sein*)” (ibid.: 149).

“The primary sense of *augeo* is discovered in *auctoritas* with the help of the basic term *auctor*. Every word pronounced with *authority* determines a change in the world; it creates something. This mysterious quality is what *augeo* expresses, the power which causes plants to grow and brings a law into existence” (ibid.: 150f.).

This point—that the original meaning of “authority” and “author” is not “to increase something that already exists” but “the ability to bring something into existence”—is very important for differentiating between authoritarianism and authority; the goal of

authoritarianism is to increase something that already exists. This perspective also shows the rich possibilities of Biesta's "pedagogy of interruption" (Biesta 2010) that tries to construct free subjects that open up to the outside (in contrast to education that, based on the principle of increasing what already exists, boils down to *qualification* and *socialization*).

At the root of the concepts of "authority" and the "author" Benveniste found what we could also perhaps call the capacity to newly bring things into existence. This is related to Arendt's attempt to give significance humans and education by updating the meaning of public realm and "the in-between" (*der weltliche Zwischenraum*) (Arendt 1967: 309) based on the concept of "the capacity of beginning something anew" (*die Fähigkeit, selbst einen neuen Anfang zu machen*) (ibid.: 18). Being free is to exist in relation to others and the world and is connected to creating the new. Due to this creative power of relationships, being free is connected to authority.

#### 4. Facilitators vs. Teachers?

There is still a large set of difficult problems in education related to freedom and authority. Biesta began his paper (and book) with a criticism of the position that the only meaningful response to authoritarian teaching is the abolition of teaching and a turn towards learning. While I also agree with this criticism, at the same time I do not think that things end here.

For example, consider "free schools" or "alternative schools." There, there are "staff members" that call themselves facilitators. It may be true that those who claim to be facilitators unjustifiably lower the value of teaching. However, such critical position might be criticized on the grounds that it unfairly underestimates the unique importance at times of facilitators for children who have been harmed and disappointed by, and therefore runaway from, studying at school. Or, it could also be criticized for weakening, although not intentionally, the unique importance that autonomous learning can have.

Rediscovering teaching is important. However, is there not a need to also look into the more positive meaning of *another* form of "teaching" for people who favor facilitators? Their activities are not a simple rejection of teaching. It surely is important to also understand the meaning of "teaching" in a form that is on the surface "not teaching" has for them. As I think Biesta will agree, the meaning of this "teaching by not-teaching" is related to the content of his "rediscovered teaching."

## 5. Experience, Ethics of the Weak, and Pathos

In closing let us turn to the Japanese pedagogical context. In 1988 ‘Clinical Pedagogy’ (*Rinsho-Kyoikugaku*) appeared in Japan, and since then has continued to play a role to some content in the country. The education scholar Shuji Wada (1932- ) and Analytical and Clinical Psychologist Hayao Kawai (1928-2007) collaborated to create Clinical Pedagogy. However, the Dutch education scholar Martinus Jan Langeveld (1905-1989) played a decisive role in its birth, serving as an intellectual backbone. In Clinical Pedagogy, teaching is understood as a dual activity comprised of ‘pedagogical’ and ‘therapeutic’ elements. Perhaps these could also be described as ‘promotive’ and ‘receptive’ elements. At the foundation of the position assumed by Clinical Pedagogy is the approach of “facing the deathbed,” an idea connected to the etymology of the word “clinical.” In this approach existed a deep understanding of the “helpless” nature of humans, the tragedy of life, and the world of the weak (Wada & Sumeragi eds. 1996; Sumeragi 2018). We can interpret it as the logic not of the strong but the weak, or as an attempt to understand education from the ethics of the weak and then produce a new educational theory and practice (Ono 2015; Ono 2017).

Drawing from Lévinas, Biesta points out that subjects arise after being addressed by the other.

“Levinas puts forward the view that sense-making does not come *before* our encounter with the other but actually only arises *as a result of* the encounter with the other or, to be even more precise: as a result of the “experience” of being addressed by another (human) being” (Biesta 2017: 5).

Also, in closing his lecture Biesta emphasized the following:

“Such a world-centered approach to education can never guarantee that students will encounter an address, nor can it predict where the address may come from” (Biesta 2018: 11).

Here Biesta points to very important ideas: (1) passive experience, or the passivity of experience, (2) the relationship of experience to the formation of meaning (meaning cannot be formed without a relationship with the other or the world), (3) the retrospectiveness of experience acquiring meaning (meaning can only be spoken of as a result), and (4) helplessness, beyond-one’s-control-ness, fragility, and logics and ethics of

the weak.

If we trace the etymology of “experience,” that is, “ex-periri,” we find that it means “to try to do something,” “to go through perils,” and “suffering.” Therefore, in the first place we cannot establish the meaning of experience in advance, namely, we cannot “guarantee” nor “predict” anything. Lévinas suggested that, in contrast to knowledge which gives preference to certainty or experience before living (*éprouver avant de vivre*) and turns experience into something quantifiable, experience is a passive event in which one is subjected to or “caught up in the world” (*s’engager dans le monde*) (Lévinas 2005: 75f.). Michel Foucault, in his later years, was also interested in the genealogy of “experiences of spiritualité,” which cannot be reduced to *scientia* or knowledge, such as “the trials in one’s own life” and “the form one’s life takes” (Foucault 2001; Foucault 2009). Modern science replaces this natural form of experience with knowledge of things that are certain or knowledge that is predictable. However, experience is, as Giorgio Agamben suggested, essentially, *pathei mathos* (πάθει μάθος); that is, the essence of human experience is “to learn through *pathos*” (Agamben 2001; Ono 2018a; Ono 2018b; Ono 2018c).

Along with deeply understanding the unique significance of humans’ passivity, beyond-one’s-control-ness, and weakness, thought must be created that gives full attention to the possibility of human co-existence, cooperativity, communality and community; the existential condition of human beings with com-passion. With such thought we can criticize education that encloses students in a shut-off autonomous world as well as education that quantifies experience and only emphasizes knowledge based on that which can be said in advance with certainty (Ono 2018e). Also, we can open up a path that updates understandings of education and provides a vision of education that includes its diverse potential. We are attempting to do this in our joint research project entitled “The Patho-logical Turn of Education” (Okabe & Ono eds. 2019), and the above-discussed four perspectives in Biesta’s research provide us with inspiration and encouragement—probably in ways that we have not even yet become aware of.

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## **Reconsidering the Intersection of Politics and Education: East Asian Perspectives**

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### **Reconsidering the Intersection of Politics and Education**

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In this roundtable, we would like to further our understanding of political influences on education and reconsider the politics of education by inviting young educational philosophers from East Asia. Modern society has fabricated opportunistic fiction regarding the political neutrality of education. However, education has never been politically neutral because it has never been able to escape from the political influences of the times. Instead, the histories of many countries worldwide reveal that education has been used directly or indirectly as a tool to support an existing political regime.

The same can be said regarding the acceptance of educational philosophers such as Comenius, Rousseau, and Dewey and their impact on educational theories and practices in Japan (Sohma et al. 2016). Specifically, the acceptance of John Dewey's educational ideas in Japan—which have continued to inspire, stimulate, and promote the theoretical and practical development of Japan's postwar education—has been directly influenced by the acting political regimes in different periods (Kamidara 1959). Dewey's theories have been interpreted as a progressive or child-centered form of education within the aforementioned context, and they have been interpreted indifferently regarding politics to the point of excluding political issues altogether. This seems to imply, paradoxically, that education has not been unrelated to politics.

Further, the relationship between politics and education has always been contentious. Political intervention in the “internal matters” regarding official knowledge and the corresponding curriculum is one example that is clearly evidenced by the development of the Japanese course of study and the content of history textbooks. Forty-two historical figures were designated as mandatory learning for elementary school children when the curriculum was revised in 1989, and that list remained unchanged after the latest revision issued in 2017. Selecting the persons to be included in the list caused considerable controversy at the time. Specifically, Togo Heihachiro is widely known as the famous Japanese fleet admiral who lifted Japan to victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Despite his fame, his inclusion as one of the forty-two leading figures to be studied sparked furious debates (Nakano 2005: 102; cf. Murai 1997: 113-128). Years later, memories of the controversy have faded, and the list has managed to garner widespread acceptance. Nevertheless, this has remained a very political issue as it sharply questioned not only our historical awareness but also the political dynamics related to the representation of the nation's history.

After the revision of Japan's Public Office Election Act, young people over the age of eighteen gained the right to vote. New guidelines have established the relationship between politics and education from the perspective of political education such as citizenship education. They shifted the focus regarding educational issues to the kinds of content that should be taught and learned. However, the concept of political education does not imply that the world of education must be replaced by an arena of political struggles. Further to the debates over how to teach and learn politics, a method to maintain a certain degree of distance from politics also needs to be reexamined. Likewise, it is also necessary to evaluate the political nature of political education more critically.

The problem areas of politics and education have intersected many times and seem destined to cross again. While sociopolitical philosophy considers the aims of education

in relation to calls for participatory politics and profound discourse regarding global capitalism, educational philosophy examines the new mode of politics with emphasis on moral education or political education. Based on the contexts of educational philosophy in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, this session attempted to critically review the intersection of such politics and education while raising new challenges and methods to approach their relationship going forward.

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## Money and Power in *Bad Genius*: a study in the politics of representation

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*Bad Genius* (2017, directed by Nattawut Poonpiriya) is a Thai movie—a box office hit in its home country as well as in East Asian countries such as China and Taiwan. While it can be seen as belonging to the genre of a heist movie, *Bad Genius* focuses on a group of young college students who use a number of ingenious cheating techniques to beat the examination system. Using this movie as the main example, this presentation looks at some issues relating to the representation of education.

To begin with, this paper makes the assumption that representations in general involve the exercise of power. To make sense of this claim, I resort to the notion of symbolic annihilation: 'Representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation.' (George Gerbner and Larry Gross, 'Living With Television: The Violence Profile' (1976), p. 182.) If the denial of social existence to groups such as women and ethnic minorities is a problem, one must also question the dominant way education is depicted in popular culture nowadays. For, schooling and education often receive negative portrayals in movies and the media. One may therefore ask: 'What are the effects on people's understanding of education if education is constantly discredited in various forms of representations?'

Education in *Bad Genius* is *not* depicted as a progressive measure that enhances social mobility. Instead, education in the movie appears to have no intrinsic value: while students see it as a mere means to obtain academic qualifications, teachers use education as a tool to make money. The main character of the movie, Lynn, is an intelligent girl who excels in the academic subjects. However, her need to fully develop her academic potential hinges on factors other than her intelligence. As Lynn's father has only a modest income as a teacher, sending Lynn to a prestigious school becomes a financial burden to her family. This lack of money also means that Lynn's chance to succeed in the future depends very much on obtaining a scholarship. As the number of scholarships are very limited, the movie highlights the fact that bright students such as Lynn are constantly under the pressure to obtain extra money.

Lynn's financial difficulties eventually lead her to become part of a team of cheating students. As the type of cheating undertaken by this team escalates into complex schemes that involve large number of school pupils, the last section of this presentation centers on cheating as a moral issue. Although the plan designed by Lynn and her friends succeeds in allowing many examination candidates to obtain high marks, Lynn's collaborator Bank is caught by the examination authority during the process and he is expelled from his school. Eventually Lynn decides to confess to the examination authority: she appears to have realized that cheating is morally wrong and does not want to be involved in cheating anymore.

During the roundtable discussion, the focus is mainly on the morality of cheating. Although Lynn's confession may resemble an affirmation of what is morally right, I try to argue that Lynn's confession does not manage to deal with the fundamental cause of the problem, namely, inequality. Lynn's confession does not change the imbalance of power that results from extreme wealth inequality: it only makes her situation deteriorate further. From this perspective, one may say that instead of taking a critical stance towards

the status quo, *Bad Genius* re-affirms existing inequality and power relationships.

## **Language Right and the Learning of Chinese in Postcolonial Hong Kong**

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After the change of sovereignty to China in 1997, while the power of English remains unchallenged – thanks to the neo-liberal economic structure, Hong Kong has even witnessed a rapid change of its medium of instruction in teaching Chinese – from using Cantonese to Putonghua (Mandarin) in primary and secondary schools in recent years. It raises concerns of further diminishing the language right of the linguistic majority.

Most people in Hong Kong are native Cantonese speakers (speaking Chinese in the form of Cantonese) and thus it is the majority language of the population. In the educational arena, the medium of instruction in teaching and learning Chinese in primary and secondary schools was Cantonese before 1997. But in recent years there has been a new and dominant trend to switch to Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese) in schools, especially in primary schools. In fact, Cantonese is widely seen as one of the Chinese dialects and de facto the minority language in the context of People's Republic of China. It gives pragmatic reason for schools administrators and parents to support the switch from Cantonese to Putonghua in learning Chinese in terms of future job opportunities and economic returns of the students. And, indeed, political correctness should also take a role in contributing this situation, as the Chinese central government views the insert of Putonghua into civic and educational arenas as part of the project of nation building of Chineseness.

In the field of political philosophy, language right is now the integral part of theory of justice after the critique of liberalism from communitarianism and multiculturalism in the past two decades. Maintaining language diversity has become essential issue of justice in contemporary democratic countries. People have the rights to use their own language in the public domain and they should expect to attain similar economic endowments through the use of their language in work place. It justifies the preservation of minority language and facilitate its use in public domains, government offices, and work places.

However, language right is different from those conventional liberal rights, such as universal suffrage and religious freedom, for which individual citizen could exercise

freely once their entitlements have been granted by the authority. Language right is rather a form of cooperative justice. Language needs to be used in both private and public domains in order to sustain its economic and political influence. Nonetheless, there is always unequal socio-political presence between majority and minority cultures. Minority citizens thus at least bear social and economic costs of not being familiar with majority language in the country.

When it comes to a post-colonial Hong Kong, the language issue becomes much more complicated. Under the political pressure of China, nation-building is the prominent objective for the regime to deploy public policy in Hong Kong. Education is the frontier of such cultural politics battles. Moreover, at the same time Putonghua has been earned the status as the more ‘useful language’, together with English, in current economic climate under the neo-liberal mind set. Upon such context, this presentation examined linguistic justice beyond the two prominent normative models of language – the ‘nation-building’ and ‘language preservation’ under liberalism and explore the possibility of applying and reconstructing postcolonial theory with Hong Kong experience.

### **Ideology, Collective Memory and National Identity in Schooling: The development of Taiwan history textbooks re-examined**

Ren-Jie Vincent LIN

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It is always controversial on teaching materials, textbook contents and pedagogies of the subject of history in Taiwan due to its complicated transformation of the politics over the past two hundred years. This research is mainly to re-examine the development of history textbooks in Taiwan after declaring the martial law of 1987, by the perspective of politics of education, with special reference to the concepts of ideology, collective memory and national identity. Therefore, the key question is that how the national identity was constructed in post-1949 Taiwan by shaping collective memories on history textbooks and history teaching implemented by ruling authorities’ ideologies on different periods. In the beginning, I re-examine and reflect these concepts and rationales of national identity, collective memory and ideology by academic works of sociology. After this, I do the literature review to explore the transformation of national identity in Taiwan by the related publications and some surveys, such as Taiwan Social Change Survey.

Recently, I begin to expand a new job on this stage. I am collecting different editions

of history textbooks of primary and high schools from textbook archives and library of the Center for Textbook Research, National Academy for Educational Research. Because it is a huge job, it estimates that I need to spend several months to finish it. At the same time, I will have my research definitions of national identity and collective memory by focusing on some significant and concrete items, such as patriotism, Chinese and Taiwanese appeared in history textbooks.

On the next stage, I will search these items, sentences and stories, including patriotism, ROC, China, Chinese, Taiwan and Taiwanese in history textbooks and then code them. Then, I will apply the software of Nvivo 11.0 to categorize and generalize the relationship between these key concepts, and argue how government's ideologies were shown by history textbooks on different stages in post-1949 Taiwan. By the huge influence of hidden curriculum by the history teaching, I will analyse how Taiwan's government shaped Taiwanese collective memory to highlight the national identity on different stages by its ideology.

Because of the deeply complicated sovereign status and relationship between China and Taiwan after 1949, the two ruling governments began to frame their people's collective memory and national identity by banking education in schooling, with special reference to history textbooks and history teaching guided directly by government's ideology. Based on the research questions and aims, it could be easily found the significant influence of hidden curriculum from history textbooks and the history teaching in primary and high school in Taiwan when I support my research report. Simultaneously, it also could be understood the transformation of history textbooks influenced deeply by Taiwan government's diplomatic policies on China.

## **Conclusion**

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How are politics and education intersected? This roundtable considered the question by using examples of Asian countries. Three approaches were contemplated to determine the relationship of politics and education (T. Tamura, M. Matsumoto, & N. Otobe, et al, *Introduction to Political Theory*, Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2017.): (1) an empirical analysis of political influence in education, (2) inferring educational norms from oughtness in society, and (3) considering what politics in education actually comprises by regarding concepts

of conflict and opposition as politics in themselves. If we follow these distinctions, Dr. Yan's suggestion was based on the third approach, albeit with a modification to analyze the politics of representation concerning education. Dr. Leung relied on theories of justice and post-colonial theories to address language rights in Hong Kong. He analyzed the politics of language rights empirically based on normative theories while referencing political theories beyond those normative theories. In essence, he presented a blended method devised from elements of all three approaches. Dr. Lin's contribution was based primarily on the first approach by analyzing the history of educational politics through Taiwanese history textbooks.

All three presenters considered politics within the context of educational phenomena. However, when trying to determine how politics and education are interrelated, we cannot only question education from political perspectives, rather, we must also question politics from educational perspectives. For example, we can ask how people become political subjects from the perspective of human formation, such as the ways in which people acquire the political literacy necessary for acquiring citizenship, etc. We should question education in politics as well as politics in education.