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THE DOUBLE SUBJECTIFICATION FUNCTION OF EDUCATION

Reconsidering Hospitality and Democracy

INTRODUCTION

In recent years philosophers of education have used the ideas of both Jacques Derrida and Jacques Rancière to rethink the ethical and political possibilities and responsibilities of education (for example, Biesta, 2001, 2010b; Masschelein, 1996; Masschelein & Simons, 2010; Peters, 2003, 2009; Ruitenberg, 2010, 2011). The work of Rancière and Derrida is especially generative for educational scholars because, to paint it in very broad strokes, both Rancière and Derrida are concerned with the ways in which a given social order is involved in assigning and excluding, and education is one of the central institutions of a social order.

Derrida has called attention to the exclusive force of binary conceptual schemas such as presence/absence or self/other, as well as to the exclusion of people from a social order structured on such schemas. He has observed that while such exclusion occurs, it never occurs completely, as a binary inevitably deconstructs itself, which is to say that the border between the two sides of the binary is permeable and exposes the two sides to each other. In the case of the binary "citizen/foreigner", which characterizes those within and outside the demos, the deconstruction of the border can be characterized as *hospitality*. Indeed, Derrida (2002) writes, "hospitality—this is a name or an example of deconstruction" (p. 364). Derrida's writing on democracy has typically invoked "democracy-to-come," not as a description of a better democratic government, but as a reference to the ways in which the borders of anything called "democracy" undo themselves. "Democracy-to-come" goes beyond the laws that govern democracy, and beyond the nation-state boundaries within which democracies can be said to exist, and is not a reference to a set of practices, but an expression of the hospitality inherent in the concept of democracy. This expression "takes into account the absolute and intrinsic historicity of the only system that welcomes in itself, in its very concept, that expression of auto-immunity called the right to self-critique and perfectibility" (Derrida, 2005, pp. 86–87).

Rancière has focused on the way in which social arrangements assign people to social ranks and locations and expect their understandings and ideas to remain confined to those ranks and locations. He has documented how people have, throughout history, refused to remain confined to these social ranks and locations, and have

T. Szkudlarek (Ed.), Education and the Political, 89–105.

entered social roles and places they were not supposed to occupy. Rancière refers to such border-crossing practices as *democracy*: "Democracy is … the institution of politics itself, the system of forms of subjectification through which any order of distribution of bodies into functions corresponding to their 'nature' and places corresponding to their functions is undermined" (Rancière, 1995/1999, p. 101).

On more than one occasion, Rancière has distanced his conception of democracy from the conception of democracy advanced by Derrida. In particular, he has argued that Derrida's emphasis on the Other as who or what is always outside the present system, as an unforeseeable future or arrival, is at odds with the idea of democracy itself. In doing so, he has set up a sharp dichotomy between Derrida's work and his own. Thus, if the work of these two thinkers is as incompatible as Rancière makes it out to be, educational scholars who have made use of the work of both will have to choose between them, or, at least, attend carefully to the tensions.

But is such a dichotomy the only or the best way to characterize the differences between Rancière's and Derrida's work? In this essay I examine whether there are other ways of understanding the differences and tensions. In order to do that, I begin by explaining how this question of compatibility and tension between Derrida's and Rancière's work is a question that matters for education. Then I turn my attention to three interpretations of the alleged incommensurability of their writings. First, I examine how Derrida's and Rancière's work seems to me to have a different focus—in the literal sense of the word as the focus of a lens that needs to be adjusted when shifting from a close-up to a wide-angle view. What I mean by this is that, while Rancière offers a compelling analysis of conflicts between groups that are or are not included in the polity, Derrida's work allows for a fine-grained analysis of the internal fabric of the groups or political movements that seek change. Second, I take a closer look at Rancière's claim that equality and singularity are incommensurable. Perhaps Rancière and Derrida employ different conceptions of equality, or perhaps there is room for singularity in relations based on equality? Third, I examine Todd May's (2011) suggestion that Derrida and Rancière are looking at the issue as if through opposite ends of a telescope, Rancière writing from the perspective of the marginalized, Derrida writing from the perspective of those with privilege to relinquish.

SUBJECTIFICATION AS EDUCATIONAL INTEREST

The question of an alleged tension between hospitality and democracy is of central importance not just to scholars who have drawn from the work of Derrida and Rancière, but to the very concept of education. In other words, what I aim to offer is not a form of applied philosophy in which education is the object and recipient of philosophical work, but rather a set of philosophical questions about education. My argument is not that we should, following Derrida, strive to make education more hospitable and, following Rancière, more democratic, because we have determined in general, outside of the sphere of education, that hospitability and democracy are

both desirable and that, therefore, education should have these qualities as well. No, the point is that the very concept of education becomes meaningless if it is not, at least in part, concerned with people becoming subjects, i.e., with "subjectification"[1]. In an argument for education that creates a space for subjectification, both hospitality and democracy are relevant concepts. Hospitality, in Derrida's view, is centrally concerned with creating space and giving place, and democracy, in Rancière's view, is about the political capacity of everyone to claim a space that is not predetermined by the existing order. Both hospitality and democracy, thus, are concerned with subjectification, which makes them of educational significance.

In asserting this I agree with Gert Biesta, who has argued on several occasions that education must take an interest in subjectification. In *Beyond Learning* Biesta (2006) argues that "it is the very task and responsibility of education to keep in existence a space in which freedom can appear, a space in which unique, singular individuals can come into the world" (p. 95). Biesta here uses the work of Hannah Arendt to frame the idea of unique, singular individuals coming into the world, and he frames this process of coming into the world as a process of coming into subjectivity. Biesta stresses that, seen through the lens of Arendt's work, this subjectification is a process of coming into *political* subjectivity because "Arendt holds that *my* subjectivity is only possible in the situation in which others can be subjects as well" (p. 135). Democracy, then, is a requirement for subjectification, because "democracy can precisely be understood as the situation in which everyone has the opportunity to *be* a subject, that is, to act and, through their actions, bring their beginnings into the world of plurality and difference" (p. 135). This is the "worldly" aspect of the space education should establish and maintain, the space in which individuals can come into the world: "one can bring one's beginnings into the world but one needs a world—a world made up of other 'beginners'—in order to come into this world" (p. 53). In order to discuss the singularity and uniqueness of those who enter the world, Biesta turns to the work of Emmanuel Levinas. From the perspective of Levinas's work Biesta argues that, when I come into the world, I do so not as an already-subject who initiates this entry, but as one who responds and who is

> …already positioned from the outside by a responsibility that is older than the ego. What makes me unique in this assignation, what singularizes me, what "makes" me into a unique, singular being … is the fact that *I* am responsible and that *I* cannot slip away from this assignation. (p. 54)

Although Levinas clearly goes further than Arendt in decentering subjectivity, Biesta does not discuss the differences between Levinas's and Arendt's conceptions of subjectivity, presumably because he does not perceive any such differences to pose a challenge to his argument for subjectification as the primary task of education.

In his essay "On the Weakness of Education", Biesta (2010a) distinguishes the qualification, socialization and subjectification functions of education and writes that "it is only through the interest in subjectification that education can be more than just socialization" (p. 360). In other words, a concern with subjectification is a necessary

condition for the practices we refer to as "education" to be education rather than, for example, training or schooling. Biesta here uses Levinas's work (but not Arendt's) to discuss this subjectification function of education because, he argues, "Levinas's work is uniquely concerned with the question of subjectivity and the process of subjectification" (p. 359). Characteristic of Levinas's philosophy is that subjectivity is radically decentered: the subject emerges as subject only in response to the Other. It should be emphasized that subjectivity, in this view, is about the singularity or "uniqueness of each individual human being" (p. 359). Biesta summarizes Levinas's conception of subjectification by saying that subjectivity emerges only in situations in which I am addressed by the Other, situations of my "'*being-in-question*,' as it is only in those situations … that the self is assigned to be a self, that the self is *singularized*" (p. 361, emphasis in original). Education, on this view, is education only to the extent that it offers the conditions in which human beings can be-in-question and emerge as subjects in response.

In his book *Learning Democracy in School and Society*, Biesta (2011) reiterates his argument for subjectification but uses the work of Rancière to frame the concept of subjectification. Here Biesta argues for subjectification not as a central function of education in general, but rather as a form of "civic learning." Seen through the lens of Rancière's work, subjectification as the process of coming into subjectivity is inevitably political, but this political quality is different from the political quality of subjectivity as discussed by Arendt. Remember that subjectivity for Arendt is political because "Arendt holds that *my* subjectivity is only possible in the situation in which others can be subjects as well" (Biesta, 2006, p. 135). For Rancière, people become political subjects when they contest the borders of an existing political order to make themselves visible and audible. Political subjectification is a coming into presence by shifting the "distribution of the sensible" so that one can now be seen and heard in an order in which one was previously invisible and inaudible (Rancière, 2000/2004; see also Ruitenberg, 2010). Political subjectification, then, is a process of naming a *dispute*—an aspect that Biesta does not discuss here but that is quite central to Rancière's conception of political subjectivity. Moreover, this contestatory or dissensual nature is different from the ways in which Levinas and Arendt conceive of subjectivity.

Biesta's work reveals a tension very similar to the one between hospitality in the Derridean sense and democracy in the Rancièrean sense that I identified in the introduction. One way of capturing this tension is to say that, according to the view of the subject found in Levinas's and Derrida's work, one of the central conditions of subjectification or becoming-subject is that I am addressed. This is an inescapable existential condition, and subjectivity emerges in the response to this address. By contrast, according to the view of the subject found in Rancière's work, being addressed is not a central condition of becoming-subject. In fact, it is the lack of being addressed in a concrete social order (to use Rancière's term: "police order") that provokes the dispute in which I can emerge as subject[2].

Is it possible, then, to argue that education ought to establish and keep in existence a space in which subjectivity can emerge, and to conceive of this subjectivity in both the ethical sense (as do Levinas and Derrida), and the political sense (as does Rancière)? The question is not whether these kinds of subjectivity are the same, for clearly they are not, but *whether both can emerge in the same educational space*. If education establishes a space in which singular subjectivity can emerge, would that space also be conducive to the emergence of political subjectivity, and vice versa, or are the two kinds of subjectivity at odds with each other to the point that the emergence of one precludes or hinders the emergence of the other?

RANCIÈRE'S DICHOTOMY

Let us analyze Rancière's claims about the gap that separates his work from Derrida's in greater detail. In his essay "Should Democracy Come? Ethics and Politics in Derrida" (2009), Rancière argues that, while Derrida uses the term "democracy," he stretches the concept beyond recognition by eliminating one of its necessary conditions, *viz.* equality. In Rancière's view, Derrida puts hospitality in the place of democracy, substitutes the *hospes* for the *demos*, and presents an apolitical conception of hospitality. "His democracy actually is a democracy without demos. What is absent in his view of politics is the idea of the political subject, of the political capacity" (Rancière, 2009, p. 278).

The reason for the absence of democracy in Derrida's work, argues Rancière, is that there is an insurmountable tension between the equality that is at the heart of the very concept of democracy, and the singularity that is at the heart of Derrida's philosophy. For Rancière, central to the ideas of politics and democracy themselves is "something that Derrida cannot endorse, namely the idea of substitutability, the indifference to difference or the equivalence of the same and the other" (p. 278).

Indeed, Derrida has written about the violence that the idea of substitutability would inflict on the singularity and alterity of the other. For example, about treating a person as an example, he writes:

> When I say "for example," I immediately say that I could substitute another example; if I say "you, for example," I imply that it could be someone else; which is why it is such a terrible phrase that says to someone "you, for example," since it inscribes chance and substitution, possible replaceability in the address to the other. (Derrida, 2002, pp. 409–410)

That the Other is "singular" means precisely that s/he is unique and irreplaceable, so treating the Other as just any other (*n'importe qui*) denies this singularity.

In the essay "Does Democracy Mean Something?" (2010), a revised version of an essay with the same title in the earlier collection *Adieu Derrida* (2007), Rancière again considers the way in which Derrida contrasts the actual forms of government called "democracy" today with "democracy to come." The latter, notes Rancière,

is defined by its openness to the incoming of the Other, and this is precisely what juxtaposes it to Rancière's own conception of politics:

> Otherness does not come to politics from the outside, for the precise reason that it already has its own otherness, its own principle of heterogeneity. Indeed, democracy *is* this principle of otherness. (Rancière, 2010, p. 53)

Rancière agrees with the contrast between the temporality of democracy-as-government and the temporality of democracy-to-come that Derrida sets up, and he has commented more recently on the importance of different temporalities that escape and interrupt the dominant sense of democracy and politics as having their "proper time" in, for example, electoral cycles (Rancière, 2011). However, Rancière (2010) argues that:

> Something gets lost in this opposition between an *institution* and a *transcendental horizon*. What disappears is democracy as a practice. What disappears is the political invention of the Other or the *heteron*; that is the political process of subjectivation, which continually creates newcomers, new subjects that enact the equal power of anyone and everyone and construct new words about community in the given world. (p. 59)

In other words, the conception of "democracy to come" is too ethical and not political enough for Rancière, who sees it as relying on an "ethical overstatement of otherness" (p. 60) which eclipses the need for political interventions today. Rancière closes the essay by recalling that Derrida, in *Specters of Marx*, called for a New International, and commenting:

> But the forms that this new International can and must take on are not clear. The main issue, in my view, is whether it will be conceptualized in political or "ethical" terms. If we conceptualize it politically, then the "infinite respect for the other" cannot take the form of an infinite wait for the Event or the Messiah, but instead the democratic shape of an otherness that has a multiplicity of forms of inscription and of forms of alteration or dissensus. (p. 61)

Particularly striking is Rancière's insistence on the need to choose either a political or an ethical conceptualization of a democratic future. The question of the kind(s) of subjectivity education should take an interest in—ethical, political, or both—hinges on this dichotomy.

THE CLOSE-UP AND THE WIDE-ANGLE VIEW

Let me address first the possibility that Derrida's conception of hospitality and Rancière's conception of democracy are not so much incompatible, but have a different focus, in the sense that Rancière's work analyzes how groups can claim a space in the political order, while Derrida's work calls attention to the relations within these groups. May (2011) underscores that the question of the relation or

tension between ethics and politics focuses on the relation or tension between the political project of a democratic movement in relation to the existing order, and the relations within that democratic movement, that is, among its own members. He refers to these relations among members of a democratic movement as "the internal character or texture" of the movement, and notes that Rancière does not address these relations in any detail, "except to note that they are based on a certain trust." May turns to the concept of friendship to elaborate this bond of trust, and then criticizes Derrida's view of friendship. However, I question May's choice of friendship as the most helpful concept to think through the "internal character or texture" of a political group. May acknowledges that actual friendships are inevitably exclusive: one can only be friends with a limited number of people: "There must of necessity be an inside and an outside, the inside including those one has been able to construct friendship with and the outside consisting in everyone else." Although May argues that it is not actual friendships he is interested in here, but rather particular "tools" or "virtues" that friendship models and actualizes, such as "temporal thickness" (i.e., having a history together) and being "other-regarding" outside of an economy of debts, it seems to me that this does not address the potential exclusivity of the kinds of bonds constructed with these tools.

Nancy Fraser's (1986) comments on ethics and politics, and on what I earlier called the "wide-angle" and "close-up" view, are helpful here. Fraser makes these comments in response to an article by Seyla Benhabib (1986), who argues for a discourse ethics that employs a relational rather than autonomous conception of the self. Benhabib points out that moral theory has, by and large, focused on interactions between the self and a "generalized other" (p. 410). Instead, she argues, when we take the self to be relational rather than autonomous, we must focus on interactions between the self and a "concrete other" (p. 410). Only when the concrete other comes into view can we see how "friendship, love and care" play a role in interactions with others (p. 411). Fraser (1986) argues that friendship, love and care are "terms drawn largely from intimate relationships" and that, for that reason, they do "not on the surface seem adequate for political contexts in which relationships are not intimate" (p. 427). She refines Benhabib's distinction between the generalized and the concrete other by subdividing the concrete other into the "individualized concrete other" (p. 427) and the "collective concrete other" (p. 428). Where friendship, love, and care are relevant ethical considerations in personal interactions between a self and an individualized concrete other, they are not what matter in the political interactions of collective concrete others. "If the elaboration of the standpoint of the individualized concrete other eventuates in an ethic of care and responsibility, then perhaps the elaboration of the standpoint of the collective concrete other leads to an *ethic of solidarity*" (p. 428). Solidarity is not a personal but a political ethic, "the sort of ethic which is attuned to the contestatory activities of social movements" (p. 428).

May has also used the concept of solidarity, although in his 2011 address he does not distinguish between personal friendship and political solidarity, but rather considers friendship "both a model for and a route into democratic politics." In his

2007 article "Jacques Rancière and the ethics of equality," he addresses the concept of solidarity without connecting it to friendship:

> In political action, the tapestry of this weaving together of cognitive and affective elements around the presupposition of equality has a name, although that name is rarely reflected upon. It is *solidarity*. Political solidarity is nothing other than the operation of the presupposition of equality internal to the collective subject of political action. It arises in the ethical character of that collective subject, a subject that itself arises only on the basis of its action. When one joins a picket line, or speaks publicly about the oppression of the Palestinians or the Tibetans or the Chechnyans, or attends a meeting whose goal is to organize around issues of fair housing, or brings one's bicycle to a ride with Critical Mass, one … joins the creation of a political subject (which does not mean sacrificing one's own being to it). One acts, in concert with others, on the presupposition of the equality of any and every speaking being. (p. 33)

I quote May at length here not only to underscore Fraser's distinction between the political value of solidarity and the personal value of friendship. May refers to the political subject as a *collective* rather than *individual* subject, and shows that, in addition to the relations or conflicts of this collective political subject with other collective political subjects (or, more likely, with the police order), we can and should examine the relations "internal to the collective subject of political action." Regarding these relations, May then makes the important observation that, while they are based on the presupposition of equality, joining a collective political subject does not mean sacrificing "one's own being" to it. In other words, *the presupposition of equality is not a presupposition of sameness*, and one can join a collective political subject without losing one's singularity.

Judith Butler, in her contribution to the symposium and volume *Derrida and the Time of the Political* (2009), argues that "it is within the scene of politics that the ethical relation emerges" and that Derrida's work impels us "to rethink the relevant collectivities of politics" (p. 296). The scene of politics is a scene of collectivities; while the success of these collectivities in addressing or seeking to be addressed by each other depends, in part, on their internal cohesiveness, I agree with Butler that "the point of politics is not to assemble a 'we' who can speak or, indeed, sing in unison, a 'we' who knows or expresses itself as a unified nation or, indeed, as the human as such" (p. 298). Instead, an attention to the ethical relation in the scene of politics is an attention to the way in which this "we" is constructed, and at whose expense:

> To think the "we"—that crux of politics—is precisely to realize that it references a host of other pronominal problems, the "I" and the "you" among them. For if the "we" is constituted through its exercise (one performative dimension of democracy), then it … forms itself only on the condition of a negotiation with alterity. No collectivity comes into being by suddenly exercising a speech act

> in common; rather, a covenant is presupposed by the act of address, a promise is implicitly made in the act of addressing another truthfully. (p. 299)

The internal fabric or texture of a political movement, then, is constantly being recreated through forms of address that must come to grips with the singularity of the individual members. While externally, that is, on the scene of politics, the movement struggles to be addressed as a movement of, to use Rancière's terms, "speaking beings," the movement's members must struggle internally with the ethical aspects of address[3]. Coming to grips with the ethical relations within a group that makes political demands involves asking questions such as:

> How is it that every "we" is negotiated through a set of exchanges that requires that the "I" rethink itself on the basis of the "you," without whom it could not exist socially? And to what extent does the "we" form itself through an exclusion that casts a population outside its jurisdiction? (Butler, 2009, p. 299)

Thus, while Rancière's work analyzes the way in which a group of people makes the political demand to be heard and seen as equal speaking beings and, in doing so, makes the political demand that the borders of the political order are shifted, Derrida's work allows us to pay attention to the internal relations that make up the political group.

Schools are one of the primary sites where a "we" is constituted, although, according to Rancière, this is hardly ever a political "we" and more likely a "we" of the police order. A truly political "we" may be created in schools in spite of the latter's implication in the police order but it is more likely to emerge in other spaces, such as neighborhood groups and trade unions. The educational function of subjectification is fulfilled in one sense when a collective political subject in the Rancièrean sense can emerge. However, the question remains whether and how, in the constitution of that collective political subject, spaces can be created where individual, singular subjectivity can emerge. How might we create spaces in which a hospitable political subject can take place, a *demos* that posits an assembled but not a unified "we," and is interrupted by the demands of hospitality?[4]

ARE "EQUALITY" AND "EQUALITY" THE SAME?

I have already concluded, based on May's argument for solidarity, that the presupposition of equality, so central to Rancière's work, is not a presupposition of sameness. This presupposition of equality, then, merits closer scrutiny. Does Rancière's conception of equality support his claim that "Derrida cannot endorse … the idea of substitutability, the indifference to difference or the equivalence of the same and the other" (Rancière, 2009, p. 278)?

May (2011) writes that friendships of the kind that have political significance are characterized by a fundamental equality between the friends:

> I look at my friend as an equal, not because he or she is equal in measure to me but because equality of this type is, to a certain and of course immeasurable

> extent, beyond measure. The equality here is an equality of two or more people who take one another not as equals in this or that characteristic but, we might say, as equals, period.

He then adds that "this equality is, in Rancière's view, the basis for democratic politics." May does not address the fact that friends are not only equals but that one can only be a friend of a *particular* other, not of *just any* other (*n'importe qui*). A friend, while equal to me in the immeasurable way that May describes, is also a singular Other whose alterity confronts me. If May is interested in enactments of equality as models and motivations for the egalitarian politics that Rancière advocates, friendship may not be the best concept to turn to. The figure of the friend is a figure of unsubstitutability *par excellence*, so, to the extent that May posits it here as a figure of equality, this must be an equality that is *not* at odds with unsubstitutability; the friend is characterized by both equality and unsubstitutability.

So what does Rancière mean by "equality" and how does it relate to its three possible opposites: difference, alterity, and disparity? In its everyday use, "equality" can mean *sameness*, which would oppose it to difference and/or alterity[5]. Equality can also mean *parity*, which would opposite it to disparity or hierarchical difference, inequality of rank or status. May (2009) notes of Rancière's conception of equality that it is not an equality of any particular quality or characteristic of an individual or group, but an equality of intelligence, where "intelligence" should not be taken in the psychological and quantifiable sense that allows us to distinguish persons of higher and lower intelligence. May explains "intelligence" in this Rancièrean sense as follows:

> We are, unless we are deeply damaged in some way, capable of creating meaningful lives with one another, talking with one another, understanding one another, and reasoning about ourselves and our situations. Our social and political contexts, while sometimes difficult and complex, do not involve essential mysteries that we are in principle incapable of comprehending without the assistance of a savant of some sort. In short, we are capable of formulating and carrying out our lives with one another. This, in Rancière's view, is the assumption—the presupposition of equality—with which politics begins. (p. 7)

"Equality," for Rancière, is not an ontological principle but a political one; it is a principle that is posited with the purpose of "restoring the contingency of domination to a prior contingency" (Rancière, 2003, par. 14), and then verified. In other words, by positing that people are equal as speaking beings who have lives and relationships, and a view of those lives and relationships, any inequality that appears is contingent upon a social order (Rancière would say "police order") that sets up such inequality. Rancière does not deny that the way in which people live their lives and the views they have about these lives are diverse, but from the standpoint of democracy, this inequality-as-difference is not what matters.

For Derrida equality and singularity are part of the aporetic nature of democracy. While there is a tension between the two, this tension is irresolvable as both aspects are needed for democracy to maintain a relation to justice. In *The Politics of Friendship* Derrida (1994/1997) writes:

> There is no democracy without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the "community of friends" …, without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal. These two laws are irreducible one to the other. Tragically irreconcilable and forever wounding. The wound itself opens with the necessity of having to *count* one's friends, to count the others, in the economy of one's own, there where every other is altogether other. But where every other is *equally* altogether other. (p. 22)

Derrida here points at two different kinds of equality: the equality-as-parity on which the concept of democracy is based, and the equality-as-commonality of every Other being as other as anyone else, the equality in the phrase "*tout autre est tout autre*." The last line in the passage I quoted is particularly salient: "Every other is *equally* altogether other (*tout autre est également tout autre*): what we have in common is that we are all Other to everyone else.

> The access to the dignity of the other is the access to the singularity of the other's absolute difference, certainly, but this is only possible by means of *a certain indifference*, by means of a neutralization of differences (social, economic, ethnic, sexual, etc.). Exceeding all knowledge and objective determination, this neutralization alone allows one an access to dignity, that is, to the fact that everyone, *every one* is worth as much as the other, precisely beyond all value: *priceless*. (Derrida, 1992/2002, p. 325)

Not only are we all equally Other to everyone else, this also means we have an equal, and equally incalculable, worth. According to Derrida, we are thus equal in our singularity and alterity, and according to Rancière we are equal in intelligence. While these are not the same principles, neither are they incompatible. There is no reason to assume that being counted as an equally intelligent and speaking being precludes being addressed as a singular being.

In an interview with Giovanna Borradori, on the question of whether sovereignty can be thought outside a state-model, even if it becomes an international meta-state, Derrida (2003) further speaks to the way in which singularity and equality must co-exist in the *demos* of democracy:

> The demos is *at once* the incalculable singularity of anyone, before any "subject," the possible undoing of the social bond by a secret to be respected, beyond all citizenship, beyond every "state," … *and* the universality of rational calculation, of the equality of citizens before the law, the social bond of being together, with or without contract. (p. 120)

Once again, Derrida does not replace the *demos* with the *hospes*, as Rancière charges, but argues that democracy must hold the two figures of incalculable singularity and calculable equality in tension. Indeed Derrida does not endorse equality as principle by itself, only when it is troubled by singularity and alterity, but he does not dismiss the importance of equality for democracy.

BOTH ENDS OF THE TELESCOPE

May (2011) provides a slightly different analysis of the tension between Derrida's and Rancière's work. In his address "Friendship as Resistance" he argues that certain kinds of friendship can offer political resistance to the dominant figures of neoliberalism by showing "meaningful ways of conducting our lives with one another." The figures May is referring to are those of the consumer and of the entrepreneur, and friendship shows that it is possible to treat each other as neither objects of consumption nor objects of investment but as equals. May argues that friendship is a model congruous with Rancière's argument for equality at the heart of politics, and that Derrida's arguments about the deconstruction of the friend/enemy binary miss the political point of friendship:

> [Derrida's] view addresses those who are the beneficiaries of inequality, those who see themselves as among the included rather than the excluded. His discourse seeks to discover (and create) pores in the border the self-perceived included might have erected between themselves and those they exclude. Rancière's view, alternately, is addressed in the first place to the excluded. It is a framework of solidarity for those who seek to struggle, not for those against whom struggle might be directed.

This is a compelling argument. Derrida's work on hospitality, forgiveness, and other forms of the gift indeed appears to be aimed at those in a position to give, rather than those who have had no choice but to hold out their hand. Of course, Derrida's point has been precisely that the sharp distinctions between these two figures don't hold, and that, for example, the host is indebted to the guest rather than the other way around, but nonetheless, I agree with May that Derrida's work appears addressed to those who can recognize themselves in the position of host, forgiver, or giver more generally. In May's view, then, Derrida and Rancière approach the issue of exclusion from different angles, with the former calling on those who are already included (and know it) to practice hospitality, and the latter calling on those who are excluded (and know it) to enact democracy. May concludes that, when it comes to politics and democracy, "Derrida is looking through the wrong end of the telescope."

This is consistent with Rancière's contention that Derrida offers little to those who are excluded. Rancière (2009) writes about Derrida's objection to the simple application of rules and laws:

> Those who suffer from one of more of the "ten plagues"[6] would, in most cases, be glad that there exists a "simple" rule "placidly" applicable to their case,

> rather than being subjected to the arbitrariness of unlimited state power and corrupt administration. (p. 282)

Rancière is facetious, of course, in suggesting that, by questioning whether rules and laws can ever be enough, Derrida is on the side of arbitrary and corrupt power and government. However, the critique that Derrida's arguments are addressed to those who have or have access to a home from which they can offer hospitality and not to those pounding on the door to find a place, is justified and important.

Here, it seems to me, the realities of educational practice can help to break this dichotomy. The question is not which of these projects we should try to tackle—helping the included open up the spaces they inhabit, or helping the excluded claim a space—but how we can tackle *both*. For the majority of people in educational contexts in which the scholars of SCAPE work—Europe and North America—find themselves both on the side of the excluded and on the side of the included. This is particularly clear at the university level where, as Kathleen McCormick (1992) notes, "many students … are members of a middle class that is closer to an 'oppressor' than an 'oppressed' class" while, at the same time, "in a capitalist society, as subjects for ideology, the middle class occupies a much more contradictory subject position, functioning simultaneously as both oppressor and oppressed" (p. 128, n 2). More generally speaking, the attention to the multiplicity and intersectionality of identities has shown that many students and teachers, at all levels, find themselves in both the position of having unearned privilege, for example by being white or male, and in the position of being marginalized, for example by being gay or having a disability. Depending on the context in which I find myself, I may be struggling to have my voice heard as the voice of a speaking being, but I may also be confronted with an Other who is excluded by the systems that support me. The educational challenge is therefore, to borrow May's metaphor, to look through both ends of the telescope. Moreover, from the perspective of Levinasian-Derridean ethics, I am compelled to look through the end of the telescope that allows me to see the Other as vulnerable and calling me to respond regardless of the political position I find myself in.

CONCLUSION

Rancière (2009) begins his analysis of Derrida's approach to politics and democracy with the important observation that Derrida and he share the view "that democracy is something more than one form of government among others, that it is an excess with respect to any form of government" (p. 275). I agree with his subsequent assessment that he and Derrida conceive of the excess differently: for Rancière it is a political excess, for Derrida an ethical one (p. 276).

However, Rancière's conclusions about the incompatibility between these two perspectives seem overblown. Rancière ignores important distinctions between the ways he and Derrida use the terms "equality" and "difference." These distinctions mean that it cannot be assumed that when Rancière argues for "equality," this

undermines Derrida's argument for "difference." A good example of this is the following claim by Rancière (2009):

> What the democracy to come can oppose to the practice of the nation-states is … the commitment to an absolute other, an "other" who can never become the same as us, who cannot be substituted. We can add: an "other" who cannot stage his or her otherness, who cannot put on the stage the relationship between his or her inclusion and his or her exclusion. (p. 280)

Rancière demonstrates here that he cannot suspend his own conceptions of "otherness" and "exclusion" long enough to see that they are, ironically, unsubstitutable for Derrida's conceptions. Derrida's argument for "democracy to come" indeed requires a commitment to an absolute and unsubstitutable Other. However, the clause "we can add" hides a change in register that introduces a misconception. The Other's otherness-as-alterity may be absolute, but that does not mean that the Other cannot politically stage her or his otherness-as-difference or otherness-as-exclusion. The exclusion that, in Rancière's work, provokes the dispute that he refers to here as "staging otherness" is not an exclusion based on alterity but on inequality-as-disparity.

My analysis suggests that hospitality as elaborated by Derrida and democracy as elaborated by Rancière are not incompatible. When it comes to the subjectification function of education, then, "subjectification" in the Rancièrean sense of creating a space where political subjectivity can emerge, and "subjectification" in the Levinasian/Derridean sense of creating a space where singular subjectivity can emerge, need not be incompatible aims. It is, philosophically speaking, conceivable that education can create a space in which a human being is addressed and can emerge as singular subject in response to that address, and in which that same human being emerges as speaking being in the political sense, by joining a collective political subject that names a dispute.

Two questions remain, an educational one and a philosophical one, and I will address them briefly in this order. With either one conception of subjectivity, it is already quite challenging not to see the subjectification function of education be eclipsed by the other functions of socialization and qualification. When we now posit that it is a *double* subjectification, the challenge is compounded. Education that takes an interest in subjectification in this double sense must attend to the ways in which students can become political speaking beings (see Biesta, 2010b), as well as to the ways they can become singular subjects in response to the Other. And while, as I have argued in this essay, these two forms of subjectivity need not be at odds with each other, the educational challenge will be to keep ethical subjectification from eclipsing political subjectification, and vice versa.

But even if we agree that Derrida's conception of hospitality and Rancière's conception of democracy, and the respective versions of subjectivity and subjectification these entail, are not incompatible, the question remains whether they imply or need each other[7], or how they might benefit from each other's company. It would appear that Derrida's ethic of hospitality does not imply or need democracy

in the Rancièrean sense, as an openness to the Other at an interpersonal level can be extended within what Rancière would call a police order. Conversely, democratic contestation seeks to break open the "police order," demanding a change to its borders, and such contestation does not, in and of itself, imply or need an ethic of hospitality. However, I cautiously posit here that while Derrida's hospitality and Rancière's democracy may not need or imply each other, they may well serve as each other's corrective or watchdog. Hospitality calls attention to the risk that the formation of a collective political subject that enacts democracy can result in new exclusions and inhospitalities, for example in the internal fabric of that political subject. On the other side, democracy calls attention to the risk that an openness to the singular Other can leave the host blind to the structural and contingent arrangements that unevenly distribute the positions from which hospitality is offered or sought. The experience of contingent inequality that compels me to assert my equality, the experience of a singular subject that calls me to respond, and the productive tension between these two, are all significant experiences in education that has an interest in subjectification.

NOTES

[1] I use the term "subjectification" here as it is the term used by Biesta as well as in certain translations of Rancière's work (e.g., *Disagreement*, 1995/1999). However, the term Rancière uses in French is *subjectivation* and this term is used in other English translations (e.g., "Does democracy mean something?", 2010) and commentaries (e.g., Tanke, 2011).

[2] For Arendt, subjectivity is dependent on others—I need a world of others to come into—but subjectivity does not seem to emerge, as it does for Levinas, in the response to the Other to whom I am responsible. While not autonomous, Arendtian subjectivity is not decentered in the same way it is for Levinas, nor is it centrally concerned with the borders of the political order.

[3] Doris Lessing's (1985) novel *The Good Terrorist* vividly illustrates the possible inconsistencies between the political project of and ethical relations within a political movement.

[4] Seyla Benhabib's (2004) concept of "democratic iteration" is interesting to explore in this regard. Benhabib makes use Derrida's work on the concept of iteration to propose a demos that reiterates itself and, in doing so, questions and resignifies itself and its boundaries, so as to make room for those who have political agency but lack formal citizenship.

[5] I cannot dwell on this here but do not want to pass over the distinction between "difference" and "alterity," certainly in the work of Levinas, who writes: "Alterity is not at all the fact that there is a difference, that facing me there is someone who has a different nose than mine, different colour eyes, another character. It is not difference, but alterity" (in Levinas et al., 1988, p. 170).

[6] This is a reference to what Derrida (1993/1994) has called the "plagues of the 'new world order" (pp. 100–104), including injustices such as homelessness and statelessness, the arms industry and trade, and inter-ethnic wars.

[7] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for this question.

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