Biesta's educational theory; the shadows of the metaphysical approach and "aims of education"

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Contents:

Summary:

Biesta's educational theory has a strong focus on the event of subjectivity and receives increasing attention in the field of philosophy of education. This thesis attempts to identify what are the problems with Biesta's educational theory. Close examination reveals that Biesta's educational theory has two major problems. The first problem is that his notion of subjectification might be neither relevant to nor feasible in educational contexts. Also, there is a danger that Biesta's strong advocacy of subjectification might undermine other educational values such as morality and rational autonomy. I therefore suggest that we should take the genealogical approach to subjectivity instead of the metaphysical approach that Biesta employs. The second problem is that Biesta confuses political problems with educational problems as his theory is based on the presupposition of the existence of aims of education. With the help of Peters' claim, I suggest that education can be valuable in itself and does not need to have aims. Instead of reaching out to external aims, an educational theory should focus on the search and protection of values which are worthwhile to pass on in education and the process how these are passed on.

1 Introduction

The field of education has been intriguing me for long because of the different types of dichotomies included in it. It is a very practical domain where people with different functions and purposes interact and do certain things in a concrete system, while it is almost always under the strong normative premises. Those normative premises are not always explicitly expressed, however, we all presuppose that, either clearly or vaguely, there are certain norms embedded in education. It is also a field where individual development and happiness is pursued while political norms are taught, and social behaviors are expected. It is a domain where authentic meets foreign. Finally, it is where freedom is discussed and practiced within a confined situation.

Philosophy of education is considered to be an area of "Applied" or "Practical" philosophy in which theories of education and also the problems arising from educational theories and practices will be treated (Siegel et al. 2018). Also, education is a particular area which you cannot think of it without either normative premises or concrete practical contents and activities. The practice of education is taking place for young and old all over the world on daily basis, almost as an innocent routine work, and yet it has a life-long impact on individuals and both direct and indirect effects on the future of the state. Philosophy of education is therefore a suitable topic for a thesis for the master program of Applied Ethics.

In Gert Biesta's educational theory, some of the dichotomies which I have always found intriguing, such as individuals and society, or, freedom and restraint, are treated substantially. Biesta has developed in his theory of education the distinction of three domains of education; socialization, qualification and subjectification. His main claim is that education consists of three overlapping domains (see the below Venn-diagram), and this claim receives a lot of acknowledgment in the field of educational philosophy.

Biesta's 3 domains of education:
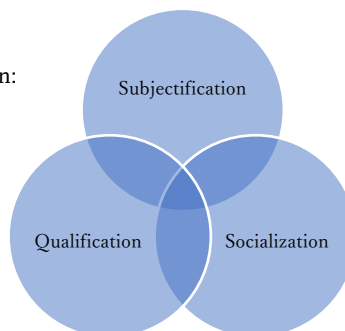
Through his trilogy of educational theory[1], Biesta strongly and passionately advocates the emergence of single and unique subjectivity. This advocation appeals to many adults who constantly feel that the emergence of their truly unique subjectivity is somewhat hindered because of an oppressive education system. They look back on their childhood and think: "My life would have been different, if I had better education which provides me opportunities to emerge truly unique myself." I am definitely one of them. I grew up in Japan where educational system is more oppressive than in Europe, and it was certainly worse 30 years ago than it is now. I can't deny that the possibility that strict rules and punishments experienced when young will, more or less, influence thinking patters of humans. And, it's a frightening thought that restraints learned at an early stage of life can be a hinderance of human freedom. Biesta's arguments for the protection of single and unique subjectivity are resonant with such a thought. It certainly has the power to make many of us fall in love with his views.

And, there is a danger that love might cloud our eyes. There are remarkably little amount of literature criticizing Biesta's educational theory, and it is out of proportion to the number of articles and books he has written. I therefore intend to contribute to the educational debate by opening up a conversation on the possible problems of Biesta's educational theory. The aim of this thesis is to perform a thorough examination on Biesta's educational theory and find out what are the problems of Biesta's educational theory. To be more specific, I'll focus on Biesta's notion of *subjectification*, which serves as the core notion of his influential educational theory, and investigate whether it is relevant in educational contexts, or not. I'll also raise a question whether it is feasible in classrooms.

The construction of my thesis will be as follows. In the following chapter, I will closely research each domain of Biesta's theory of education. To work correctly with Biesta's educational theory, I first need to analyze Biesta's theory of education closely and clarify the central concern of each domain and values defended in them. As he has written three books with no intention of making it a trilogy, the descriptions and arguments are quite sporadically spread in the three books. So, to start with the research, I will organize and categorize his arguments under each domain. Chapter 2 shows us the philosophical background of each domain and the outstanding significance of the domain of subjectivity

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[1] Biesta admits in the acknowledgment of *The Beautiful Risk of Education* that his 3 books (*Beyond Learning*, *Good Education in an Age of Measurement* and *The Beautiful Risk of Education*) together consists of his theory of education.

in Biesta's educational theory.

In chapter 3, I'll state that my research reveals that there are five major values treated as the purposes of education by Biesta, namely, democracy, freedom, equality, subjectivity and uniqueness. I will also analyze the structures of Biesta's argumentation in order to show the common structure Biesta applies to advocate each value. This research on the structures will be particularly important for my argumentation in chapter 4 to prove that Biesta employs the metaphysical approach.

The findings in chapter 2 and 3 will serve as building materials for chapter 4 and 5 where I argue against Biesta's educational theory. Chapter 4 will focus mainly on the examination on the domain of subjectivity, as the research in chapter 2 shows that Biesta's educational theory lays a heavy focus on this domain. Here, I will go back to the definition of education and examine whether this domain of subjectivity can be fitted in education and how. I raise doubt that there might be some challenges for Biesta's concept of subjectivity in the practice of education. Also, upon the discovery of the fact that Biesta's idea of 3 educational domains are resonant with the history of the evolution of subjectivity described in Mansfield's *Subjectivity*, I will suggest that these 3 domains of education might be better understood as three aspects of one and the same subject.

In chapter 5, with the help of the article of Peters, I will argue against Biesta's presupposition that there are aims of education. Peters claims that education is valuable in itself, and therefore there are no external purposes or aims beyond it (Peters 2007 [1965], 67). Based on Peter's arguments and the findings in chapter 3, I argue that the values defended in Biesta's educational theory are political values that should not necessarily be fulfilled in education. What we have to achieve in education is that students recognize those values as valuable things in a society through the acquisitions of the knowledge and skills related to those values.

Above arguments will guide us to chapter 6 where I conclude my thesis by pointing out 2 main problems of Biesta's educational theory. Firstly, Biesta's educational theory lays a heavy focus on the protection of subjectivity, however, his notion of subjectivity might not be neither relevant to nor feasible in educational context. It also might undermine the promotions of other values such as morality, rational autonomy and acquisition of knowledge which are supposed to be central concerns of education. Secondly, Biesta's presupposes that there are aims of education, however, we should not take this premise for granted. When we start with the question of "Whether education has aims or not?", we are

able to realize the possibility that education is valuable in itself. And, when we take a standpoint that education is valuable in itself and has no external aims, we will be able to be engaged with a truly educational theory and activities.

2 Biesta's 3 domains of education;
Qualification, Socialization and Subjectification

Biesta's educational theory consists of three domains of qualification, socialization and subjectification. These three domains with a specific purpose are not existing separately, but rather overlapping and intertwined in the field of education (Biesta 2016b [2010], 26). Biesta's educational theory are made out of three books, however, his theory is not systematically presented as he has written those three books with no intention of making a trilogy. I therefore try in this chapter to illustrate the development of each domain clearly by the close research of each book.

In *Beyond Learning,* the first volume of Biesta's trilogy, the majority of pages were spent for the treating of the question of subjectivity, although the term of subjectification is not yet born in this book. In *Good Education in an Age of Measurement* (hereafter referred as *Measurement*), the second volume of his trilogy, Biesta introduces the terms, 'qualification', 'socialization' and 'subjectification' to serve as three different domains to be engaged with the question of multiple purposes in education (Biesta 2016b [2010], 5, 14 and 22). Especially in the prologue and chapter 1 of *Measurement*, Biesta spent many words on drawing the framework of his educational theory in which the 3 domains are not separate from each other, but they are overlapping with each other in the form of a Venn diagram (see the chart in introduction).

Here, Biesta repeatedly says that education has three different functions in order to stress that the question of good education is not a simple but a composite question (Ibid., 21). In the third and the last volume, *The Beautiful Risk of Education* (hereafter referred as *Beautiful Risk*), Biesta further develops his idea of three domains of education and his critics on the age of learning.

2.1 The domain of Qualification

The domain of qualification is mentioned as the first and major function of education. Interestingly, Biesta spends surprisingly few pages on touching the question of qualification in his trilogy. First of all, in the first volume of his trilogy, there is no word of qualification found. Biesta mentions only once about the concept of "acquisition" as the most common conception of education (Biesta 2016a [2006], 67). He describes;

"[...]: the acquisition of something external such as knowledge, values, or skills, something that existed before the act of learning and that becomes the possession of the learner as a result of her learning." (ibid.)

I understand that this concept of acquisition provides a basis for Biesta's domain of qualification which is developed later. In *Measurement*, Biesta uses the word of qualification for the first time and declares that the qualification function is without doubt one of the most important components of organized education (Biesta 2016b [2010], 20). Qualification is acknowledged as a major function of education and described as follows;

"[...] providing them with the knowledge, skills and understandings and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgment that allow them to "do something" – a "doing" that can range from the very specific [...] to the much more general [...]." (Ibid., 19-20)

In the third volume of his trilogy, *Beautiful Risk*, a new concept related to acquisition is introduced, namely, an aspect of competency. The domain of qualification takes care that students acquire knowledges and skills so that they are qualified to do certain things in a society (Biesta 2013, 64 and 128). Biesta also specifies four objects of acquisition, namely, knowledge, skills, values and dispositions (Ibid.). It is not very clear to me what is the philosophical background of the domain of qualification, as Biesta does not treat it at all in his theory.

2.2   The domain of Socialization

The core idea of socialization in Biesta's writing is roughly 'an introduction of newcomers into an existing world.' It has to do with the way how we become part of particular social, cultural and political practices and orders (Biesta 2016b, 20. 2013, 64 and 128). Although Biesta doesn't explain the philosophical background of this concept, I assume that his concept of socialization is based on Dewey's theory of education. Dewey clearly defines the function of school as an institution providing an environment to children where they get associated with social traditions and customs (Dewey 1916, chapter 2). Dewey conceives of the function of schools as an environment where children are introduced to and get used to

the social values and conventions. At the same time, it should also be a safe environment where Children can practice those social customs without getting into trouble. It is, so to speak, a pseudo-society where children are protected until they obtain social values and dispositions (Ibid.). We can say that this idea on education described by Dewey is in agreement with the function of socialization in Biesta's theory. Also, the fact that Dewey is one of the philosophers Biesta frequently quotes in his theory endorses this assumption too.

Let me start with Biesta's argument on the notion of "community" as a relevant argument for the domain of socialization. Both in *Beyond Learning* and *Measurement* Biesta explores the notion of "community" by citing Lingis' distinction of "rational community" and "other community". The "rational community" is defined by Lingis as a community build by people who share a common language and a conceptual framework (Biesta 2016a [2006], 55). This type of community does not only share common beliefs but also produces a common voice and discourse (Ibid.). It means that the members of a rational community are made to speak as a "rational agent", in other word, merely as "a representative" of the community (Ibid., 56).

The "other community", on the other hand, provides "own unique voice" to its member. Each member's particular voice is heard in this community. After having made clear the difference between two types of community, Biesta continues to figure out what is the relation between the rational community and education. He points out that the role of schools and other educational institutions is the reproduction of rational communities (Ibid.).

Here, he reminds us that the most commonly shared conception of education is in terms of acquisition (Ibid., 67). The concept of education as acquisition is what I have discussed earlier in the previous section of qualification. Biesta attributes not only the function of qualification but also the function of socialization to the educational theories relying on the idea of learning as acquisition (Ibid.). And, education as acquisition can only introduce its students to "rational community" but not to "other community". It means that the students cannot have their own voice through education as long as it's understood as an acquisition (Biesta 2016b, 87). As a consequence, the function of both qualification and socialization are good as they provide 'representative' voices to students, but not good enough as they fail to provide their own unique voice.

It is here Biesta introduces the idea of subjectification as an important function of education which provides students with unique, own voice. In order to give a unique, single

voice to students, Biesta suggests that we have to be engaged with the question of the possibility of the "other community" within the educational system (Biesta 2016a, 70).

Although Biesta adds that he doesn't mean to exclude the role of education as the reproduction and maintenance of the "rational community" (Ibid.), he posits the function of socialization in the opposite of the function of subjectification.

> "The domain of socialization, which has to do with the ways in which, through education, individuals become part of existing social, political, professional, and so on "orders"; and the domain of subjectification, which in opposition to socialization, is not about how individuals become part of existing orders but how they can be independent – or as some would say, autonomous – subjects of action and responsibility." (Biesta 2013, 64).

From the above reading, we can know that the domain of socialization is placed at the opposite of subjectification which belongs to the category of "a pedagogy of interruption (Biesta 2016a [2006], 90-91)" which I will further examine in the following section.

2.3   The domain of Subjectification

Biesta's concept of subjectification is based on existential philosophy, particularly those of Levinas and Arendt. The function of the domain of subjectification can be summarized as the protection and stimulation of the events of "coming into the world" of unique, single beings (Ibid., 9). His argument on the concept of subjectification occupies a large part of his trilogy, and I attempt to pick up its main features below.

In the first volume of his trilogy, Biesta puts forward his idea of desired subjectivity in education. Biesta begins with the criticism of metaphysical humanism evolved in modern philosophy as it is not *sufficiently* human (Biesta 2016a [2006], 40, emphasis in original). The question should be asked is "who-question" instead of finding "what" is the substance of the subject (Ibid., 42). This is a mention to a well-known turn from essence from existence happened in the history of philosophy.

Biesta also performs the examination on the conditions of a space where a subjectivity can come into presence as a unique, singular being. By being inspired by Tschumi's concept of disjunctive space, Biesta argues that a space can only exist by grace of the happenings of events (Ibid., 46). That wants to say that the presence of events can make the existence of

the space possible. The disjunction of space and event is the condition of the place where subjectivity can emerge (Ibid., 46). By this argument, Biesta shows that a space does not exist separately from the subject, but they exist rather in the form of a mixture, or disjunction as Tschumi prefers to call it. This is the first condition of a space where a subject emerges.

Biesta continues on the search for another condition of space for the emergence of subjectivity by citing Arendt's notion of vita activa. Here, among Arendt's three modalities of active human life; labor, work and action, the highest stage of action only has importance. Action, in Arendt's idea, means to take initiative and to begin something new. A subject can therefore be defined as a beginner who begins his or her beginnings. And, the world is where each one strives to bring one's beginnings. It means that the world is populated by other beginners, hence a world is a space of plurality and difference (Ibid., 48). Biesta therefore takes plurality as the second condition of the space where a subject can emerge.

The third condition is related to the question how we are coming into world as a unique and singular being. Here, Biesta's argument is based upon philosophy of Levinas. Levinas develops his concept of a subject as being engaged in an ethical relationship of infinite responsibility for the other (Ibid., 50). Both Arendt and Levinas consider that our being is primordially "being-with-others", but Levinas goes one step further than Arendt and pulls out our primordial infinite responsibility for the other in his ethical philosophy (ibid., 51). Biesta writes;

> "We're 'called' to be a self, so we could say, by the other. What makes us unique in this, is that the call is not a call to a human being in general; it is me who is called by the other." (Ibid., 52)

He thus concludes that an untransferable responsibility in an ethical relationship with others makes it possible for us to come into the world as a unique singular being. This is the third condition of the space where a subject comes into a world.

So far, he describes what kind of subjectivity should be protected and nurtured in education, and also what are the conditions of the space where such a subject can emerge. And, in *Measurement*, the second volume of his trilogy, Biesta introduces the term of 'subjectification' (Biesta 2016b [2010], 21). Biesta also opens up a new discussion concerning the process of subjectification.

In chapter 6 of *Measurement*, Biesta claims, by applying Rancière's argument on politics

into education, that politic itself is the process of subjectification (Ibid., 122). Rancière's argument begins with the distinction between the terms of 'police order' and 'politics'. In Rancière's theory, *police* should be understood as a body or institution of politics, and politics is the disruption of the *police order* in the name of equality (Ibid., 120). Whereas the *police* is the body that determines that which particular activities and speeches are recognized and accepted, the politics is in principle the activity which causes a discord against the police order for the sake of equality. As we might be able to define that democracy is a claim for equality, politics is always "democratic" action for Rancière (Ibid., 121). And, Rancière's political subject comes into being in and through the act of disruption of the police order. Biesta takes up this process through which political subjects are constituted in Rancière's political theory in his notion of subjectification (Ibid., 122).

Biesta further develops this line of argument on subjectification in chapter 5 of *Beautiful Risk* which is the last volume of his trilogy. Along with the Rancière's political theory, Biesta points out the fundamental difference between subjectification and identification. Whereas 'identification' is an act of taking up an existing identity within the existing order, 'subjectification' is a supplement to the existing order from elsewhere (Biesta 2013, 84).

In this volume of his trilogy, Biesta also inserts one of the intriguing claims of his theory of education into the play. It is the idea that the education is a "risky" business as the title of the book shows (Ibid., chapter 1). Here, Biesta compares two types of creation by borrowing Caputo's two different interpretations of the book of Genesis. At one hand, there is a type of creation is symbolized by Yahweh and his way of creating and parenting. The character of Yahweh is described as omnipotence and rigorous, and his attitudes towards his creation is controlling, nervous and distrustful (Ibid., 15-17). According to Caputo, this is the influence of Greek metaphysics, which is relying on ideas and absolute perfection, and therefore Biesta calls this as "strong metaphysical creationism (Ibid., 13 and 17)."

On the other hand, a type of creation is described in the characters of Elohim, the God of Hellenism. In opposing to Yahweh who seeks for the control and perfection, Elohim is more relaxed, flexible and in harmony with the reality (Ibid.). He can accept his creations as they are, without asking them to be perfect and ideal. Biesta calls this type of creation as "weak existential creationism (Ibid., 17)."

A key here is that the difference between Yahweh's attitude and that of Elohim in dealing with the reality. Along with any acts of creation, we face full of uncertainty, unpredictability, and frustration created by all of those. We do not know what the result of a creating act could

be, and that is certainly a 'risk'. When we maintain the full control on the creation in the pursuit of perfection and ideal, we should not take a risk. Or, we can go on with creating acts if we can be perfectly ok with whatever the results of the creation will be. Finally, Biesta claims that, and it is an important point, that we have to take Elohim's approach if we want the event of subjectivity happen.

The core ideas of this comparison are well summarized in the following sentences. In order to let the event of subjectification happen, we need to take a risk, as Elohim does. If not doing so, the emergence of a subject is hindered. This quote also shows us that Biesta likens the role of creation of God to that of educators.

> "Because Yahweh is not willing to take a risk, his creatures are being prevented from becoming subjects in their own right, from realizing their unique and singular subject-ness. Elohim, in comparison, shows us an educator who knows that creation is a risky business and has to be a risky business and that without risk nothing will happen; the event of subjectivity will not occur." (Ibid., 24)

So far, I have been trying to capture some of the core features of the domain of subjectification in Biesta's educational theory. Biesta spends most pages of his trilogy for the description and advocacy of the function of subjectification and "a pedagogy of interruption." It is obvious therefore that the importance of this function is huge in his theory, and we can also comfortably say that this function forms the core of his educational theory. A pedagogy of interruption is, as I have treated in the end of the previous section of the domain of socialization, a pedagogy that aims to keep the possibility of interruptions of the normal order open (Biesta 2016b [2010], 91). And, the idea of pedagogy of interruption is not meant to cover all three dimensions of education but is specifically focused on the domain of subjectification (Ibid., 75).

To summarize, a subject is, in Biesta's conception, a unique singular being that will emerge in the world of plurality and difference. And a subject bares a unique untransferable responsibility towards others. The domain of subjectification in Biesta's educational theory has as its purposes the protection and stimulation of the emergence of such a subject, and they are immediately the tasks and responsibilities of teachers too. We can never know whether this event of subjectivity will happen or not, or when, though.

2.4 Evaluation of the three domains;
Biesta's main focus on a pedagogy of interruption and subjectification

Biesta repeatedly acknowledges in his trilogy that the question of good education is multidimensional and therefore education is constituted of three domains of different functions serving to different purposes. However, the above research shows that Biesta spends extremely little number of pages in treating the function and the value of domain of qualification. Although he repeatedly says that the qualification is the main function of good education (Biesta 2016b, 20 and 104. 2013, 64 and 128), this claim sounds empty without detailed examination. Thus, from the above research, Biesta's strong and passionate advocacy on the significance of the function of subjectification, in a different word; "a pedagogy of interruption," comes into relief.

Now, I move on to the relations between the three domains. Biesta is aware of possible conflicts and synergy in the overlapping areas of the 3 domains and explains how these 3 domains are mixed and intertwined in the real education by taking mathematics education and citizenship education as examples in chapter 1 of *Measurement*. It's not difficult to see how the 3 domains functions in citizenship education. Besides a strong focus on socializing students into a particular citizenship identity, obtaining political knowledge and understanding satisfy the qualification purpose of education. And, learning and practicing political ways of being and doing suffice the subjectification purpose of education (Biesta 2016b [2010], 24).

In case of mathematics education, it's not that simple as the case of citizenship education. It is not so difficult to imagine that a strong focus is laid on the function of qualification in mathematics education. It is done by providing students with mathematical knowledge, skills, insight and understanding (Ibid., 25). By including mathematics in school curriculum, students can be associated with the idea that mathematics and the mastery of it is important in a society. This is an explicit message of socialization in mathematics education. But, these two elements are not enough for good mathematics education. We also need the domain of subjectification in it. We have to keep asking the question of "what kind of opportunities for being and becoming the engagement with the field of mathematics and the practice of mathematizing might offer." (Ibid.) When all three functions are properly treated in the field of mathematics, we can call it a good mathematics education.

From the above two examples Biesta presented, we understand that the educational functions and purposes of all three domains should be present in each subject of school curriculum. Here, however, Biesta does not yet treat the potential conflicts and synergy of the three functions. Let us move on to chapter 7 of *Beautiful Risk* where Biesta gives us examples of conflicts.

Biesta gives one example of synergy and conflict between the three educational domains. A case of synergy is expected in the overlapping area of the domain of qualification and the domain of socialization. It is the case that a type of vocational education can at the same time function as a way to socialize students into particular domains of work and responsibility (Biesta 2013, 129). And, an example of conflict is found in the overlapping area of the domain of qualification and the domain of subjectification. It says that a constant pressure and stress driven by the achievement in the domain of qualification can have a negative impact on the domain of subjectification (Ibid.). Only a few examples how the three functions either coincide, complement each other or possibly conflict are offered in the three books.

3   Values advocated in Biesta's educational theory

In the previous chapter, I have outlined Biesta's 3 domains of education and the relations between them. In this chapter, I will examine which values are treated by Biesta as the purposes of education and how Biesta advocates them. Here, I expect that the research on the defended values opens up a new aspect on the relations between the three domains.

The research on Biesta's three domains of education in the previous chapter shows that Biesta's central concern is the domain of subjectification, however, I expect that a close research on his educational theory from the standpoint of the values which Biesta advocates in his educational theory might enable us to see it in a different light. I believe that this chapter will further help us to understand the core structure how Biesta elaborates his philosophical arguments in his educational theory.

The researches in the previous chapters allows us to distill 5 values that Biesta explicitly advocates in his books, namely; democracy, freedom, equality, subjectivity and uniqueness which Biesta calls as ultimate values. On the contrary, he suggests that instrumental values, such as effectiveness and accountability, do not belong to the discussion of education (Biesta 2016b [2010], chapter 2).

3.1 Democracy

The value that I treat first is the value of democracy. Biesta spends a lot of pages on advocating the significance of democracy in his educational theory. It is therefore clear for us that democracy and democratic education is one of central concerns in Biesta's educational theory. As we saw in the previous chapter, Biesta uses the argument of Rancière and introduce the concept of *politics* as the activity which causes a discord against the *police order* for the sake of equality. In this way, all the *politics* is considered to be democratic activities.

Biesta opens up his arguments on democracy in chapter 6 of *Beyond Learning*. His aim here is to reconfigure the concept of democracy and democratic education (Biesta 2016a [2006], 118). In order to achieve this goal, Biesta examines the concept of subjectivity with the question of "What kind of subjectivity is desirable or necessary for a democratic society?".

Biesta's investigation on subjectivity starts with the philosophy of Kant. Kant, a prominent philosopher of Enlightenment age, has developed his ideas of subjectivity as

rational autonomy which is a cognitive ability of making up one's own minds without relying on any other authorities (Ibid., 127). From this type of subjectivity, one of very influential concepts of democracy is developed. It views democracy as a cluster of individuals who are capable of making their own free and independent judgments (Ibid., 119).

Biesta points out 3 problems with this type of subjectivity. Firstly, it is an 'individualistic view' of democracy, and the success of democracy depends on the knowledge and skills of individuals (Ibid., 120). This is against Biesta's belief that the true challenge of democracy should be our ability to live together in the world of difference.

The second and the third problems are concerned with the democratic education based on 'individualistic" concept of democracy. In a democratic society consists of rational autonomous individuals, schools are considered to be the place where students are trained to be properly democratic. Therefore, they will be educated to be ready to take the responsibility for the future of democracy. Biesta rejects this view as an instrumentalistic conception of education, and this is the second problem (Ibid., 119).

Third problem derives from the second problem and that is the individualistic approach to democratic education. When schools are responsible for and factories of democratic individuals, their emphasis will be upon individual knowledge and skills. As a consequence, matters that are truly democratic, such as relationships with others or learning social and political context, will be left out (Ibid., 120).

Next, Biesta takes on the philosophy of Dewey. Dewey offers an alternative for Kant's conception of subjectivity by moving the center of the subjectification from mind to interactions and communications (Ibid., 129). For Dewey, a subject is not considered to be an immanent consciousness, but believed to be out there between individuals through communication. He believes that we become who we are only through our participation in a social medium (Ibid., 130). An individual self is shaped by taking a part in shaping the context, and Biesta calls this type of concept of subject as social conception of subjectivity (Ibid., 131).

Dewey's social concept of subjectivity overcomes the problem of individuality of Kant's concept of subject, however, it still has a problem of instrumentalistic view on democratic education (Ibid., 132). Under Dewey's concept of subject, education is still responsible for the production of democratic subject. Schools are the places for students to learn social interactions. The idea here is that "students not only learn from what they are being taught, but they also learn from the other situations in which they take part (Ibid., 124)." Biesta

rejects this idea of Dewey as instrumental view of education as well (Ibid., 132).

How can we then overcome the problem of instrumentalism? Biesta finds his answer in the philosophy of Arendt. As I have introduced before, Arendt's concept of *action* plays an important role in Biesta's subjectification. For Arendt, to act means to begin something new and bring something new to the world. Human beings are thus characterized as a "beginning and a beginner (Ibid., 133)." In this line of thought, to be a subject means to act in bringing one's own beginning in the world. And, a crucial point here is the presence of others, because "if I would begin something, but no one would respond, nothing would follow from my initiative, and as a result, my beginnings would not come into the world and I would not be a subject (Ibid., 133)." This implies that Arendtian concept of action is never possible in isolation but in plurality. Biesta calls this concept of subjectivity as a political conception of subjectivity (Ibid., 135). Following this, education is not seen as a space of preparation, but as a space where individuals act and bring their beginnings into the world (Ibid., 137).

After having categorized three conceptions of the democratic subject: 1) Individualistic, 2) Social, and 3) Political, Biesta claims that the third one of political subject is truly democratic (Ibid., 121). What is interesting here is that Biesta does not describe these three conceptions as equally good and important. He sees these three as a layered style in which the individual concept at the bottom, the social concept in the middle and the democratic on top. Kantian individualist concept is dismissed for the problem of individualism and instrumentalism. The next layer, the social concept in the middle has conquered the problem of individualistic, and yet the problem of instrumentalism remains. And, the political conception of democracy by Arendt is introduced on top as serving an adequate solution.

3.2 Freedom

Freedom is one of the key values which Biesta strongly defends in his theory of education. First of all, Biesta touches upon the fact that education entails a violation of the sovereignty of the student.

> "Education is a form of violence in that it interferes with the sovereignty of the subject by asking difficult questions and creating difficult encounters." (Ibid., 29)

Here, as I understand that sovereignty of students entails their freedom from outside

influence, education is considered to work against students' freedom. And, by the term 'violence', Biesta means that educators' interference in the lives of students which can have a deep, transforming impact on them. Biesta calls this type of violence in Derrida's term as "transcendental violence (Ibid.)," and accepts this type of violation as long as it contributes in the emergence of subjectivity (Ibid., 29). It means that in the sake of the event of subjectivity, freedom of students can be somewhat undermined. I see here the superiority of subjectivity to sovereignty of students.

Nonetheless, Biesta strongly believes that one of the key purposes of education is freedom. He thus seeks the way how education contribute to the freedom of the human subject in chapter 5 of *Beautiful Risk*. Here, we confront one of the dichotomies which I have mentioned in the introduction, namely, the dichotomy between freedom and restrictions. This dichotomy is also known as the educational paradox (Biesta 2013, 80). Biesta tackles this problem by freeing us from the framework of modern emancipatory education invented and inserted by Kant, and takes us to the new idea of emancipation introduced by Rancière.

Biesta starts with the analysis on the history of emancipation and sketches the mechanism of emancipation as freeing someone from the control of another and as a result, freed individuals will gain independence and freedom (Ibid., 79). The acts of emancipation are seen in different forms from religious toleration, emancipation of slaves, workers, women, minority tribes and children. Among those, the most relevant emancipatory project for education is that of Immanuel Kant. In the age of Enlightenment, Kant famously declared enlightenment as "man's release from his self-incurred tutelage (Ibid.)." His enlightenment ideal was thus immediately emancipatory project. As Biesta summarizes, Kantian enlightenment entailed a process of becoming independent and autonomous, and this autonomy was based on the use of one's reason (Ibid., 80).

Biesta confirms that the link between education and human freedom is established by Kant. Before Kant, freedom was the matter of politics but not that of education. However, as Biesta writes, "Kant made the question of human freedom the central issue for modern education by making a distinction between heteronomous determination and self-determination […] (Biesta 2016b [2010], 77)." Thus, Kant converted the matter of freedom from political matter to immanent developmental matter.

Biesta, however, does not agree with Kantian immanent conception of freedom. He suggests that the problem is that this Kantian notion of rational autonomy has grown into the telos of human nature (Ibid., 76). It makes us pursue a certain type of human being,

namely "rational autonomous human being." If we follow this line of thought, individuals who do not possess rational autonomy including children will be excluded from the discussion as they are not properly human (Ibid., 77). Biesta objects to modern humanism represented by Kantian ideal by claiming that it is not sufficiently human as it excludes children (Ibid., 79).

What then counts as sufficiently human humanism? In *Measurement*, Biesta introduces the Arendt's concept of *action* as an alternative concept of freedom. Elsewhere I have written that this notion of *action* means roughly "to begin something new and bring something new to the world of plurality." A big difference between Kantian concept of freedom and that of Arendt is that Arendtian freedom is not immanent but "by necessity a public and hence a political phenomenon (Ibid., 83)." And, for Arendt, the public domain is the place where freedom can appear (Ibid., 84).

"Arendt's notion of "action" entails an understanding of the way in which human beings come into presence – and continue to come into presence – that is not about the expression of some personal identity, but has to do with the ways in which we engage with the complexities of a world populated by others who are not like us." (Ibid., 84-85)

Hence, freedom can be found in the web of plurality only. *Action* is also considered to be the disclosure of our uniqueness. Arendt's concept of uniqueness should not be understood as something static like characters or qualities which we can possess or have. It is rather a particular way of existing with others (Ibid., 85). It is therefore understood more in political, relational and existential sense, and Biesta calls this type of uniqueness as "distinct uniqueness (Ibid.)." Arendt's concept of *action* thus gets rid of telos of human nature, and therefore it can provide us more 'human' humanism.

Yet, Biesta does not stop his research here. He finds a problem of developmentalism in Arendtian concept of action. As I have already touched in the previous chapter, Arendt makes a distinction of 3 modalities of active life: *labor*, *work* and *action*. These three are understood in a layered construction in which *labor* lies at the bottom and *action* on top. Among those three modes, freedom is only possible in the life of *action* called "vita activa" (Biesta 2013, 104-105). The freedom for Arendt is not an inner feeling or a private experience, but necessarily in public. As Biesta admits, this Arendtian concept of freedom is "highly political" (Ibid., 106).

For Arendt, freedom is a political concept that only exists in the realm of politics. As soon as children gets into the political world where Arendtian action becomes possible and thereby freedom is also possible. As long as schools are considered to be a "halfway" institution where children prepare to the political world, and freedom is not possible in education.

Biesta criticizes this view of Arendt on freedom in education, because it treats children as "a developing human being" and discriminates their positions from that of adults (Ibid., 110-111).

> "Only if we were to assume that children are simply not capable of word and deed but only produce 'noise' can it be argued that action and freedom will never appear among children." (Ibid., 112)

Biesta's claim here is that the Arendtian concept of freedom is not human enough as it attributes freedom only to the domain where children can't belong to. He criticizes this concept of freedom as developmentalism in order to try to restore and protect the freedom of children. We saw above the same line of argument against Kantian concept of democratic subject by calling it "not human enough." For Biesta, it is important that a concept is inclusive of everyone without being judged by the level of maturity.

Biesta thus refuses the Kantian concept of emancipation and further investigates the possibility of Arendtian political concept of emancipation is possible or not in education. He concludes that, although Arendtian political concept of emancipation can provide us more 'human' humanism than that of Kantian concept, it still has a problem of developmentalism.

One thing Biesta overlooks in his argument on the value of freedom is the fact that emancipation has actually two major interpretations. One is in Kantian sense that one emancipates oneself from self-incurred tutelage. This type of emancipation does not imply underlying inequality as it's concerned with a developmental issue. This is the so-called "enlightenment idea of emancipation," and the key value here is freedom. Or, we have the other concept of emancipation as the movement toward equality. This is rather political sense than educational, and there lies the inequality or dependency as the original condition in this line of thought. The revelations of slaves, minorities, women and children are good examples of emancipation as a trajectory for equality. And, this political usage of the notion of emancipation is more common.

Biesta does not recognize this distinction between emancipation as a trajectory for freedom and emancipation as a trajectory for equality. It causes several confusions in his theory of education. For example, Biesta starts his argument defending the value of freedom with the notion of emancipation as a trajectory for freedom, and he ends up with criticizing Arendtian political theory for its inequality between adults and children. We'll encounter one more example of the confusions in the next section.

3.3   Equality

Above in the section of the value of democracy, I have described 3 types of conception of democracy, and among those three, the political concept of Arendt is accepted by Biesta as a desirable conception of democratic subject (3.1). Biesta further adds the value of equality to the argument of democracy in chapter 6 of *Measurement* and in chapter 5 of Beautiful Risk. In chapter 6 of *Measurement*, for example, Biesta tells us the importance of democracy and how we have to understand the proper shape of democracy is. In chapter 5 of Beautiful Risk, Biesta treats equality as a matter of emancipatory education.

Biesta cites from a work of Rancière and writes on equality as follows;

"[...] no party or government, no army, school, or institution, will ever emancipate a single person, because every institution is always a 'dramatization' or 'embodiment' of inequality." (Biesta 2013, 94)

Following the above arguments of Rancière, Biesta admits that schools and schooling cannot bring equality. Yet, we should not give up on pursuing equality. How then is it possible? In order to make this possible, Biesta decides to redefine the conception of emancipation. Instead of thinking equality as the outcome of a particular trajectory, we should presuppose the equality of intelligence (Ibid., 97-98). It should be our standpoint, but not the goal.

In a school as an educational institute, there is always a presupposed inequality between the ones who teach and the ones who are taught. Knowledge is transmitted from teachers to students via explanation. This mechanism suggests the inferiority of students' intelligence to that of teachers. As this defines and presupposes the inequality, Biesta suggests, we do not need teachers as "master explicator" who explain things to students. We need teachers who can summon their students to use their intelligence (Ibid., 93). This type of relationship

is not of intelligence to intelligence but is of "will to will (Ibid.)". In this relationship, there is no inequality of intelligence as intelligence obeys only itself, but it is the will that obeys another will. Such a relationship is the desired in education, Biesta concludes.

As we saw in the previous section, emancipation has two major interpretations; a trajectory for freedom and a trajectory for equality. At one hand, a trajectory for freedom is also called "enlightenment idea of emancipation" and it's concerned with a developmental issue without implication of underlying inequality (3.2). At the other hand, emancipation as a trajectory for equality is rather political sense than educational, and there lies the inequality or dependency as the original condition. In the argument for the value of equality, Biesta again mixes these two interpretations of emancipation and treats equality as an aim of emancipatory education instead of an aim of political trajectory of emancipation. I, therefore, have a doubt whether this rather political value of equality should be pursued in educational contexts or not.

3.4 Subjectivity

In the previous chapter, I have already examined the event of subjectification and its position in Biesta's theory of education. Here, I'll lay a focus on how Biesta builds up his philosophical argument on the notion of subjectivity. As I have already summarized in the previous chapter, a subject is, in Biesta's conception, a unique singular being that will emerge in the world of plurality and difference. And a subject bares a unique untransferable responsibility towards others.

Biesta's argument on subjectivity starts with the investigation of Cartesian *ego cogito* and moves on to Kantian rational autonomy. As Biesta correctly writes, the establishment of Cartesian ego cogito as the knowing subject is widely considered to be the historic turning point in the history of philosophy as the beginning of modern philosophy. This *ego cogito* is taken into Kantian rational autonomy of "*Ich denke*" and this shapes the tradition of "philosophy of consciousness (Biesta 2016a [2006], 36)."

The philosophy of consciousness is later challenged by Hegel and Hegelian philosophers of the twentieth century, such as Dewey, Mead and Wittegenstein (Ibid.). Their central claim is that consciousness should not be the foundation of a subject, and they have offered a series of alternatives, such as communication (by Dewey), symbolic interaction (by Mead) and forms of life (by Wittegenstein). Thus, the foundation of western philosophy is shifted from

"consciousness" to "intersubjectivity" (Ibid., 36-37).

Foucault brings this discussion to the next phase. He challenges the modern articulation of human subjective consciousness from an anthropological point of view. He reveals the fact that the modern conscious subjectivity is merely a recent invention of a particular type of subjectivity developed in a particular age under particular circumstances. Thereby, he declares the end of man which means that the death of modern subjectivity (Ibid., 37-40).

The importance of Foucault's work is that he has eliminate the question of "what is man?" from the discourse of subjectivity, and this path is echoes with the philosophy of Heidegger and Levinas (Ibid., 40-41).

Following this historical development of the discourse on the concept of subjectivity, Biesta theorizes his philosophy of subjectivity as "the question of where the subject, as a unique, singular being, comes into presence (Ibid., 41)." This question in his hand, Biesta goes on with the search of the conditions and process of the space where the event of subjectification occurs. This I have treated closely in the previous chapter (2.3).

Next, I try to distill the core feature running through Biesta's concept of subjectivity in order to get to the central concern of his educational theory. Biesta writes;

"Subjectification is about the appearance – the "coming into presence," as I have called it elsewhere – of a way of being that had no place and no part in the existing order of things." (Biesta 2016b [2010], 85)

I read this as a rather radical liberalistic claim that we should not feel at home in the place where we are at. We continuously keep distancing ourselves from a community in which we live in order to be truly ourselves, and in that distance, we find our subjectivity. A series of words used by Biesta to describe the event of subjectification, such as 'discord', 'disagreement', 'disruption', 'rupture' and 'interruption' are all showing the power a subject possesses against the present. A subject is desired not to be included into the current situation. It should not pander easily to the orders, but to stay critical and not to be scared to rock the boat. It is a power bringing a new world.

I share this view with Zhao who calls Biesta as a prominent philosopher in the field of reconfiguration of education (Zhao 2014, 519). She analyzes the Biesta's function of subjectification as "a function in which students are encouraged to become unique individuals beyond and against existing social orders (Ibid.)." Biesta's notion of a subject can

therefore be characterized as an open and transformative that seeks the opportunity to go beyond the existing order.

3.5 Uniqueness

The last value I treat in this chapter is uniqueness. Uniqueness is usually not considered to be a value, however, I treat it here as one of values defended by Biesta because it is used here in political sense as it is in the philosophy of Levinas and Arendt which I will explain below. Ans also, as Biesta defines his concept of subjectification as "the emergence of a unique single being,' uniqueness is the significant feature of Biesta's subjectivity in his educational theory. He believes that the protecting and promoting uniqueness is a way to overcome modern humanism pushing us a specific type of human nature (Biesta 2016b [2010], 81).

One source of his concept of uniqueness is Arendt's "distinct uniqueness". The main implication of Arendt's uniqueness is that it will be revealed through every action of us and how others react upon them. As I have taken up before, plurality is the necessary condition of Arendt's notion of *action*. And, the existence of others will make it impossible for an individual to remain a unique master in an action. These unpredictable and uncontrollable factors make the subjectivity of an individual distinctively unique.

The other source is Levinas' concept of "uniqueness as irreplaceability (Ibid., 86)." For Levinas, "to be unique" is significantly different from "to be different." He claims that we should ask the question of "when it matters that I am unique," instead of "what makes us unique." It means that the question of uniqueness is not about possession of character but concerning our subjectivity as an irreplaceable being. Levinas argues that uniqueness is constituted by a responsibility we cannot evade, and this is precisely what makes us unique (Ibid., 89). This idea of "uniqueness as irreplaceability" is present in Biesta's argument for advocating "unique voice" of the other community which I have treated in the previous chapter.

3.6 Which educational domain all these values belong to?

After having done the close study on the 5 values defended by Biesta, one thing becomes clear. We have come to know that many of the values he defends in his educational theory belong to the domain of subjectification.

First of all, it is obvious that the values of subjectivity and uniqueness are the two key concepts of Biesta's domain of subjectification, so I will not further explain about these two values. Second of all, the value of freedom also belongs to the domain of subjectification in Biesta's educational theory. One could argue that freedom is a value underlying the domain of qualification, however, as we have discussed in this chapter, Biesta denies the Kantian concept of immanent freedom by which we gain freedom by the ability of independent thinking (3.4). Thus, for Biesta, the domain of qualification does not contribute in promoting human freedom. Instead, for Biesta, freedom lies by necessity in a public and political phenomenon as in Arendtian political philosophy that constitutes a main philosophical background of Biesta's subjectivity.

Third of all, the value of democracy requires a longer explanation. Let us call back what we saw in the section provided to the examination of the domain of socialization (2.2). Biesta's concept of socialization is based on Deweys' theory of education, and according to Dewey, school is considered to be an institution for children to learn and get used to the social values and practices. In this view, schools or other educational institutions are considered to be a pseudo-society where children are protected until they finish education and move on to the real society. This view treating school as an instrument to realize democracy is what Biesta criticizes as instrumentalism. To overcome this problem, Biesta introduces Arendtian politic concept of democratic subject as we saw above (3.1).

What Biesta is trying to achieve in his argument on the concept of democracy is that schools should not be a place where children are practicing as a trainee. Instead, education should be considered and functioning as a real society where the event of subjectivity is actually taking place. For Biesta, learning about democracy or practicing democratic attitudes is not truly democracy. Democracy should be practiced and realized in the form of the event of subjectification, which is not exclusive for adults, because proper democracy should not exclude children. Biesta wants education settings to be recognized as a type of real democratic society where the event of subjectivity is actually happening. He thus confirms the existence of democracy is possible by confirming the event of subjectification is actually happening at schools. That is the reason why the value of democracy is attributed to the domain of subjectification in Biesta's theory of education.

Last of all, the value of equality is left uncategorized. It is because I wasn't able to find to which domain does this value belongs to. I can only assume that this value can belong either to the domain of socialization or to the domain of subjectification, as it's not necessarily a

value respected in the process of qualification. In the domain of qualification, however, the differentiation between the qualified and the disqualified is more of importance that can be contradictory to the value of equality. Actually, as I have touched in the previous section, I have a doubt whether the political sense of emancipatory trajectory for equality can be relevant to education or not. I'll come back to this problem in the next chapter.

From the fact that Biesta defends many values that are attributed to the domain of subjectification, it has become clear that Biesta places a heavy focus on the domain of subjectification instead of finding a desirable, justifiable combination of three domains. Although Biesta repeatedly claims that all the three domains are equally important, he doesn't defend any values that are clearly attributed to the domain of qualification and the domain of socialization. As I have stated in the beginning of this chapter, he refuses to take instrumental values, such as effectiveness and accountability into the discussion of education, and those instrumental values are attributed to the domain of qualification (Biesta 2016b [2010], chapter 1).

As a result of the above examination on the values advocated by Biesta, we have come to know that many values attributed to the domain of subjectification only. Here again, I don't confirm the sign of conflicts or synergy between the three domains.

Another point that strikes me when I look at the list of values Biesta defends is that many of those are social, especially those discussed in political philosophy. A value such as uniqueness is also understood in political sense by Biesta, as it is defined as irreplaceability of individuals implying the responsibility to others. He hardly touches any values related to academic skills, such as intellectual capability and knowledge. He also doesn't touch the moral values at all. Well, he does dedicate the entire chapter seven of *Beautiful Risk* for the discussion on virtuosity, however, it goes about the virtuosity in teaching only, but not the virtues students have to acquire.

4 Problems with Biesta's subjectification

So far, I have performed an analytical research on Biesta's educational theory. We have distracted the core concept of each domain and distilled the values treated in his theory. And, the previous research has shown us that Biesta's educational theory lays a heavy focus on the domain of subjectification and the event of subjectivity. In this chapter, I will turn to the discussion whether Biesta's account of subjectivity is desirable in education or not, and also whether it is feasible in a classroom or not (4.1 and 4.2).

After having done that, I will move on to the suggestion of the other approach to the concept of subjectivity that might be more suitable in educational context. I call Biesta's approach as a metaphysical approach and suggest that this approach might be the cause of some of problems I find in his educational theory. Instead of a metaphysical approach, I take the genealogical approach in following the research of Mansfield (4.3). By taking the genealogical approach, we learn that the subjectivity has multiple usage that correspond to Biesta's three domains of educational theory. So, instead of making a distinction in the different functions of education as Biesta does, I suggest that qualification, socialization and subjectification should be considered to be three different aspects of one and the same subject "I".

4.1 Is Biesta's subjectivity relevant to education?

The first point I would like to point out on Biesta's concept of subjectivity is that the lack of criteria on a subject. Biesta's educational theory does advocate the subjectivity, especially the process how it comes into presence, however, it lacks the explanation what it is or how it should be.

This problem derives from the fact that Biesta misinterprets Levinas' irreplaceability. As we saw in the examination of Biesta's notion of uniqueness, Biesta takes up Levinas' notion of irreplaceability into his notion of uniqueness (3.5). Levinas' irreplaceability, however, only indicates the imperative responsibility of a subject against the other, but doesn't say anything about our subjectivity as Biesta argues (Zhao 2014, 519). Levinas attempted to ground the human subjectivity on "sociality" instead of on "ego and conscience," and as a result, it ended as "a very thin conception of subjectivity (Zhao 2012, 663-665)." As Biesta theorizes his notion of subjectification based on Levinas' notion of uniqueness as

responsibility, it doesn't provide us any direction in the pursuit of subjectivity. Zhao writes;

"This notion of uniqueness only suggests the imperative of my responsibility to the other. It is indeed a completely different avenue to the question of human subjectivity, but hardly an avenue that can be useful to the educational mission of subjectification." (Zhao 2012, 662)

Also, as Biesta interprets the uniqueness of Levinas philosophy wrongly, he fails to see the ethical aspect of responsibility as Levinas means in his ethical philosophy. According to Zhao, Levinas' theory embodies spirituality and morality but Biesta misses this point in his educational theory (Zhao 2012, 659 and Zhao 2014, 522).

As a result, it leaves us with the question of how we have to deal with the moral education for children. In *Measurement*, Biesta writes:

"The question is whether in order to prevent a new Hitler or a new Pol Pot from coming into presence we should forfeit the possibility of a new Mother Teresa, a new Martin Luther King or a new Nelson Mandela from coming into presence as well. It is as simple – and of course also as tremendously complicated – as that." (Biesta 2016b [2010], 81)

Here, Biesta obviously tries to make a contrast between "a good subject" and "a bad subject" and ask the question whether the emergence of a bad subject should be hindered for the price of the emergence of a good subject or not. My answer to this question is straightforward. Good education should try to prevent the emergence of bad subjects and promote the emergence of good subjects. Good education should have a clear judgement on what is good and what is bad. That is the part of moral education, or ethics which is an important part of education. In opposing to that, Biesta's theory considers the protection of "the emergence of a single unique being" as the highest good in education and puts the quality of a subject as a secondary importance. Under Biesta's educational theory, teachers cannot confidently prevent the emergence of an evil subject such as Hitler and Pol Pot. As a consequence, we'll fail to provide children with a moral compass. From ethical point of view, it fails to provide the solid ground for teachers to nurture the morality of children.

To sum up, Biesta's concept of subjectification is not relevant in educational context for two reasons. Firstly, Biesta's concept of subjectification is not really useful in educational

context, as Biesta theorize his concept of subjectification based on the irreplaceability of Levinas which actually says nothing but our responsibility to the other (Zhao 2014, 519). Secondly, it hinders moral education rather than promoting it.

4.2   Is Biesta's subjectivity feasible in education and in classrooms?

Next, I want to point out the problems with the subjectification of Biesta from the point of the view of teachers in educational settings. Biesta's strong criticism on the 'leanifiation' of educational discourse and practice stems from his passionate advocacy of subjectification. *Learnification* is a term Biesta introduces in criticizing the current tendency of shifting the weight from the idea of teaching to the idea of learning in the field of education (Biesta 2013, 62). In inverse proportion to the expansion of the dominance of learning, the role of teaching in education is diminishing. Biesta worries about this situation and tries to restore the language of teaching in education.

Biesta's criticism on *learnification* is based on an argument against constructivism. Constructivism sees the process of learning as immanent acts that happen in the consciousness of students only, and therefore the focus of the education is brought inside of students' cognitive elements, such as insights, understandings and knowledge (Ibid., 45-46). If we depart from the idea that learning happens immanent, what teachers can do is pretty much limited to supporting students' learning by creating a suitable environment and providing appropriate materials for their learning. As a consequence, teachers become merely a facilitator of their learning (Ibid., 45). However, Biesta argues, giving up the proper role of teachers in such a way means that we're giving up the very idea of education (Ibid., 46). For Biesta, learning is different from education (Ibid., 44).

In *Beautiful Risk*, he writes in advocacy of teaching;

"Against the idea of the teacher as a fellow learner or a facilitator of leaning, I will suggest that we should understand the teacher as someone who, in the most general sense, brings something new to the educational situation, something that was not already there." (Biesta 2013, 44)

As we can read above, Biesta sees the role of teachers as bringing something new to the world. Here, we should note that Biesta's concept of bringing something into the world is

fundamentally different what Socrates taught in his maieutic method. Whereas maieutic model of Socrates merely brings what is already there into the world, Biesta's understanding of bringing comes from outside and adds radically new (Ibid., 52). Biesta thus adds the dimension of transcendent to teaching.

Although Biesta does not relate his "transcendent" dimension of teaching to the process of subjectification, I dare to say that Biesta by this argument wants to suggest that helping and stimulating the emergence of subjectivity of students by adding something radically new are the essential role and responsibility of teachers in education. It is also clear from the fact that Biesta advocates teachers' creative role in education, as he likens God's role in creation and parenting with those of teachers (Ibid., chapter 1).

Teachers thus should not be satisfied only by making students' learning process as smooth as possible. Instead, they have be aware of this "transcendent" dimension of bringing something radically new into the world. And, this event of bringing something new can be the subjectification of one or more of their students. It will say that teachers possess the power of creation in education. Though, Biesta reminds us that this power of teachers is a weak existential power that we saw in the comparison of JHWH and Elohim (Ibid., 53). It means that, as we have already seen in the explanation on the risk in education, it cannot guarantee that the events of subjectification will take place or not (2.3). Nevertheless, teachers can and should keep trying in the hope for the event of subjectification and stay responsible for it. That is not really motivating the teachers, as their hard work will probably not be recognized or conditionally recognized based on the event of subjectification.

The other problem is that Biesta's subjectivity provides no criteria whatsoever to define what it counts as subjectivity, as it only takes account of the self's openness and responsibility to the other (Zhao 2012, 663). With this "thin conception of subjectivity," teachers cannot know where the finish line lies, as the responsibility to others is not something that we have to attempt to achieve, but rather it is a precondition in any human interactions. It is therefore too general and too confusing to pursue in a classroom. That is why I want to suggest that the emergence of the subjectivity in Biesta's educational theory should not be a fair criterion for the quality of education, as it simply gives neither a direction nor a clear goal to the works of teachers. In short, Biesta's concept of subjectification is too vague and too general to provide any guidance to educators.

Next, I raise my doubt on the entanglement of the subjectivity and education in Biesta's educational theory. As I have stated elsewhere, Kant believed that only education can create

rational autonomous individuals and that was the establishment of Kantian subject as an Enlightenment trajectory (3.2). Following this logic, Biesta confined the emergence of subjectivity in the range of education, however, is it reasonable?

When we attribute the event of subjectification to the field of education, education becomes responsible for the emergence of our subjectivity. Let us think of children who can't get a proper education. Can they never have a chance to emerge as a subject? Does the subjectivity emerge necessarily through education? Although Biesta denies the Kantian Enlightenment trajectory of establishing rational autonomous individuals, he seems to be trapped in the framework of Kant which connect the formation of the subjectivity and education. Zhao also recognized this point and says that Biesta have circulated back to the modern purpose of education instead of re-conceptualizing education (Zhao 2014, 520). So, Biesta passionately works on the promoting the subjectification function of education, but at the same time, he is trapped in the trajectory of modern education and engaged with the unfinished work of modern education ideal which is fostering a subject (Ibid., 519).

The length of education is also one of my concerns. Today, many of the developed countries in the world provides basic compulsory education up to 15 or 16 years old and higher education up to 22 years old. It can be shorter in developing countries. I wonder whether the subjectivity of students can emerge so young, or not. For me, the emergence of subjectivity is rather a lifelong matter and it's better that we give more time to this to happen instead of confining it in education. We all know from our own experience that education is playing a limited influence on our subjectivity. There are many more factors than education which has left a great impact on our subjectivity, such as family, friends, sports, arts, books, films, pets, neighbors, travels, social interactions and even interactions with strangers. We have to realize that the emergence of subjectivity should be understood and treated in much broader scope than the field of education.

4.3 Rethink subjectivity; the genealogical approach to subjectivity

Through the above examination on the values advocated in Biesta's trilogy, I have noticed a common structure present in Biesta's arguments on democracy, subjectivity and freedom. All his arguments are developed in the layers of the 3 major frameworks of philosophy; 1) Modern Philosophy of Kant, 2) Hegelian philosophy in the 20th century, such as of Dewey, and 3) Existential philosophy of Arendt and Levinas. And, Biesta describes why 1 and 2 were

not good enough and therefore introduces 3 in order to overcome the problems of 1 and 2. It is also striking that the course of his arguments are parallel to the chronical development of Western philosophy.

This structure is most obvious in the argument on the democratic subject which I have described above in chapter 3 (3.1). Biesta starts with the critics on Kant, moves on to Dewey and finish with advocating Arendt. He rejects Kantian democratic subjectivity because it's individualistic and instrumentalistic. Dewey's democratic subject overcomes the problem of individualism, and yet it's still instrumentalistic. This way of approach to the concept of subject is typical metaphysical investigation, however, I agree with Mansfield in suggesting that we should take genealogical approach instead of the metaphysical approach to the concept of subjectivity (Mansfield 2000, 5-6).

When we apply the metaphysician's approach to a specific concept, we study various theories and discourse of other philosophers and consider those theories only as stepping-stones to reach the inevitable final theory. In opposing to that, genealogists seek for;

"[...] not the truth that will finally make further discussion redundant, but how the discussion itself – with its wild inconsistencies and its bitter antagonisms, [...] – defines the way we live and represent ourselves." (Ibid.)

Mansfield argues that we must take the genealogist approach to the concept of subject for two reasons. Firstly, he believes that we cannot really define subjectivity into a single consistent thing. He writes; "Because subjectivity is primarily an experience, and remains permanently open to inconsistency, contradiction and unself-consciousness (Ibid., 6-7)." Secondly, Mansfield also refuses to have one final theory of subjectivity. He cites an anecdote of Freud's refusal of applying his own theory to his behavior and argues that even for the most famous theorists "there is something about their own subjectivity that they refuse to pin down (Ibid., 7)." I join him and agree to the impossibility of confining subjectivity into one ultimate thing in order to maintain the space for an inexplicable aspect of subjectivity.

Therefore, I join Mansfield's genealogist approach to subjectivity and say that subjectivity has roughly four usages; 1) the subject of grammar, 2) political-legal subject, 3) philosophical subject and 4) subject as human person (Ibid., 3-4). The first one is, in short, the word 'I' that we use when we formulate single-person sentences. I don't go deep into this one, as it has more grammatical importance than philosophical interest. The second one,

politico-legal subject is the body that carries our rights and duties in legal and social settings. In this view, the subject is identical to the actors within fixed codes and powers. The Third one, philosophical subject is considered to be the ground of truth and knowledge. And lastly, the subject as human person is illustrated as the subject of experience and generally understood as our selfhood or personality (Ibid., 4).

Here, it strikes me that Biesta's three domains of educational functions correspond to the above three categories of the subjectivity respectively. First, I tackle the comparison between qualification by Biesta and the philosophical subject. Concerning Biesta's notion of qualifications, I have already stated above that its main function is the acquisition of knowledge and skills. And, the philosophical subject is defined by Mansfield as the ground of knowledge and truth (Ibid.). Mansfield further claims that this concept of philosophical subject serves as the epistemological ground of human subject. As Mansfield writes, "before we perceive anything, something must be there, in place, to do the perceiving (Ibid., 18)." Biesta doesn't really touch this point when he talks about acquisition in his argument for qualification, however, it is a very important point that should not be missed. In the process of acquiring any kind of knowledge, there are several faculties are involved such as sensory perceptions, memories, representations, expressions, etc. We should not overlook all those foundations Kantian philosophical subject laid in the fundamental process of learning anything at all. This is the basis of our interactions with the world. So, the domain of qualification needs philosophical subject as its ground of knowledge.

Furthermore, Mansfield writes;

"For Kant, subjectivity can only have content through awareness of the world. What circulates within our interior lives is a collection of mere representations. These representations meld with faculties that constitute us. Primary amongst these faculties, allowing us to have a relationship with the world is a sense of 'I'. This I is much more fundamental than what we call a personality, or an identity." (Ibid., 19)

So, Mansfield says that this philosophical subject is "the bedrock on which that individuality is built (Ibid.)." It means that the philosophical subject is more fundamental and an inevitable element for the subject as human being.

Next, I take on the comparison between Biesta's socialization and the politico-legal subject. You might have noticed already, but politics is one of the main themes in Biesta's

educational theory. He spends a lot of pages on the political aspect of human subject in various types of arguments. It is also shown that all the values that Biesta defends in his educational theory are political values.

Mansfield does not do a wide research on this type of subjectivity, but he treats the mechanism how social practices are passed down to the next generation and have an influence on the subjectivity of individuals. For example, he touches Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Bourdieu's concept of *habitus,* in a different word 'community of dispositions,' is the mechanism through which our dispositions and behavior are formed in the society and culture. This type of subjectivity can serve as a subject of Biesta's socialization.

The third and the last one is the comparison between the type of subject as human being and Biesta's subjectification. As the research above shows, Biesta's concept of a subject is a "unique single being that emerges in the world of plurality." This is a very vague statement and it does not say much about "what it is." Only description that I can find is "uniqueness" of it, and this uniqueness is understood in political sense in Biesta's theory.

Here, I run into a problem that Biesta takes the political values as the purposes of education. As I have suggested at the end of the previous chapter, most of all the values defended in Biesta's educational theory are political values. Those values are political ones, but not educational ones. These values should be realized in politics, but not in education. Political values belong to politics, and education is a sphere where these values are taught. What Biesta tries to do with his educational theory is, not to teach, but to realize those values in education and I don't think that is a rightly educational way.

As we saw in the previous section, Biesta uses the concept of "uniqueness" as "uniqueness as irreplaceability", as it is described in the philosophy of Levinas (4.1 and 4.2). This conception, however, doesn't say anything but the responsibility to the other. I therefore suggest bringing the concept of uniqueness back into an educational sense from the political one as Biesta does. Biesta's strongly political 'uniqueness' is not very useful in education. Instead, valuing uniqueness in educational context is, I believe, to respect children's "selfhood" and "personality". And, we also have to make sure that the process of the education does not fall into the oppressive education which destroys the uniqueness of children.

As a conclusion, I would suggest that three functions of education in Biesta's educational theory should not be understood as three separate domains with some overlapping areas. Unlike Biesta thought it would be, we should treat three domains of Biesta's educational

theory as different aspects of one and the same subject. We are individuals with multiple functions who appreciate different types of values at the same time and carry responsibilities in different settings. These three functions are interwoven in our subjectivity and interact with each other in a tremendously complicated manner, and even more, there are more aspects of our subjectivity than these three mentioned in Biesta's educational theory. That makes it impossible for us to grasp all the facts about it, like Mansfield argues.

With this discovery, we can explain why Biesta cannot easily find the conflicts or synergy between the three domains (2.4). As these three domains are merely different aspects of one and the same subject "I", the importance of each aspect is varied depending on the situation. It is rather contextual than theoretical. We do not necessarily have to choose one of concepts of subjects and deny the other, like Biesta does.

5 The problems of developmentalism and instrumentalism and purposes of education

In this chapter, I will treat the problems of developmentalism and instrumentalism which Biesta points out as a problem of Arendt's philosophy and a problem of Dewey's philosophy respectively. To refresh our memory, Biesta points out that instrumentalism is a problem of Kantian and Deweyan philosophy as they see education as an instrument to produce democratic subjects. Biesta thus introduces Arendtian political concept of subject as a solution to the problem of instrumentalistic view on education. Yet, Biesta finds out that Arendtian political philosophy has another problem of developmentalism. As Arendtian political philosophy views children are considered to be developing subjects and therefore fails to consider them to be political subjects. So, Biesta calls Arendtian philosophy as developmentalism and criticizes it for discriminating the positions of children from that of adults.

My doubt is that whether those two problems criticized by Biesta are necessarily problems in educational context as Biesta believes. I assume that these problems are caused by Biesta's blind belief on the existence of purposes of education. Instead, I'd here like to invite you to step back and begin with the examination of the question of "whether education has purposes or not."

My aim in this chapter is to discuss these two problems in relation to the aims of education with the help of Peters' educational theory. Biesta calls us to ask the question of "What is education for? (Biesta 2016b [2010], chapter 1)". He claims that we have to bring this normative question back in education instead of being engaged with instrumental questions, such as "What works?". Although Biesta says that he doesn't have an intention to define what exactly the purposes of education, it is obvious that he presupposes the existence of the aims and purposes of education and he is in search for them (Ibid., 14 and 19).

Here, I'd like to start with the investigation on the question whether education indeed has aims or purposes as Biesta presupposes. Peters argues that education possesses an intrinsic value in itself but there are no extrinsic aims beyond itself (Peters 2007 [1965], 67). The education for Peters is described as follows;

"[...] 'education' implies standards, not necessarily aims. It consists in initiating others

into activities, modes of conduct and thought which have standards written into them by reference to which it is possible to act, think, and feel with varying degrees of skills, relevance and taste." (Ibid, 65)

For Peters, education is essentially a specific type of process through which helps children to fit into society which is basically understood in the term of "initiation." And, the task of an educational theory is to determine "what" are valuable contents to be learned and "how" they will be passed on. And, as the result of education, students must to come to know and embrace the value of what they have learned (Ibid., 60).

Further, Peters' educational theory shows us that the problem of instrumentalism is derived from our belief on the existence of external aims of education. Because 'aiming' implies the concentration of attention on some objects in distance, the word like "aim" or "purpose" is suggesting the existence of the objects external to education (Ibid., 58). This gives us an image of education that we have to get to the goal or achieve something at the end of it. It also makes us think that education itself as a tool to accomplish this mission. As a result, instrumentalism and developmentalism appears. When we give up on the belief that education has purposes or ends, both instrumentalism and developmentalism is not possible any longer. Education is then not a preparation for something beyond itself as it doesn't have a destination to arrive. Biesta rejects Instrumentalism and Arendtian developmentalism, however, this happens only when we believe that there are aims extrinsic to education. When we value education as it is, that it possesses an intrinsic value in itself, both problems of developmentalism and instrumentalism will disappear.

For Peters, education is supposed to "intentionally transmit what is valuable in an intelligible and voluntary manner (Ibid., 63)." So, two things become important here; 1) which values should be transmitted and 2) how those values are transmitted. Above in chapter 3, I have treated some values Biesta advocated in his theory of education. Values such as democracy, freedom, equality, subjectivity and uniqueness of individuals which we have examined in chapter 3 are all valuable things that should be transmitted to children through education. But these values are considered to be the contents of education, but not external aims of education. For example, Biesta treats the value of equality too in his educational theory, and he was trying to eliminate inequality in education. Peters' approach allows inequality to exist between teachers and students, however, what teachers have to do is not to be equal to students but to transmit the value of equality and try to make it a

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valuable thing for students. Peters shows us how we can transmit the value of equality in education by viewing teachers as "simply more familiar with the contents" of education and "more skilled in handling the tools for laying bare its mysteries and appraising its nuances (Ibid., 64)." Because, for Peters, equality is not a destination they have to arrive through education, but should be respected and treated as a valuable thing in education.

When we follow Peters' argument and abandon the presupposition that "education has aims," the two problematic issues in Biesta's educational theory will disappear. As I have stated in chapter 4, Biesta treats those political values which he calls 'ultimate values' as the aims that should be realized in education. However, those political values should be realized in a political sphere but not in education, because they are the purposes of politics, but not that of education. What education should do is to teach them what are important values in a society and why they are important. Biesta views these values as the purposes on education which must be realized in education, and this misunderstanding causes the problem of developmentalism and instrumentalism. When we take the standpoint that there is no external aims or purposes of education, but teaching is already valuable in itself and children are in fact preparing at schools for entering into a political sphere. What we have to do in education is to teach those values and nurture dispositions in children to care about those values.

For Peters, to be truly 'educated' means the following two conditions are fulfilled;

"[...] (a) caring about what is worth-while and (b) being brought to care about it and to possess the relevant knowledge or skill in a way that involves at least a minimum of understanding and voluntariness." (Ibid., 60)

These conditions of 'being educated' in Peters theory justly cover Biesta's four objects of a pedagogy of acquisition; knowledge, skills, values and dispositions which we have treated in chapter 2 at the section of the domain of qualification (2.1). Biesta was right in saying that the domain of qualification is the first importance of education, as it is a particular domain entrusted to education only. The domain of socialization can be understood as the second important domain. As this domain serves as a preparation for going into the political society and the interaction with others at school is an inevitable element for learning the indispensable values in society.

And, as I have already argued in the previous chapter, the domain of subjectification of

education might play a limited role in the subjectification of human beings, as our subjectivity as a single human being are not shaped only through education. There are many other factors having an influence on our subjectivity, such as a family, religions, arts, sports, and so on. The event of subjectification therefore should not and cannot be confined in education. Naturally, it doesn't say that we can make light of the domain of subjectification.

It's worthwhile to mention that Peters mentions to the importance of the proper process of education. He confirms that the transmission should be in "an intelligible and voluntary manner," and it means that transmissions through coercive manners such as torture, hypnosis, brainwashing, or any other kind of brutal forms will not be called educative (Ibid., 60).

I believe that in following the Peters' concept of education without external purposes, the teachers can concentrate on their proper educational tasks as an educator. I agree with Biesta when he claims that it is impossible to measure those ultimate values he defends. This is the core statement of his criticism on an evidence-based pedagogy (Biesta 2016a [2006], chapter 2). However, a problem appears when his strong advocacy of unmeasurable ultimate values goes too far and as a result it ends up as a rejection of something measurable in education (Ibid., 14).

Indeed, there are measurable skills in education, such as literacy and calculating, and there are values that we cannot measure as well. We measure things that we can measure, and the outcome of the measurement makes us competitive. But this competitiveness is acceptable as long as we keep committing to the education of unmeasurable values too. Measurable skills and unmeasurable values are both equally important contents of education and what a good educational theory has to is to make sure that both of them are properly transmitted in an appropriate manner. Rational autonomy, for example, is rejected by Biesta along with the Kantian concept of individual subject. It however stays as a valuable thing in education by itself. Rational autonomy is still considered to be one of important value in education, for example, as a right of self-determination or as a capacity that aids people in living fulfilling lives (Curren 2007, 13).

6 Conclusion

To sum up, the above research shows us two problematic issues of Biesta's educational theory. Firstly, Biesta's educational theory lays a heavy focus on the advocacy of the function of subjectification, but it is still questionable whether Biesta's concept of subjectivity is relevant to or realistically feasible in education. I therefore rethink the subjectivity along with the view of Mansfield and learn that all three educational domains require a subject, and therefore we should consider that those different domains are the different aspects of one and the same subject through a genealogical approach.

Secondly, Biesta takes the presupposition of "education has purposes" for granted and builds his theory upon this presupposition. However, we should depart from the very question of "whether education has purposes or not," because if we take a position that there are no external aims or purposes of education but education is valuable in itself, some problems of Biesta's educational theory, such as instrumentalism and developmentalism will disappear. I have argued with Peters' argument at hand that by acknowledging the value of education in itself we can engage with the properly educational discussions, such as which values should be taught and how it should be done. Biesta, as he confuses political values as educational purposes, fails to recognize the significance of truly educational points such as acquisition of knowledge and skills, establishment of rational autonomy and moral education.

I have begun this thesis with the confession that I fell in love with Biesta's educational theory. And, I believe that his educational theory has attracted not only me but also many other people, because Biesta's strong and passionate acknowledgement of a yet-to-be-born self and the protection of the emergence of single and unique subjectivity appeals to many people. However, after having done the thorough examination on his educational theory, I have found out that Biesta's educational theory is not problem-free. Moreover, both problems which I have found through this research are not much discussed in the literature. So, I believe that I have contributed to the educational debate by opening up a new conversation. This can be a tiny step in our path leading towards a better educational system.

Yet, it does not change the fact that Biesta makes a really good point in his educational theory when he warns us with the current trend of growing attention to the competition of measurable skills. Also, we have to keep reflecting upon the process of education so that we will not fail to respect the authenticity of children. His educational theory definitely makes

us rethink of the education in the age of postmodernism era.

This research helped me to resolve some of dichotomies which I found problematic in the philosophy of education, especially that of freedom in education. Freedom might not be guaranteed or realized in the educational environment, however, it does not have to be, as long as we treat the value of freedom as one of indispensable part of the contents of education. It also helped me to find a way how I can bridge the practice and ethics in education as a graduate of Applied Ethics program. Although not every value might be realized in educational settings, we can at least treat them as materials in education and apply them into the way how we interact with students.

The discovery of the fact that education is valuable in itself will motivate us to continue with a research on which values are worthwhile to pass on through education and what are the appropriate processes to do that. For example, some of important values such as happiness and well-being of students which I think indispensable in educational theory, although Biesta does not treat them in his educational theory. Also, the importance of the study on the values such as sustainability and animal rights will probably increase in future.

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