

Subjectification, identity, and resistance – Education as a contribution to peace in a fractured world

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Biesta (2022) has recently taken up Adorno's view that the central role of education is to ensure that Auschwitz never happens again. He develops what he calls the Eichmann-Parks paradox as a way of exploring how subjectification is key in this regard (Eichmann's whole defense, Biesta argues, is characterized by an absence of subjectification and personal responsibility). In this presentation Biesta's thoughts are developed further in relation to issues of identity-formation (based on Tyson forthcoming and Wiehl 2015). It is argued that as long as identity-formation builds on narratives of resistance, as long as the main source of personal development is tied to an experience of identity that defines itself against an "other", there is no hope for any lasting peace. The presentation then moves on to consider Waldorf education primarily as an education aiming to foster processes of identity-formation that do not require resistance in order to become self-aware and develop. In other words, Waldorf education is discussed as a pedagogy that encourages the individual to take responsibility for her self-development without needing to be forced into it through obstacles and misfortune. The discussion centers on an argument that arts, crafts and gardening represent invitations to practice care and a path to self-development that is inherently peaceful. It considers pedagogy as a series of experiments in "powerlessness", ie. a striving to build relationships that are open to subjectification (acts of freedom) and that actively encourage it. The argument concludes with a reflection on how Waldorf education aims to enrich the moral imagination of both teachers and students. Based on a passage from Rudolf Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom* (1995) the discussion considers how moral imagination, sufficiently intensified, can be a source of developmental energy that liberates the individual from the need to develop identity through conflict and "othering".

The presentation aims to be a contribution to the philosophical foundations of Waldorf education. As such, it is primarily a theoretical study.

References



Human
Intelligence

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