

# Subjectification and Resonance in Late Modern Bildung: The Global Model of Waldorf Education

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## Abstract

This paper explores the significance of subjectification and resonance in global education. Assuming that all schools have the function of enabling socialization, qualification, and subjectification or becoming a subject, the paper argues that this latter process has been neglected because of a one-sided pursuit of qualification, which may lead to alienation. Using the Bildung educational theory and a globalized and postmodern perspective on this, it is suggested that the role of self-formation is an important counterbalance to neoliberal education policies and could offer a way to reconcile Confucian ideas of social harmony and postmodern notions of emancipation. Thus, this study offers a layered model of the Waldorf curriculum. This comprises a global and universally human level, based on an ideal-typical developmental progression, a meso level that offers a local-level skills and knowledge curriculum, and a micro level that requires individual teachers to practice skilled artistry. Furthermore, it is suggested that the role of the teacher should enable subjectification and that an effective teaching approach should counter alienation by seeking experiences of resonance. This model could also be applied beyond the Waldorf discourse.

**Keywords:** global education, subjectification, Waldorf education, resonance



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## 1. Introduction

Waldorf teacher education prepares people to teach in Waldorf (also known as Steiner) schools. This task has many aspects to it including enabling teacher students to learn dispositions, beliefs, particular ways of seeing and talking about their students, sets of teaching skills and general pedagogical knowledge (Schiller, 2000; Schmelzer, 2016; Rawson, 2020a, 2020b). At the core of this teacher education is a transformative process of self-formation that is referred to as *Bildung*. *Selbstbildung* (or simply *Bildung*) refers to a process of self-formation or self-cultivation through interplay with the cultural tradition. *Bildung* has a long tradition in Middle Europe and Scandinavia reaching back to the European Enlightenment, Neo-Humanism and Idealism, though it has undergone critical and postmodern revisions (Hastedt, 2012; Løvelie, Mortensen, & Nordenbo, 2003). As Rittelmeyer (2012) has discussed the capacity for self-formation assumes the existence of more fundamental capacity of *Bildsamkeit*- that is, plasticity or the ductile ability to change form. Indeed, because of this ductile plasticity, *Bildung* is never complete, is always open to the future and is therefore open and unpredictable with regard to its ‘outcomes’.

Indeed the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer describes *Bildung* as a process of becoming; *Bildung* “grows out of an inner process of formation and cultivation, and therefore constantly remains in a state of continual *Bildung*...Like nature, *Bildung* has no goals outside itself...In having no goals outside itself, the concept of *Bildung* transcends that of mere cultivation of given talents” (2013, p.10-11). Building on Hegel’s notion of *Bildung* as the process of raising the individual mind to the level of the universal and the overcoming of alienation, Gadamer goes further, “to recognize one’s own in the alien, to become at home in it, is the basic movement of the spirit, whose being consists only in returning to itself from what is other” (2013, p. 13). Each individual raises herself out of her natural condition by appropriating the language, customs and institutions

of her people and is thereby pre-given a body of material which she has to make her own, and this process can be extended into the world of other human cultures. The very quality of *Bildsamkeit*- the ability to be formed- is what makes *Bildung* possible and necessary. *Bildung*, following Gadamer, is “keeping oneself open to what is other- to other, more universal points of view” (2013, p.16) and this process forms a ‘cultivated consciousness’ that has the character of a universal sense that enables us to relate the particulate to the universal.

Biesta (2013) refers to this process of transformative self-formation as subjectification or the process of becoming a subject. This article suggests that subjectification can play an important role in countering the alienation or estrangement that arises from current neoliberal education policies and links this to Rosa’s (2019) sociological construct of resonance.

The central function of Waldorf education is enabling the healthy development of the person (Rawson, Richter, & Avison, 2014), which as Zech (2018) explains, aligns with contemporary readings of *Bildung* as transformative learning and individuation, which I align with Biesta’s notion of subjectification. In order for subjectification to occur in school related situations, teachers need to teach and they need to be persons, who themselves have engaged in transformative learning and subjectification. As Biesta (2019a) puts it, the education process is based on teachers teaching something with purpose to students.

Biesta (2013) has argued that it may be helpful to analyze school education using the heuristic that all schools have the functions of enabling socialization, qualification and subjectification. Whilst classical notions of *Bildung* focus on the self-formation of autonomous and rational individuals, in postmodern discourse this self is no longer considered valid. Nevertheless, *Bildung* remains an important idea because of its subject perspective, which contrasts with the object perspective taken by much education policy around the world. Biesta argues that education today mainly serves the functions of socialization and qualification but that it needs to focus more on enabling the

formation of the subject, through an orientation “towards [seeing] children and students as subjects of action and responsibility, not as objects of intervention and influence” (2012, p. 39). Thus he argues that schools also have the function of calling forth subject-ness or what he refers to as ‘grown-up-ness’ in the students, by which he means the ability of individuals to make autonomous and informed judgements from an ecological rather than ego-logical perspective and to take responsibility for their actions (2019b).

I locate this discussion in the context of a global education that has increasingly privileged qualification based on measurable outcomes and marginalized the development of the person and education towards emancipation and social harmony.

## **2. The Background**

Waldorf education is one of the largest alternative education movements worldwide after Montessori and currently has 3,142 educational institutions in 74 countries (Paull & Hennig, 2020), served by around 200 teacher education programmes, ranging from universities offering Master and Bachelor degrees (Willmann & Weiss, 2019) to small-scale part-time seminars. This educational approach has recently been described in three academic publications in English (Dahlin, 2017; Nicol & Taplin, 2017; Rawson, 2021a). Each of these texts makes it clear that Waldorf education expects teachers to have high levels of creativity and skilled artistry in teaching as well as skills in reflection, practitioner research and collegial working. There is widespread consensus in the Waldorf movement that the personal qualities of the teacher are important and indeed the Waldorf approach relies on teachers choosing, structuring and personally presenting their material, rather than following standardized or published material. Class teachers stay with their classes for up to 8 years and direct narrative is an important mode of teaching. Waldorf education does not (yet) generally suffer from the same de-professionalization and degrading of teachers from

—thinking, judging and acting professionals “into ‘factors’ in the production of learning outcomes” (Biesta, 2019a, p. 262) that teachers in mainstream schools often experience and so relationships are still an important aspect in pedagogy.

### 3. Globalized Bildung

In an age of measurement (Biesta, 2010) education has increasingly become homogenous (Moos & Wubbels, 2018) through common neoliberal policy technologies of standardization, performativity and managerialism (Ball, 2013) and the question as to the purposes of education have become increasingly urgent. Possible answers to the question of purpose point to core epistemological and ontological questions of human relationships between self, other and world, which are the core aspects of Bildung.

In a paper considering Bildung in globalized times, Roselius and Meyer (2018) emphasize that one of the core issues in education today in the context of globalization is finding the balance between quality-orientated education, which focuses on the whole person, and exam-orientated education. Given that the forces of globalization, as analyzed by Beck (2015), mean that the local is always connected to the global, linked by the range and rapidity of digital media and that all globalization processes involve transformation in some way, Roselius and Meyer argue that we therefore need a global education theory, though not a global curriculum that all teachers everywhere would teach. They suggest that a modified, postmodern notion of Bildung might provide such a framework.

They argue that even the historical Neo-Humanist understanding of Bildung associated with Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) posited an ongoing engagement of the self with a changing social and cultural world, thus Bildung is not historically fixed to a given time and cultural space. Bildung is not a specific curriculum or educational programme (though recent usage of terms such as *Bildungsstandards* suggest otherwise), but

rather a perspective on the interaction between self and world; how the self emerges in interaction with the world. Thus a Bildung perspective looks at the development of the person and thus has individuation and emancipation as its aims, whilst most education today focuses on educating of specific competences required by the economy and society. Such competences and the kind of knowledge favored by standardized testing are firstly short-term in a rapidly changing economy and secondly not sustainable in a digital world with almost unlimited access to knowledge, but which requires the abilities of meaning-making, discernment and judgement. Furthermore, social harmony depends on ethical dispositions and the ability to take responsibility for one's actions.

The German Idealist commitment to an agentic, self-contained and self-determining core of being (referred to as the I -*das Ich*) and the notion of identity as a totality that was central to Bildung theory and the European Enlightenment has now been deconstructed and discredited, not least for postcolonial reasons. Postmodern theory has replaced the concept of identity as totality with the notion of multiple identities across different life situations. Bildung in its postmodern iteration can become a medium of individual and social emancipation through the reflexive self-construction of the individual, and when this process is acknowledged and supported by institutions.

Though Roselius and Meyer don't refer to these authors, this version of Bildung is well represented by Faulstich's (2013) notion of Bildung as an ongoing attempt by the subject in her individual biography to construct possible, stable and coherent identities within the affordances and constraints of the institutional structures she is embedded in and by Hurrelmann and Bauer's (2015) model of productive reality processing. In similar vein is Alheit's (2018) theory of biographical learning and biographicity, which refers to the ability of subjects to continuously redesign the contours of their lives within the lifelong learning context. This aligns with Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod, and Goodson's (2011) notion of learning in the

life-course, which involves people changing their dispositions through re-positioning using narrative, and it also includes Koller's (2018) notion of Bildung as transformative learning.

Roselius and Meyer refer to the end of meta-narratives and particularly national narratives (though it has to be said that these are currently resurgent) and those education narratives that underpin education policies that in effect reinforce existing patterns of social inequality through the uniform imposition of standards, which assume a homogeneity, which social reality does not provide. Thus standardization marginalizes difference, albeit often in the name of equality- no child left behind- (which the rich anyway bypass via private education). A basic problem with measurable standards is that they tend to increasingly value what can be measured, rather than measuring what is of value. As Verhaeghe (2015) has pointed out, neo-liberal curricula with high stakes testing regimes in fact promote neoliberal values of egotism, competition and consumerism, even while they claim to promote social solidarity, cooperation and inter-culturalism.

Roselius and Meyer argue that recent interest in Bildung in China (e.g. Peng, Gu, & Meyer, 2018) and also in the Anglophone world, derives from the perception that Bildung also offers an ethical perspective, a focus on social well-being and encouragement for inter-subjective creativity. As Peng et al. (2018) have argued, Bildung can be aligned with a Confucian view of education towards social competence and moral behaviour as blending harmony with emancipation. Peng et al. (2018) show that attempts are being made to blend traditional Confucian notions of communitarian and family orientated social harmony and neo-Confucian ideas of emancipation, whilst encouraging an entrepreneurial capitalist culture that requires critical thinking and creativity (Y. Zhao, 2014). Zhao argues that harmony without emancipation is unrealistic in the globalized world without massive suppression and emancipation without harmony is dangerous to the stability of the social and political order. According to T. Zhao (2006) the new philosophy of Tianxia ('all-under-heaven'), interpreted as the world-

as-family ruled by the quality of family-ship, offers a Chinese frame for globalization that includes individualistic neoliberalism.

Put into an educational context, this would look like an education system that squares the circle of collectivism and individualism, that includes difference and gives voice to minorities whilst expecting compliance with the overarching idea of belonging to a larger whole. However, without clarifying the epistemological and ontological basis for the relationship between self and world, such efforts at squaring this educational circle will not be easy. The hopeful idea of an emergent subjectivity characterized by grown-upness and ecological consciousness may find itself between the rock of an essentialized self and the hard place of a decentered, figured subject, and between the polarities of a de-centered, transnational globalized world and national America-first/China-first policies. T. Zhao (2019) makes a strong argument for preferring the Chinese ontology of relations as opposed to the Western ontology of things, as the basis for happiness. This is convincing though it risks the polarizing of Western subjectivity and Chinese valorizing of reciprocal otherness (Baggini, 2018), when actually both gestures are required.

Steiner's (1919/1985, 2018) model of societal three-folding offers a further dimension to the model of global Bildung in the form of a dynamic trialectic. His core idea is that each the three primary but mutually dependent domains of society, the economic, the cultural and the political domain of governance and justice should be ruled by different functional principles. Economic activity should be guided by the principle of entrepreneurial association orientated towards the harnessing and transformation of resources to meeting human need. The political and rights sphere should be guided by social justice and democratic participation and the cultural sphere, including education and science, should be governed by the principle of autonomy. A high-quality education available to all, should focus on allowing the potential within each person to emerge and it could support this process by enabling socialization and qualification so that each person has the best



chance to find a place in the world, in which she can make a contribution and find fulfilment. This means that neither the state nor the economy should prescribe:

*what the rising generation should know and be able to do to fit into the existing social structures, but rather the question should be asked, what capacities are latent in the human being, and what lies within that can be developed? Only then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the social order from the rising generations...[they] should not be moulded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it. A healthy relation exists between school and society only when society is kept constantly supplied with the new and individual potential of persons whose education allowed them to develop unhampered. (Steiner, 1919/1985, pp. 71-72)*

Rather than reproducing the existing social order or projecting current expectations into the future, education should take the ‘beautiful risk’ (Biesta, 2013) of allowing that potential to emerge. As Biesta (2013) argues, what emerges is, and should be, fundamentally unpredictable, otherwise educational institutions infantilize and patronize young people by prescribing what they should become, imposing identities on them that are alienating and denying them the opportunity to take responsibility for their own development, thus encouraging passivity, dependency and estrangement. As Dahlin (2010) has pointed out, this kind of emergent Bildung would be a truly democratic education because it builds the future on what lives in each and every member of the new generation, rather than merely reproducing the status quo, which is not adequate in a rapidly changing global world. This can be seen as a universal educational principle of Bildung.

## **4. A Layered Curriculum Balancing Global and Local Perspectives**

In its latest iteration (Bransby & Rawson, 2020; Rawson, 2021a) Waldorf education offers a framework to balance global and local interests in ways that reflect Biesta's three functions of education, socialization, qualification and subjectification/individuation. This framework understands curriculum as everything that shapes the educative process, from the content of what is taught, to how and when it is taught and includes teacher beliefs and school culture. Thus a school provides a sequence of learning situations offering opportunities for learning and development in socialization, qualification and individuation. Schools therefore have to create the appropriate preconditions and opportunities for emergent development or self-formation of the person in and through engagement with the other, both literally as other person, but also as other culture and other historical times and also the world as other. Each of the disciplinary subjects- art, geography, biology etc.- offers different perspectives on how people can relate to the world.

Bransby and Rawson (2020) argue that curriculum primarily serves the developmental tasks the students have to engage with. These developmental tasks, seen from the perspective of Waldorf pedagogical anthropology are threefold and comprise:

1. The integrated development of body, mind and spirit in the normative form of an ideal-typical developmental trajectory, mapped along a sequence of developmental zones of proximal development.
2. Local social and cultural expectations regarding skills and knowledge.
3. Individual needs and biographical interests.

The questions posed by these developmental tasks are addressed by a layered curriculum framework in which the macro layer maps out an ideal-typical global developmental pathway for individuation and subjectification that is deemed to be relevant to children and young people anywhere

in the world. This does not mean that children's actual development follows these phase and stages. What this model says is; if this sequence is followed, it fosters harmonious and salutogenic development (Rawson, 2021a). Globalized Bildung operates at this macro-level by recognizing the universally human in the person and by acknowledging common rights and responsibilities, such as those articulated by UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child and other similar transnational statements.

The meso-level comprises the local perspective on curriculum, including educating for a globalized world, whilst the micro-level calls for the skilled artistry of the teacher to match the meso and macro level tasks with the needs of specific learners in context, which brings us to the role of the teacher.

## **5. The Importance of the Teacher as Person**

Hattie's (2012) research into learning has shown that teachers matter in a number of ways, whilst also being potentially one of the significant hindrances to learning. His meta-study shows that alongside aspects such as the effective use of assessment for learning, giving students relevant feedback and having and communicating clear goals, teachers need to be passionate and inspired about teaching and this is communicated through meaningful relationships between teachers and students. As Biesta (2015, 2019a) has argued, who the teacher is as a person is important because students benefit when they are taught something for a purpose by someone. If we unpack this idea, then the 'something' (e.g. knowledge or skills) that the students should learn has to be experienced as meaningful and useful (i.e. purposeful) and this is more likely to happen if the teacher identifies with and presents this 'something' in an authentic way that manifests something of his or her subject-ness. Palmer (2017) says something very similar:

*face to face with my students, only one resource is at my immediate*

command: my identity, my selfhood, my sense of this ‘I’ who teaches-  
*without which I have no sense of the ‘Thou’ who learns ...good teaching  
cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity  
and integrity of the teacher.* (p. 10)

Biesta’s (2020) recent reflections on the COVID-19 crisis from an educational perspective draw our attention to the fact that it is not the loss of learning that is the problem but the loss of teaching. If learning is the ability to direct attention to what is salient, as Ingold (2000) argues, citing Gibson’s (1979) ecological theory of perception, then the primary role of the teacher is to direct the student’s attention to the world. This can be done in an authoritarian way that determines what the students should learn or it can be done in an emancipatory way, encouraging the self-activity and thus the self-formation of the student. As Biesta explains:

*Authoritarian teaching not just wants to direct the attention of students, but also wants to have total control over what students do with what enters their field of perception. Emancipatory teaching, on the other hand, also wants to direct the attention of students, but leaves it to them to figure out what they do with what they may encounter there. The judgement, and the burden of the judgement is, in other words, on them. The teacherly gesture here tries to say no more than ‘look, there is something there that I believe might be good, important, worthwhile for you to pay attention to.’ .... And this gesture not just focuses the attention on the world ‘out there’ but in one and the same ‘move’ brings the ‘I’ of the student into play. (2020, p. 2)*

The act of bringing the I or the subjectivity of the student into play is not just a question of pedagogical knowledge and skills but also of the subject-ness of the teacher and the teacher’s own relationship to the world. Teachers create learning situations in which students both learn and

experience themselves as learning subjects, younger children no doubt unconsciously, older ones more consciously.

A core aim of Waldorf education is enabling individuals to become active democratic citizens capable of making autonomous judgements, acting in a socially responsible ways and taking responsibility for their actions (Rawson et al., 2014). Biesta (2019b) calls this grown-up-ness. Grown-upness is the opposite of being infantilized, that is, being positioned by people or institutions as helpless yet demanding like young children. Adults have to control and direct the lives of infants, determine their pathways and make all the key decisions, whilst safeguarding and nourishing them. As a metaphor infantilizing is particularly apt for an education system that seeks to standardize, control, manage and measure all outcomes, including the kind of people it ‘produces’. Grown-up-ness is a metaphor for the opposite attitude to students, one that encourages and enables them to become responsible agents of their own learning and becoming. Clearly, in order to enable grown-up-ness in their students, teachers themselves also need to be engaged in a process of becoming a subject; a teacher needs to be someone.

As Biesta has argued (2015, 2019a), education always has to consider content, purpose and relationships. The sense of purpose should not only be institutional and driven by standards, but should be experienced and lived by the teacher and manifest in the judgements that they make about what to teach and how they do it (whatever curriculum policy states). This sense of purpose is something students can experience implicitly, and perhaps sometimes explicitly in lessons. The aspect of relationships in the process of teaching and learning – the being taught by someone- is crucial to the processes of subjectification. Biesta (2015) speaks of teaching as an act of gifting the children and young people something the teacher feels is valuable, has been chosen by her and is offered in the best possible way. A gift, however carefully chosen and presented and freely given, still has to be accepted. Teaching as a gift requires a willingness on the part of the learners to be open for what comes towards them. Thus the nature of the relationship

is subtle and not quite as asymmetrical as it sometimes appears. If what the teacher brings is unfamiliar and strange, and in a sense radically other, it can prompt resistance, or rather the new content offers resistance to being understood. Either way it requires entering into a relationship with it by both teacher and student.

Two of the generative principles of Waldorf education (Rawson, 2021a) are that, firstly, the teacher has to form a significant personal relationship to the teaching material and then present it in an artistic way and in a way that fosters sense of coherence among the students in a salutogenetic sense (Antonovsky, 1996), by ensuring that they generally experience the tasks they are given as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful for them to engage in. Artistic in this sense means that form and content are balanced in a meaningful way for the given situation and specific group of learners. Teaching is understood as a performative process of knowledgeable action with purpose, the purpose being not instrumental or designed to produce prescribed, measurable outcomes, but rather to promote well-being and the good life in the Aristotle (2009) sense of praxis, which requires practical wisdom (Biesta, 2015, speaks of the virtuosity of the teacher, since phronesis or practical wisdom is the virtue required in praxis). Both teacher and then students have to enter into a relationship with the part of the world (in the widest sense) being studied. It is this dialogue between self and world that is the essence of self-formation/Bildung because it can lead to transformation of both subject and object (Koller, 2003, 2018). Enabling this dialogic engagement with the world is a key function of teaching. As Biesta put it:

*But to exist as subject, in and with the world, does not mean that we simply do what we want to do, that we simply follow our desires. It rather means that we acknowledge and come to terms with the reality of what and who we encounter in the world or, to put it in more precise terms, of what and who we encounter as the world. Existing as subject thus requires that we try to exist in dialogue with what and who is other*

– *in the world*. (2019c, p. 5)

Therefore, teachers need to be aware of the nature of these processes and develop the skills to prepare their teaching and material in such a way that the students can experience and accept it as a gift, and have the artistry and skills to organize and guide this process, whilst keeping the outcome open in such a way that individual transformative learning can occur (Rawson, 2021a). Subjectivity events can include encountering the other as a person, but it can also potentially be through encountering art, culture, nature and certain life situations.

Even though Waldorf education is committed to subjectification, this does not always translate into subjectification events in the classroom. In a small scale study of Waldorf graduates, however, Rawson (2019) showed that this particular group of students actually identified non-formal learning situations such as social internships, drama productions and project work as more connected to their personal development than formally taught topics. Rawson suggested that there are various reasons for this, including alienation in formal lessons when students have the feeling that the topics are taught primarily because they are on the curriculum or are relevant for exams, rather than because they may offer opportunities for expansive learning (Grotlüschen, 2004) or existential experiences leading to subjectification events. As the study showed, boundary experiences in which students sojourn in other communities of practice for short but intensive periods, such as internships, but also the block method of teaching, which involves 3~4 week immersion in a particular field to the point of identification, and then cross over into a new field, can offer moments of reflection and re-positioning leading to changing dispositions. The transitions in particular are rich sites of transformative learning.

Another factor may be the effect of interruption and encountering the other as unexpected and unknown. As Biesta (2013) has suggested, subjectification events may occur through a pedagogy of interruption, when

the student is confronted with powerful new experiences that force her to either reject or block them or to open up to them with a willingness to change her existing stance, understandings or world view in the light of this new experience. My experience as teacher is that young people in puberty, a period in which existing structures are being questioned or are proving inadequate for identity work, respond best when they feel able to be agentic in the learning process. What manifests as risk-taking at this age can be seen as the *Bildung* function of taking on one's own developmental tasks, though it can also lead to inner withdrawal, when they feel a mismatch between their biographical interests and external expectations.

In general, Waldorf education attempts to support opportunities for individuation events by allowing students to experience real phenomena, wherever possible through rich sense impressions in context, and then allowing them to temporarily forget (e.g. overnight), then, retrieve, recall and reconstruct their subjective experiences and subsequently construct appropriate concepts to account for these experiences in dialogue with others and ultimately in dialogue with existing concepts. Such concepts have more meaning for them than those that are simply given by teachers or text books, because they have generated them (Rawson, 2021a). A law created has more meaning than a law given. Performative narrative is another way of creating intense experiences that interrupt and challenge assumptions and embodied expectations. And finally, having a teacher personally chose, structure and present this material enhances the relational and embodied nature of experience. In the primary classes teachers model how we engage with the world and make meaning, whilst in the secondary classes, the teachers as disciplinary subject specialists, often with professional experience as craftpersons, artists, scientists, historians, are able to mediate different ways of engaging with and understanding the world. In all ages, the self-activity of the learner is essential for self-formation.



## 6. Subject-ness and Identity

Biesta has explained the difference between identity and subject-ness or subjectivity as follows:

*the question of identity...is the question of who I am, whereas the question of subjectivity is the question of how I am. Identity is who I see myself as, what I identify with and how people see me in terms of gender, ethnic background, education, social class and status and any other typology we apply to groups of people we are like or who are different to us. (2014, p. 34)*

Connected with identities are the generic types that people are often identified as belonging to. Steiner (1963b) discusses the need to see beyond what he calls the genus, the generic or stereotypical form (he was referring specifically to sex and gender) and learn to see the unique signature of the individual. As Hughes comments, Steiner:

*was arguing that generic thinking disregards individuality...Generic thinking erases individuality. The example of gender makes this clear. When sex is constituted as a genus, says Steiner, individuals of either sex become invisible as individuals and this is particularly true of women in societies where males dominate. (Hughes, 2012, p. 247)*

It is manifestly also true about creed, country, colour, class and culture as Appiah (2019) has shown eloquently in his book *The Lies That Bind*.

Hübner and Weiss (2017) distinguish, in the context of Waldorf teacher education, between personality and person-ness (the German language allows a distinction between *Personalität* and *Persönlichkeit*, both of which can be translated as personality). The term teacher personality refers to the ensemble of dispositions that are the basis for effective teaching, whereas

person-ness (*Personalität*) has to do with the person as an individuality, what in this paper I refer to as the subject, subjectivity and subject-ness. As Loebell (2017) explains, the distinction between individuality and subject is one of perspective because the person experiences herself as the actor in the act of perceiving, thus making it also an act of self-perception (i.e. I enact the processes that enable me to hear you or to be able to walk) and thus the subject of these acts. Individuality is what others identify as that which is unique in the other person, that is, what can be framed in a biographical narrative or biographical mythos (Göschel, 2012) or recognized as the unique voice, for example, of a writer, the signature of a particular composer, or the hand of a painter.

The individual's self-observation is not fixed and is constantly changing and growing. Through learning and development the subject experiences herself as an emergent being with potential. This might manifest as dissatisfaction, the sense that one could do something better, or be a better person. Furthermore, individuality or subject-ness can only be experienced as relational, that is, in relation to the experience of otherness. Loebell cites Ricken's (2014) definition of individuality as being neither a substantial, determinable and indivisible *what*, nor a subject-theoretical and unique *who*, but a practical and performative *how* a life is led and how the person's own singularity and temporality and their associated otherness and alienation are managed. This resembles Faulstich's (2013) characterization of life-long learning as the construction and securing of identity and the development of person-ness (*Personalität*) that is bound up with the process of gaining sovereignty over one's own life, expanded agency and therefore opportunities for new learning.

Learning is the motor of development because through bodily/sensory engagement with the world, new experience is gained that changes the conditions under which new experiences and thus learning can occur. Dewey's (1938) transactional view of experience, which sees a mutually formative relationship between subject and object and in particular subject

and social institutions rejects the view of an essentialist self; an individual is nothing fixed, given ready-made. Rather, selfhood is something achieved, and achieved not in isolation but with the aid and support of the other, in relationships. In Dewey's view, the individual can attain autonomy through reflection and in the exercise of choice and this ability is located in participation in social processes and institutions in the pursuit of the common good. For Dewey achieving individuality and freedom go hand in hand but both only exist in a social context (Festenstein, 2019).

In Steiner's terms individuality or 'I-ness' has to be achieved through self-emancipation (Hughes, 2012). This emancipation occurs through the capacity of freedom which takes the form of cognition and knowing, performed by a process of uniting concepts with perception in an experienced perceiving. That process can also be called thinking. In thinking we individualize and particularize concepts and generalize what we perceive. When we manage to, "observe this thinking in progress (as distinct from observing its results - our thoughts), we are intuiting our individuality as a function of our universality" (Hughes, 2012, p. 248).

## **7. Knowing and Coming into Being as Subject**

The knowledge process or knowing, according to Steiner (1963a, 1963b), is a productive, performative act through which the subject brings forth reality; Dahlin (2013) formulates it succinctly, "knowledge + experience = reality". More exactly, in the act of knowing, the subject completes reality by giving meaning to an otherwise incoherent experience of a part of the world. By locating that part in its wider context with the help of individualized concepts, that is, concepts intuited by an individual and which can be intuited by any individual with similar experiences, it gains coherence for us. In doing so, the subject brings herself more into being and more into a relationship to the world. This general principle of knowledge generation that Steiner describes shows us how cognition, emancipation and

individuality are connected and are the shared heritage of each and every human being. Each of these processes is based on encountering, engaging with and recognizing otherness and our mutually formative relationship to it.

The notion that the personality of subject-ness of the teacher is crucial is acknowledged in Waldorf teacher education (e.g. Hübner & Weiss, 2017; Loebell & Martzog, 2016; Schiller, 2000). Nieke (2017) describes teacher education as having the dual role of qualification and the development of the person. As Loebell (2017) puts it, teacher education always involves the whole person and includes the subject actively in the learning activity. Developing subject-ness, or becoming an agentic person is a project of self-transformation in which the subject brings herself into being. Many of the generative principles (Rawson, 2021a) of Waldorf education require teachers to enact creative agency and knowledgeable action with purpose. Furthermore, Rawson (2020b) has explained how dispositions, teacher beliefs and values are learned in initial Waldorf teacher education and transformed into professional dispositions through learning-in-practice in which scaffolded reflection plays an important role.

## **8. Developing Subject-ness**

As we have seen, the process of encountering the world can involve resistance and interruption because the world is not ours to shape as we choose, but has its own existence. We experience the world as alien other, particularly when we only do this cognitively. As Steiner (2020) has pointed out, in confronting the world ‘out there’ we usually construct mental images cognitively ‘in here’, as it were, to represent it ‘out there’. In encountering the world in this way, we are tempted to impose our will on it, dominating and shaping the other to our will. In doing so we experience the world as thing to manipulate, rather than as a being we can relate to. And if we fail to master what confronts us, we may give up, become alienated, retreat and in a sense, disappear for the other. Either way we are unmoved and unchanged by

the encounter. The third, preferred option is a dialogic, relational approach leading to co-existence with the other and the world. Biesta (2013) calls this the educational space.

Rumpf (2010) has characterized two kinds of learning; the first involves capturing a ‘piece’ of the world, separating it from its context, analyzing it, colonizing and exploiting it to satisfy our desires. The other way of learning involves a respectful approach, tentatively opening ourselves to the other, listening to what it has to say and being prepared to be changed by the experience. This second approach can be described as aesthetic, in the sense of the Ancient Greek term *aisthesis*, meaning sensory experience rich in feeling and including discernment. It involves an engagement that starts with recognizing the qualities of the other mediated to us through the senses- for example the materials or properties of the world but also of artefacts such as works of art, and proceeds to a description of the effect these ‘materials’ have on us (Mollenhauer, 1990). Mollenhauer pursues this thought process to the conclusion that it is in the nature of the aesthetic experience that it brings the subject into being, for example, a piece of music that brings forth the experience of melancholy. Monet’s painting of a haystack (or Breughel’s or Van Gogh’s haystacks for that matter) doesn’t just remind us of something, doesn’t just represent something, but brings forth a state of being in us, in which both haystack and subject manifest, in which the subject experiences herself as the one experiencing. As Mollenhauer puts it, the experience I have of and with myself in the moment of an aesthetic description, is not an ‘as if’ experience, a representation of an experience, but is the reality of the I. Mollenhauer speaks of an aesthetic I that strives towards aesthetic emancipation, which is different from political and social emancipation in that it seeks to experience itself in the aesthetic experience, thus liberating itself. The aesthetic I manifests in idiosyncratic ways; it is about telling idiosyncratic narratives, that express the contingent self in metaphors and that give voice to the idiosyncratic other.

Soetebeer (2018a) has explored the nature of *aisthesis* in relation to

Goethe's conception of self-formation or *Bildung*, perhaps best summed up in the expression; the human being knows herself in as much as she knows the world, which she is only aware of in herself and is only aware of herself in the world. As Goethe put it; each new object we fully engaged with builds a new organ in us (cited in Soetebeer, 2018b). Put into terms of contemporary discourse, the individual is in constant interaction with her environment and depending on how open or closed she is for aesthetic experience, this process can lead to transformation as new experiences require a re-construction of the subject's existing relationship to and understanding of the world. As Soetebeer (2018a) shows in his study of Goethe, this process of self-formation and re-formation is also a preeminently biographical experience, because for Goethe "biography was a decisive resonance-space in which the significance of historical and social processes become visible" (Soetebeer, 2018a, p. 343), an insight that is echoed in many contemporary notions of the narrative self (Alheit, 2018; Bauman, 2008; Biesta et al, 2011; Kegan, 2018).

In contrast, however, to many post-modern interpretations of self-formation, Soetebeer (2018b) interprets the process not merely as one of de-construction or even destruction of the subject, but as a potentially creative process of re-formation of the self through the formation of new organs in Goethe's sense through exercise, in particular artistic exercise. As Soetebeer puts it, "re-formation (*Umbildung*) brings about new organ formation, predisposes abilities, when the re-forming experiences activate a process through which the relationship of the individual to the world and also her specific identity changes" (2018b, p. 123). Following Rawson's (2020b) theory of Waldorf teacher education, this process can lead to new dispositions through hermeneutic study, contemplative practice and artistic exercises. Thus teacher students can thus develop a set of dispositions, beliefs and skills appropriate to Waldorf education.

## 9. Resonant Relationships as a Basis for the Development of Subject-ness

Rosa (2019, 2020) has introduced a sociology of subject-world relationships he describes with the metaphor resonance. Resonance is not a state of being but rather a mode of relationship characterized as follows.

1. Resonance involves an encounter with the world or an aspect of it that ‘speaks’ to us and to which the subject is called upon to engage with.

2. Resonance generates self-efficacy in the subject’s answer to the experience of being touched or moved by the encounter with the world, which calls forth an emotional response from within, leading to a process of engaging with and working on the encounter as experience.

3. Resonance initiates a process of transformation for both subject and object.

4. Resonance is fundamentally impossible to predict, control, possess, instrumentalize or guarantee.

The world comes towards the subject, in what Meyer-Drawe (2012) calls a powerful, unexpected and even painful experience (*Widerfahrnis*) that she likens to the Ancient Greek notion of *pathos mathei* – learning through suffering (originally in the theatre) - and we initially respond emotionally and then subsequently reflectively. Rosa (2020) emphasizes the point that resonance cannot be coerced or forced to occur, or indeed, prevented from occurring, though it is not unreachable- there is an important distinction between controllability and the possibility of being reached. Rosa writes, that applied sociologically, “resonance always has the character of a gift that occurs as an unexpected experience (*Widerfahrnis*)” (2020, 68, MR translation). If we are open to it, the world speaks to us; what we can’t do is demand that the world obeys our commands and reveals itself to us. Furthermore, resonance is also constitutively open in terms of outcomes. The implications for education are profound.

Building on a tradition of critical theory, Rosa takes a multidisciplinary

approach to analyzing the conditions of late modernity and identifies a paradox in the widespread psychological need for wholeness as a condition of the good life and at the same time, the aggressive desire to control all aspects of the world, in order to access and attain objects of resonance.

Rosa's response to the conditions of late modernity or post-modernity is resonance (Schiermer, 2020), which he also refers to as appropriation, which he says is less instrumental than assimilation, because it implies transformation of both subject and object (as Rogoff, 1995, also points out). Rosa makes it clear that in order to go beyond merely identifying and categorizing the causes of alienation, alongside being open to resonance, we must be reflexive and notice both what affects us and how we filter experience. Rosa (2019) applies his analysis of resonance to education, critiquing the marginalization of resonant experiences through the instrumentalization of much current educational practice. Many aspects of Waldorf education counter alienation and prompt experiences of resonance, but perhaps the least visible and arguably most important is the quality of relations between teachers and pupils. This has several aspects; the teacher's commitment to the material and her skilled artistry in shaping lessons for meaning-making purposes, the interest in her students and the respect she shows them, the cultivation of shared intentionality and the modelling of an attitude to the other and the world. Teachers who can model an epistemology that leads to the experience of being in the world that is not just a transmission of information or the transfer of knowledge as facts, are more likely to prompt subjectification events, inspire young people to become qualified and social capable people, because they are enabling embodied learning.

## **10. Conclusions**

A postmodern notion of *Bildung* means having respect for the universal processes of individuation (subjectification) and the ability to enable



enabling appropriate qualification and inter-cultural socialization. This requires teachers who are themselves ‘grown-up’ subjects and personalities and not merely technicians delivering existing programmes. If Biesta is right in asserting that education means someone teaching someone something meaningful, then teacher education must find ways of prioritizing this. Waldorf education, which itself is undergoing a process of consciously reinventing itself as a global education after 100 years or successful practice across continents (Boland, 2015, 2017; Bransby & Rawson, 2020), including a process of decolonizing curriculum (Rawson, 2020c, 2021b), offers a model of how global and local educational interests can be combined. By identifying a universally human level of developmental processes underpinning individuation- albeit within the frame of Steiner’s (2020) pedagogical anthropology - it combines this with processes of socialization and qualification at the local level, though even here, there are undoubtedly aspects that have a common and global relevance, such as media competency, ecological capability, democratic dispositions and narrative empathy (Nussbaum, 2006), the ability to tell another’s story. This is important not only for Waldorf education, but is an issue for education generally, because it adds the dimension of self-formation to the mono-dimensional focus on measurable outcomes and foresees a dimension of socialization that includes an inter-cultural component.

In allowing teachers to be teachers, which means expecting and enabling them to be autonomous professionals with skilled artistry, it will be possible to facilitate the relational encounters that both provide a basis for resonance and are, I suggest, an effective way of enabling qualification. The alienation that arises when self-formation is misrecognized, as Meyer-Drawe (2012) suggests, needs to be balanced by a recognition of all the educational processes that enhance the experience of resonance.

This is a new field of educational inquiry and Waldorf is actively participating in it. Furthermore, it is a field in which East and West can meet and perhaps eventually overcome the need to use these geographical symbols

and the colonial binaries that they imply. When that time comes, there will be a meeting of different educational philosophies in dialogue with each other, and though the Middle European philosophy of Bildung has a contribution to make, before it can do this, it needs to find a global framework that truly deserves the name. There is a model for this.

The German poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe mooted the notion of a world literature linked to translation process that makes it possible, which was further developed by Walter Benjamin (1996). This world literature would serve the same function in the sphere of Bildung that the globalized economic exchange, that Goethe already recognized in 1827, did for the global market, it would be a medium of exchange and mutual understanding. It would be based on translated texts that drew on the same common source of inspiration and experience that the originals drew on. Goethe himself was open to and allowed himself to be inspired by Chinese, Persian and Arabic texts. As Huang (2014) has shown, Goethe and Benjamin's idea posits mutual recognition of a universal dimension to the human being- they called it pure language. Like a world literature, a world education would enable us to read local educational contexts with the eyes of the world and to see the world with the eyes of those local educational perspectives, to paraphrase Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2012, p. 60), whose glocal theory provides a theoretical framework for such a world education. In glocal theory the metaphor of the globe means that there is no essentialized West or East, or indeed any privileged perspective and each point is equidistant from the centre. Understanding comes through multi-logic (not merely dialogic) discourse on the basis of a common humanity.

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## 現代晚期之陶養的主體化與共鳴： 華德福教育的全球模式

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### 摘要

本文主要在探究主體化和共鳴在全球華德福教育的重要性。假設所有學校都需具有促進社會化、合格化、主體化或成為主體的功能，本文倡導陶冶（*Bildung*）的教育理論和全球化及後現代的觀點，主張自我形塑對於平衡新自由主義教育政策扮演重要的角色，並能提供一種將儒家的社會和諧思想和後現代的解放觀念結合的途徑。本文提供多層次的華德福課程模型，包含全球普遍性的人性層次以提供個體化的發展架構、一個中階層次在發展在地課程，及一個微觀層次讓個別教師演練教學的藝術。此外，本文還論證了教師在促進主體化的角色和通過尋求共鳴體驗來批判異化的教學方法。本教學模式也可以廣泛應用在華德福教育以外的相關論述領域。

**關鍵詞：**全球教育、主體化、華德福教育、共鳴



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