A Philosophy of Boredom in Education

by

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Statement of Originality

I, BAE, Taejin, hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis and the material

presented in this thesis is my original work except those indicated in the acknowledgement. I

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Abstract

In this study I address the problem of boredom. The main question, arising from this problem, which I address is "what is the educational meaning of boredom in the modern schooling system?" In addressing this question my thesis is that boredom should not be demonized but rather redeemed in contemporary curriculum studies, and, to this end, there is a need for a paradigm shift in its conceptualization. My aims and purpose in this study are thus to understand the real nature of boredom in the modern schooling system, and to suggest the practical (*praxial*) implication in classroom. The research context of this study is in the domain of philosophy and theorizing of curriculum; especially based on philosophical phenomenology and Hannah Arendt's existential theory. I start with the explanation and justification of the subject centered / thematic approach curriculum inquiry as research theory assuming that, as normal phenomena of human life and child development, not everything in boredom is negative and should be eliminated and have more profound and positive meanings. This thesis employs a philosophical methodology with a focus on document analysis and exemplifying understanding (*Beispielverstehen*). My results show that there are also profound and positive dimensions of boredom such as driving force, reproduction, reflection, and creativity that can lead to educational development, and from these I formulate a multi-dimensional conceptual framework of boredom in curriculum. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to an almost non-existent in-depth theoretical engagement with boredom in contemporary education.

Keywords: boredom, conducivity, curriculum philosophy, natality, rebirth

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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1. Significance and Aims of the Study

This study aims to explore theoretically the meaning and relevance of boredom in education. Although there are many related studies in other fields, such as psychology, sociology, or philosophy, boredom has seldom been seriously and systematically examined in the field of education. Some extant educational studies have dealt with boredom rather tangentially as a classroom management or motivational problem, particularly in the field of psychology and policy. Only a few philosophical studies deal with boredom following the tradition initiated by Heidegger (1983). This study discusses the possibility and the direction of inquiry on boredom as a topic of pedagogy, by examining the nature and possible meanings of boredom in relation to schooling and suggests theoretical and practical implications for praxis and understanding phenomena.

1.1. Research on boredom in education

Discussions of boredom are scarce in the educational field. Some educational psychologists insist that the cause is the ambiguous nature of boredom itself: "boredom is an inconspicuous, 'silent' emotion, as compared with manifest affective states like anger or anxiety" (Pekrun et al., 2010, p. 531). This point of view implies to find the cause of the problem is in the conceptual perspective. Likewise, some ethnographers argue that the lack of investigation into boredom in education derives from the value-directed characteristic of the schooling and

academic tradition, that "boredom represents a taboo of sorts within school pedagogy" (Breidenstein, 2007, p. 94). By this view, researchers and educators are reluctant to deal with boredom due to the entrenched attitude towards education.

An evolutionary theory of education studies can be helpful to understand the boredom-taboo phenomenon. The origin of pedagogy has forced researchers to avoid the study of boredom from the beginning. Public education in the modern concept started from the national education of Prussia (Boyd, 1921). Following the order of Enlightenment which is known as "Dare to know!" and "Have the courage to use your own understanding" (Kant, 1784), schools have tried to produce workers for an industry (Weber, 2011), citizens of the modern society, and patriots of a nation. In this context, educational studies have promoted the characteristics of development-centrism, goal-oriented curriculum, evidence-based assessment, achievement centrism, and extreme structuralism. This means that researchers could not focus on boredom, which is the clear phenomenon of failure. Even if some educationists have dealt with boredom, they have not been able to avoid the constraints laid down by the enlightenment and modernity.

In late modernity, educational psychology became the most frequently used perspective to study boredom. Educational psychologists have tried to: define boredom with theories of motivation (van Tilburg & Igou, 2012); find the characteristics of boredom as an emotion linked to academic achievements (Pekrun et al., 2010); and analyze the role of boredom as a branch of study in behavioral science (Bench & Lench, 2013). They have also tried to confirm students' strategy to avoid boredom in their daily life (Nett, Goetz, & Daniels, 2010),

developed objective scales to measure boredom (Mercer-Lynn et al., 2013), extended the boredom concept to boredom-proneness (Watt & Hargis, 2010), and tried to find effective ways to help students to control boredom (Pekrun et al., 2010). This scholarly stream indicates educational psychologists' focus on the emotional analysis and treatment as a research topic.

According to Pekrun and his colleagues (2010), educational psychologists regard boredom as a specific emotion and not mere lack of interest and enjoyment. Indeed, psychologists categorize boredom as a negative and deactivating emotion because they think learners experience boredom unpleasantly and, therefore, involves a reduction of physiological activation. Consequently, such an emotion has been attributed to negative behaviors or mental states such as juvenile delinquency, depression and dissatisfaction of life, stress, health problems, problematic behavior and performance, and dropping out from school. Furthermore, some educational psychologists connect boredom with the negative results of IQ test scores, verbal and nonverbal abilities, and academic ability. Interestingly, some psychologists like Bench and Lench (2013) suggest that boredom's productive functions are related to students' motivation, although they also focus on the limited reactions to temporal situations. The majority of psychologists still treat boredom as something negative or hazardous to emotion.

Qualitative studies of boredom in social scientific areas constitute another key area. They link boredom with the education studies, among which ethnographical and anthropological research studies stand out. Compared to psychological approaches, qualitative research

conceptualizes boredom more variously and profoundly, not just in its emotional aspect, but also in the cultural aspects of the phenomenon. For example, Musharhash (2007) describes the boredom of Australian aboriginals, the Yuendumu, to prove the modern origination of boredom. Bengston (2012) ethnographically enquires into the boredom of adolescents confined in Denmark. He observes and describes the experience of boredom experienced in isolation from external stimulation. Mora (2011) describes the boredom of urban middle school students and teachers that derives from high-stakes standardized testing in the USA. These and other qualitative research conducted on boredom investigate a wide range of topics from boredom's nature to psychological experience through educational policies.

The two major approaches to research boredom in the field of education, namely quantitative and qualitative have three critical weaknesses.

The first is conceptual. Psychologists conceptualize boredom operationally as a temporal/situative reality, that is, by delimiting the concept to a state of tediousness. Even chronic boredom is conceptually hijacked and treated as a temporal situation, merely a long-lasting temporal boredom, i.e., habitual boredom. It seems that qualitative researchers use more profound and broad concept of boredom than psychologists, however, as Mora explains, they also describe the concept of boredom is "congruent with the data collected" (2011, p. 2). This suggests that researchers' descriptions of the boredom concept are limited by their research tradition and methodologies. Logically, this is not so problematic to make the research clear and legitimatized. However, we must think about the impact of research results in school; this affects human beings, or the objects related to human beings. If we look at the

education context, we can easily find many research results which have affected, or even negatively affected our classroom: such as reflective thinking, critical thinking, intelligence and so on. These concepts, which seem logically legitimized in their research, hard to say representing realities clearly.

It is possible to argue that the conceptualization of boredom in an educational context offers an interesting and important research gap, for example, curriculum as a research area concerning the experiences of school members. Experiences are constructed upon things as varied as personal history, parent's status, residential location, cultures, economic situation, and government policy. As a result of these, various phenomena occur with various dimensions. That is, we must understand boredom based on extended concepts which can embrace the topic as a whole rather than in part. A narrow concept of boredom cannot avoid focusing on unpractical research even if it pursues practicality.

The second weakness of extant studies in education is perceptual: limited and prejudiced perception against boredom. The majority of approaches regard boredom as a negative element that must be eliminated. Even if some researchers emphasize positive or meaningful aspects of boredom (Gibbs, 2011; Toohey, 2012), they constitute a minority. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon, such as descriptive perspective for education (e.g., treating boredom as a disease to be cured), development centrism (treating boredom as an obstacle which interrupts students achieving a goal), and Enlightenment (an ethical problem which makes students insincere). To some extent, it is true that boredom has negative connotations. However, we must think about the meaning of boredom rather than focusing on its negative

side. As Damasio (1988) observes, even though some emotions (like depression, anger, sadness) seem definitely negative, they play critical roles for human survival, hence, no emotion is just negative, and all are meaningful.

The third weakness is the fragmented nature of the education studies. Based on the traditions of social science, many studies inquire into narrow aspects of boredom, and isolate it from cultural, social, and historical contexts. Because these studies emphasize objectivity, the situation is impossible to avoid. From the outset, the studies are isolated from reality and fragmented from the usage of life concepts. The problem also exists with speculative studies based on the humanistic tradition. These take boredom as a product of modern society, and search for its modern meanings. However, their inquiries are usually explained case by case, not systematically; they seldom ask how social structure affects human experiences, and how the social structure, human experiences and reactions are interrelated.

1.2. Research gap

Lack of inquiry on boredom in curriculum

The foregoing critique of extant education studies on boredom mirrors the criticism of postmodernists and phenomenologists in curriculum inquiries (Aoki, 1988; Cherryholmes, 1988; Doll, 1993). Curriculum studies, based on the naturalized epistemology which regards human sense as the definite channel to establish the world image (Quine, 1969), isolate subject from object, and try to find objectivity. Thus, they develop a curriculum based on psychological prescription with standardized or normalized scales and tend to treat uneven conditions as though they were anomalies or problems. They serve economic needs such as

labor markets or job necessity and adjust curricula to meet demands from business rather than seeking social benefits or individual telos.

The origination of curriculum illustrates the phenomenon. Since Ralph Tyler published 'The basic principles of curriculum and instruction' (1949/2013), the traditionalists in curriculum studies have focused their research on four main topics: selecting and defining objectives; selecting and creating learning experiences; organization learning experiences; and evaluation. Even if many elements have been subsequently added (e.g., conceptual-empiricists' studies such as those by Brunner, Schwab, Gagne, and Walker), the dominant framework since Tyler has never been deconstructed. In turn, this origination and development led research to focus on the development-centered ideology of students. From the very beginning, boredom had never been a topic of curriculum studies.

There have been efforts by phenomenologists and post-modernists to overcome both traditionalists' and conceptual-empiricists' limitations and to understand the nature of curriculum in classrooms. For example, phenomenologists have tried to find the hidden topics of curriculum studies, such as 'secret place' by Langeveld, 'pain' by Raffel, 'loyalty' by Moore, 'the joke' by Karatheodoris, 'child prodigy' by Allen (Pinar, 1995, p. 409). These topics originate from the re-conceptualizing of *currere*, the Latin etymological root of 'curriculum'. Traditionalists also used this concept to explain the nature of curriculum. For example, Zais (1981), one of the representative traditionalists, said the 'racecourse' was the Latin origination of curriculum, so curriculum following subject discipline is a natural result. Even if conceptual empiricists focus on the process more than traditionalists do, they also

concentrate on the development of a course to run.

However, after re-conceptualists switched their focus from the development of a course to the experience of the runner on a course, *currere* started being recognized as a subject-centered concept. At this point, *currere* was translated to the infinitive form of 'to run', perhaps to denote that it provides a strategy for students to study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction (Pinar, 2004, p. 35). Gibbs (2014, p. 147) explains "*Currere* is the realization of multiplicity and the weaving of context that helps an understanding and supports one's becoming." From then onwards, education partakers' experiences have often been ignored in schooling systems by teachers, parents and educators-researchers became a focus of study. These inquiries into boredom emerge from the same critical mindset as that of phenomenologists, and also aim to overcome the limitations of phenomenological approaches in curriculum inquiries.

In the same context of my position as a reconceptual/philosophical phenomenologist, I use the term 'pedagogy' to explain the boundary of my curriculum study. Pedagogy commonly implies child-focused teaching as a counter concept of andragogy. However, as the theory of child focused teaching is about the child's experience of learning in an educational environment, curriculum studies of learner's experience means pedagogy. Boredom is a core experience of schooling; it has weight to be discussed in the pedagogic context.

Prevalent boredom as an educational experience

Why should boredom be a topic of curriculum study? As I commented on the NAIS report,

students commonly feel bored at school. Thinking about the reason for this is meaningful as well as a recognition of its prevalence. Student polls indicate that there are several causes of boredom. 81% of students felt that class materials were not interesting. 42% of students felt that classroom materials were not relevant. 33% of students felt that tasks were not challenging enough, while 26% of students felt that the tasks were too difficult. 35% of students felt that teachers did not interact with students (Yazzie-Mintz, 2010, pp. 6-7). That is, teaching materials, learning contents, learning contexts, and class interactions were recognized by students as a source of boredom. These are the core elements of curriculum development and experiences in schools.

Even if this report only represents the recognizable and superficial boredom of students, we can note how prevalent boredom is in schools and how much efforts are overflowed to overcome the boring situations. If so, what is the origination of boredom? Many researchers in different fields, such as Heidegger, Specks, Svendsen, Musharbash, have identified modernity as the origin of boredom. In their view, boredom is a product of modern society; it has become more prevalent; and its influence increases continually. As a product of modernity, it is impossible that public education can avoid boredom. This fact has been reported comprehensively in many studies. Researchers also take for granted that boredom is strongly correlated to many social pathologies such as melancholy, depression (Radden, 2000), fatigue (Fisher, 1993), alienation (Tolor, 1989), and suicide (Patterson & Pegg, 1999). Regardless of their validity, these studies signal that public education (schooling) in modernity is related to the experience of boredom in students and teachers.

Following the direction of *currere*, to inquire into the experience of boredom of education, stakeholders are considered the most important aim of this study. If boredom is one of the core experiences of human beings in modern society, and school is a core organization reflecting modern society, boredom will play an important role in curriculum performance as an element interwoven into modern structures. Therefore, an important research gap in the field of curriculum studies is to find the elements and to interpret the phenomenon; for example, how do curriculum elements (like class objectives, learning experiences, class organization, assessment) make education members bored? How does space and time organization of schooling make stakeholders tired? How does class language make students bored? And how does the teachers' location make students bored?

Philosophical inquiries on boredom and educational questions

Philosophical discussions about boredom cover large boundaries and perspectives, which psychologists and qualitative researchers do not have. They range from human existence to social structural problems. Among them, the most representative and meaningful perspectives of boredom relevant to curriculum inquiry could be described along demonic/negative dimensions, modern/existential dimensions, and creative/inspiring dimensions.

The first, negative and demonic perspective of boredom can be traced to Pascal in the 17th century and was re-interpreted by Kierkegaard in the 19th century. This pejorative understanding has affected us continually (Svendsen, 2005). Pascal regarded boredom as a misery of life without truth, solid satisfaction, passion, occupation, effort and diversion derived from the disconnection from God. Because man is nothing without God, he argued,

boredom is self-recognition of nothingness of one's own self so that we cannot avoid suffering from the absence of God to avoid diversions (*ibid*, pp. 52-53). Reaching Kierkegaard, the demonic aspect of boredom became even clearer. Kierkegaard classified boredom into hierarchical classes: bore others for plebeians; and bore themselves for nobilities. Then, he assigned demonic boredom to the latter social class. McDonald (2009, pp. 62-63) explained Kierkegaard's hierarchy of boredom saying that because of the dialectical position between elements of temporality and eternity, self and others, and God and the self, human beings fail to give sufficient weight to God, leading agents to demonic (evil) boredom after losing their imagination.

The second approach is to regard modernistic/existential boredom as an existential crisis. In this perspective, boredom is merely a modern product like other social pathologies. This perspective's logical structure closely resembles Norbert Elias's representative work on 'Civilizing Process' based on socio-genetic and psychogenetic investigation. Elias (2000) insists that human behaviors, feelings, habits, and life mode, accepted as elements of civilization, started from the nobles in ancient times, and that these have spread to the broader populace over time. Boredom would be one of the characteristics that spread to ordinary people and is, therefore, a modern product. After the establishment of modern society, the populace came to share the rights and personal 'issues' with the 'leisure class' (Veblen). In particular, the Nietzschean 'death of God' only further accelerated individualism and capitalism that made people lack of meaning in their life and feel overwhelmed by solitude.

Martin Heidegger is a representative philosopher who recognizes this situation and

articulates an existential boredom. He inquiries into human ontology using a phenomenological perspective. Humans live in the world from their first moment; they are not somehow above or separate from it. The world is the subject's experience of itself; humans always meet the world through their disposition. Mood is the way to meet with and to be in the world. Boredom as a subjective mood is the way to meet the world and to find ourselves (Boss, 2009). In the phenomenological tradition, the idea of disposition is very similar to the 'life world' of Husserl (1970) and the 'lived world' of Merleau-Ponty (2002). The implication is that human recognition cannot be isolated from reality, and the direction of human consciousness is inextricably attuned to boredom in modern society.

The third perspective is the creative/inspiring dimension of boredom. This perspective denies the belief that boredom is a negative element to be eliminated. This perspective also accepts that boredom is a product of modern structure as well as of human nature and tries to find the real meaning and function of boredom as well as calling for a paradigm shift inquiring the nature of boredom. This acknowledges the creative role of boredom by illustrating the works of geniuses in human history. Toohey (2011) is the most representative scholar in this perspective who insists that boredom has creative and productive roles to play as it did in history. After cross-examining philosophy, history, psychology, neuro-science, literature, visual art, music, and personal experience, he concludes that even if boredom is not the almighty to solve every problem, it is a very useful and beneficial experience, and we have to listen (metaphorically) to the stories that boredom tells us.

Based on the philosophical discussion of boredom previously described, how can we

discuss boredom pedagogically? In contemporary schooling, where demonic boredom is a major phenomenon, pedagogy seems to seek the answers mainly from Heidegger's existential boredom. Heidegger's idea of existential awareness through boredom, especially for re-conceptualists in the curriculum studies who highlight children's educational experiences, seems to be a very attractive learning content because they pursue the intrinsic purpose of education. In other words, boredom as a meaning, which can achieve educational growth while expressing the telos of the child and can be regarded as an important factor to achieve the child's qualitative growth. But can it be recognized in the field of education that the premise underlying such existential discussion, i.e. that every human being is dying every moment, running toward death? Does boredom actually work in a classroom that consists of a group of students who are constantly changing until they grow up to be adults?

To explain boredom experiences by covering from human existence to socio-historical aspects and to overcome the limitations of the now Heideggerian-dominant perception, the new concept of boredom is necessary from the ontological aspect. As a representative anti-Heideggerian and pedagogically adjustable philosopher, I try to investigate Hannah Arendt. Her discourse starts from the critical aspect of Heidegger of human being, as dying existence, which can explain the constantly dynamic existence of the classroom—child.

1.3. Research problems and questions

Based on the above discussion of boredom, the main study problem is as follows; "How can the experience of boredom in the modern schooling be understood?" To meet the goal of this study, I suggest the four following problems: Critical literature review of extant studies,

New conceptualization, and typologies of boredom, how to understand boredom in school and curriculum, the axiology of boredom in the classroom.

First, how can we categorize the extant studies of boredom, and what is the meaning of the process? As discussed above, the study of boredom has a long history, but it has been fragmented. A critical review of these research achievements is the starting point of philosophical discussion. In particular, the diverse understandings of boredom are an important framework for interpreting and explaining the experience of boredom in school; so the categorization of the historical achievement becomes that of experience of boredom.

Second, how can we conceptualize boredom for the pedagogic inquiry? Based on the critical categorization of studies on boredom, the new conceptualization of boredom helps to provide a deeper understanding of boredom. Since boredom is a basic inner experience that wo/men have, it can be understood based on an existential inquiry about human beings. This study re-conceptualizes boredom based on Hannah Arendt's understanding of human beings.

Third, what elements of the curriculum make a school boring and how do they work? Based on the first and second steps, this question aims to examine the experience of boredom relevant to academic and theoretical achievement in curriculum theory. In this study, boredom is regarded as an innate characteristic of the modern schooling and the educational experience. By analyzing and re-interpreting curriculum theories and curriculum elements in school, we can more deeply understand the characteristic of the modern schooling related to students' and teachers' experience of boredom.

Fourth, what is the axiological meaning of boredom in school? As education is linked to

the growth of human beings, schooling is basically in time and space where value-oriented activities take place. Boredom also aims for value as one of the educational experiences in school, therefore, is worth exploring. Value theory is generally discussed in ethics and aesthetics, in which boredom is closely related to these value-oriented activities.

1.4. Research contents

What is boredom? Is this a natural emotion or historical product? Is this simple flow of mental state or existential experience? Can we fix the concept of boredom or flexible ambiguous ungraspable phenomenon? Can we think of boredom in the educational aspect? Is this practical? Is the boredom good or bad? Is this meaningful or meaningless to human experience? Is boredom pleasurable or disgust? Can we think boredom in another way?

The complexity of the concept on boredom requires to investigate the extant studies of boredom and categorize the boredom studies. In the chapter 2, I've categorized the existing discourses of boredom as three traditions. First, the *Acedians* treat boredom as a root of evil in old times and as an enemy in modern times. For them, it is an obstacle to be eliminated to achieve their purposes. This idea is meaningful in the aspect that the modern schooling is based on it. In classrooms and schools, boredom is the symbol of laziness or insincere to development. Second, the *Mortalitists* assume boredom as an existential human nature related to death. Boredom plays a role of a channel to reflect or introspect by undeceiving meaninglessness of life. It is significant in the aspect that schooling is focusing on the instrumental reason rather than morality or critical reason in the development centered stream. *Mortalitists*' idea gives possibilities of boredom in education but still seems to fail to

explain the classroom closely. They failed to recognize the uniqueness of child existence which has been commonly accepted since 'birth of childhood'.

Unlike the *Acedians* and *Mortalitists* who treat boredom as being dark and negative, the *Conducivists* think boredom as a crystal of possibilities. They accept that boredom has the positive aspect, but also do not miss the painfulness. They try to investigate the values and usages of boredom, and also listen to the signals of it. In my opinion, the *Conducivists*' eye is proper to interpret the schooling system deeply, especially to understand classroom activities. The phenomenon of boredom shows the nature, feature, limitations, crisis, and desirable directions of schooling. In the phenomenon, boredom exists as evil or obstacles and also as a driving force for reflection, critical thinking, and creativities.

Hannah Arendt is the scholar whom I treat as the core philosopher for my boredom theory as a faculty for rebirthing. Similar to Nietzsche, Arendt also doesn't directly deal with the theory of boredom. However, boredom occupies a huge quantity and significant position in her writings in order to explain human conditions and the socio-historical phenomenon. To Arendt, boredom occupies the negative position as the *acedians*, which occupies the painful life of the slavery, and also exploits wo/men in the materialistic consumer's society. Especially, she has a similar perception to Nietzsche when explaining the Nazi's brutality with the boredom problem. The Eichmann in Jerusalem judgment shows how boredom works in the process of the Jewish massacre under the analysis of 'the banality of evil'.

However, Arendt's theory of human being involves more than her explanations about boredom. The 'more' is the core concept and theoretical starting point of this thesis. She

doesn't know the possibilities of her ontological understanding of wo/man and it will be the significant condition for the boredom theory as a *Conducivist*.

In the chapter 3, I conceptualized boredom through a prism of *Conducivitists*. Arendt's existentialism of human condition and activity was critically explained as the foundation theory. Next, Arendt's discourse of boredom finally, the new concept and typologies of boredom was discussed from the condition of human beings as an origin of boredom. According to Arendt, human beings are a natal and mortal existence, therefore, boredom can be conducive to human condition in-between human activities; especially between rebirth and rebirth. Among the three human activities—*labor*, *work*, and *action*—action is mostly linked with natality, therefore human beings are easily bored when they *labor* or *work*. As the condition of action/natality/rebirth is plurality, the collapse of plurality becomes the basic condition of boredom. The collapse of plurality causes individuality or collectivity of human beings, and wo/men could experience the boredom of isolation, loss of freedom, and be trapped into necessity. This tendency is quite ordinary in modern society, thus, in schooling.

In this chapter 4, I have discussed how the three categorizations of boredom are addressed in the curriculum discussion and how they can be analyzed. *Acedian* and *Mortalitist* perpectives have been dealt with by many curriculum theories. Studies by curriculum re-conceptualists have shed some light on the potential of *Conducivitist* perspectives to boredom. The *Conducivitist* position needs to be further discussed and expanded. From the perspective of *praxis*, the boredom curriculum can be separately thought of as an understanding of educational phenomena and experiences of students. Curriculum

development aims at students' rebirth in knowledge and practical reason, thus, it is inextricably linked to ethics.

In the chapter 5, I discuss about the ethics and aesthetics of boredom in the educational sense. In the case of boredom with difficulty to grasp the substance, makes it hard to deal with both ethically and aesthetically. Therefore, this chapter discussed the understanding of the axiology of boredom according to the relationship between the types of boredom and human activities discussed above.

In terms of ethics, boredom is mainly on the *Acedian* tradition, which I freely describe victory of interesting over interest. In other words, all educational philosophies and curriculum discussions about interests result in the axiological dominance of 'interesting' in the field of education, which can be attributed to the *animal laborans* of modern education. In the East Asia, I showcase, there are not only these modern values, but also other factors which strengthen the *Acedian* perception that could well be called 'rigorism of education'. Rigorism of education from the Confucian and Enlightenment traditions defines the behavior of educational members more disciplined and value-oriented towards 'developmentalism.' In addition, one of the discussions of educational rigorism in recent years is the 'transparency' of schools. Transparency of all procedures and outcomes strengthens the regulation of human behavior. Evidence based assessment, open supervision, and teacher evaluation accelerate the regulation of human behavior than ever before by bringing objective systems into the education field and making all processes visible—transparent. In other words, it justifies monitoring and controlling of human behavior in the name of objectification and transparency, which

strengthens the isolation and unfreedom of boredom that excludes subjectivity by regulating the obscured educational behavior called diversity and flexibility.

In dealing with the aesthetics of boredom in education, the discussion on beauty qua perfection is largely excluded in this writing but it overlaps with the ethical aspects. The most influential aspect of boredom in the modern education is the tendency of pursuing the 'structural perfection' or structural completion in the curriculum and outcomes. They in turn block the creative and inspirited educational experience. School education is basically structural. The school space has the most stable and efficient structure, and the time has a formal module structure of 40 to50 minutes of class and 10 minutes of rest. The learning content expressed repeatedly and cumulatively, as the spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960), from the primary school to the secondary school, and the class is recognized as the most perfect class when it is composed of introduction, background knowledge activation, main teaching, class summary, and ending. The evaluation adheres to the method of solving the same number of problems in a given time, and is scored uniformly as numbers. The experiences of all educational members, including students as well as teachers, are structurally formal and are in quest for perfect form.

The pursuit of a structurally perfect educational experience is the clearest source of unfreedom, isolation, and necessity that humans can experience. In other words, the structural perfection of educational experience is the most important cause for the *Acedian* boredom. When humans experience the world, they are necessarily based on the aesthetic perception, which is the basic premise of interest/boredom. Thus, the *Acedian* boredom, which is derived from the educational environment for *animal laborans*, is neither beautiful nor creative. On the

contrary, boredom originated from the activity of building a world in interaction with others might be sometimes boring but always natal and beautiful.

2. Theoretical Background and Position of the Study

This study examines the experience (i.e., phenomenon) of boredom in school from the perspective of the curriculum philosophy. The core background and concepts are phenomenology, postmodernism, re-conceptualism of curriculum inquiry, and boredom.

2.1. Phenomenology and post-modernism

The phenomenological dimension of this study follows the tradition of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martinus J. Langeveld, Ted Aoki, and Max van Manen. This study also incorporates Hannah Arendt's existentialist concept of *natality* as a human condition. This study will examine the experience of boredom at school through epistemological and existential perspectives. Additionally, this study regards modernity as the reason for prevalence of boredom and assumes that schooling forcefully modernizes child. The study also shares grounds with postmodernism as it criticizes the modern nature of educational studies and regards this as a starting point into the inquiry on boredom. Therefore, this study is positioned between the two poles of phenomenology and post-modernism.

Curriculum is also affected by other fields. Traditionalist theories of curriculum began in administration and management theory, with Buchamp and Tyler, under Fordism and Taylorism, calling this 'scientific inquiry'. Conceptual-empiricists, such as Bruner and

Gagnet, systematized curriculum study along psychological lines throughout the 1960s and 1970s. There were various voices in the development of curriculum studies; these also were unable to overcome the effects of the fields' theory and establish a pedagogic foundation.

This study suggests that phenomenology is the foundation of curriculum study. It derived from the characteristics of phenomenology. Husserl (2002) argues that philosophy should be rigorous and universal by examining scientific concepts and science itself. A rigorous concept is very clear which directs things comprehensively so they can be recognized by human perception. He distinguishes rigorous concepts from polluted concepts, which are theoretically recognized. Rigorous science is then composed of rigorous concepts. Therefore, rigorous science represents universally reality, and this is distinguished from naturalistic and historical science.

There are three possibilities to turn phenomenology into a base for educational science. First, phenomenology assumes the limitations of human recognition. That is, humans cannot live in and recognize reality-in-itself as separate from human perception; reality is value directed and located in the context. Husserl criticizes the value-free characteristics of naturalistic philosophy. Because educational studies also have assumed value neutrality, it also could be criticized in this context. For example, as a science dealing with human beings, education cannot avoid values and contexts. Under the motto of "Zu den Sachen selbst! (to the things themselves!)", phenomenology does not pursue biased and prejudiced research; it argues for the impossibility of naturalistic science's value free assumptions, and examines the value directing characteristic of education and educational science. As van Manen argues

(2002), education should be guided by pedagogy.

Second, phenomenology is a problem-centered approach. To understand phenomena, Husserl insisted on the phenomenological attitude; eliminating prejudice and understanding the phenomena with holistic insight. Many areas in the Education studies are adapted and derived from their mother fields such as psychology or administration. This means their study began from studies of other things and not from the educational field itself. Therefore, to establish the foundation of education as a practical study, beginning from the educational situation and phenomenon is a must. Moreover, it should begin from experience, not just from concepts and abstractions. This starting point could be referred to as 'understanding'.

Third, phenomenology denies every reductionism. Husserl's main critique of naturalistic and historical philosophy is their reductionism. The attempt to explain everything based on natural law or history ignores multifaceted phenomena, and makes agents pursue only the perspective they accept. However, naturalistic philosophy and historical philosophy try to explain everything by their foundations; this makes philosophy unphilosophical; it cannot explain things clearly and wholly. However, educational studies are a science dealing with human beings rather than objects. As van Manen said (1990), educational studies have to interpret the meaning of human phenomenon or understand the lived structure of meanings, rather than classifying the natural phenomenon (as biography) or explaining the objects statistically or causally. That is, educational studies should not just involve numeric or historic analysis, but apply multifaceted understanding.

In addition to phenomenology, postmodernism is a very important background to this

research direction. Since Doll's (1993) initial postmodern study on curriculum, many studies have been performed. Joo and Kim (2010), for example, categorized the postmodern curriculum along three horizons; post-structuralism, de-constructivism, and post-modernism. Post-structural curriculum researchers criticize the assumptions of structuralism and structural curriculum, such as Greene and Cherryholmes. They attempt to destroy the common concepts and experiences regarded as correct and suggest new insights into the classroom field based on the tradition of Derrida, Deleuze, Lacan, and Foucault. A second line of de-constructivists, such as Pinar, Whitson, and Illich, expand the idea of post-structuralists to the extreme. They understand the curriculum as a deconstructive text and embrace the phenomenologist's insight; they believe that they can reconstruct a new self - who is capable of manipulating the past, present and future- overcoming the psychological and social cul-de-sac situation.

This study also looks at the recognition of antinomy in modernity, which is critical. According to Kant (1781/1998, p. 470), there are many pair concepts and phrases which are self-evident but incommensurable. There are antinomies of rationality in modern schools, for example, the words 'reasonable' and 'rational' are connected to concepts like logical, effective, acceptable, good, fair, desirable, and civilized. To find the antinomy and experience of boredom in the modern schooling will be one direction of this study.

This positioning derived from the usage of concept; 'post-' means 'after' or 'next' rather than 'beyond' or 'anti-'. This study criticizes the scientific and structural curriculum traditions, attempting to pinpoint their limitations. However, this study will not insist on de-

schooling or suggest alternative education systems as Illich (1971) did. This study aims to find the foundation of the education field itself by putting a step on curriculum theory. It will be possible by reviewing various field research with philosophical, comprehensive insight and educational intentionality. Therefore, in this study, postmodernism is the modernism after/late modernism and the direction of curriculum study; postmodernism is understanding contemporary schools rather than they should be overcome.

2.2. *Currere* and structure, environment, context

The major concept of 'environment' in curriculum is explained clearly by William Shubert (1986, pp. 239-246). Explaining the curriculum paradigm, he divides the paradigm of perennial analytic categories based on the Tyler rationale. The learning environment was located under the category of organization among the four principles: purpose; learning experience; organization; and evaluation. Shubert then describes the dimensions of learning environments as physical, instructional material, interpersonal, Institutional, and psychosocial dimensions. However, this positioning and categorizing of environments is based on the stale dichotomy of epistemology in the stream of Cartesian philosophy. He separates the mind and material first, then divided the material to the distance, size, and functions. To Shubert, as a major curriculum researcher, environment is the framework to control; to teach students and make them learn effectively. This perception of environment is prevalent in curriculum studies, which is based on the social scientific epistemology and Dewey's proposition that education comprise the interactions between learners and learning environments.

   Dewey's idea has similar implications for phenomenological epistemology. According to

phenomenologists, such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Aoki, the epistemology which composes the world with human recognition, the reality of the phenomenon cannot be separated from human beings. When human watches an object, the thing-in-itself (Sachen selbst) cannot be perceived. Although we feel perceiving an object itself, it is not the thing-in-itself but the recognition of representation of the body. When we touch a desk, what we feel is the sense of our finger contacting the desk, not the desk itself (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). That is, we can perceive and recognize the phenomenon in our consciousness (Phänomen) not objective reality directly, which is separate from human beings (Erscheinung). Then, the 'life-world' where humans dwell, stay, and live is the environment of the subject so that the learner's and teacher's personal and inter-personal environment could be equal to the schooling environment. In turn, the curriculum elements which interact with student's and teacher's experiences all should be the schooling environment. The world where they live in school is the educational environment for them.

Naturally, the phenomenon qua perception of human recognition occurs in the context that the subject stands on. The context represents the social, political, economic situation with the personal history of subjects. The school context is not just an environment but a modern environment. Schools in East Asia are a rather uniform modern context; they pursue competition over cooperation; school spaces resemble military units and business buildings; and, one-way instruction dominates. In other words, the schooling environment is loaded with ideology, value direction, and space and time for systematic inquiry rather than an axiological vacuum.

Study of educational experiences as *currere*, therefore, should include the context of the modern schooling and understand how subjects interact and transact with structures, environments, and contexts. Additionally, the category of experience is not just limited to the human perceptional level through sense organs. We should ask- how does the structure alienate the experience of being; how to 'habitual-ize' and 'other-ize' us under the name of civilization, and modernization. Modernity is recognized as an origination of every loss of humanization; boredom is suggested as the primary and core experience as a result.

2.3. Boredom as Experience

The conceptualizing of boredom should find correspondence with our ordinary life experiences (Husserl's 'life-world') by embodying [exploring, looking into, 'going into'] various dimensions and levels, rather than the linear logic of extrapolating collected data. As previously mentioned, it may be easier to narrow down a concept based on the collected data but it is hard to represent an experience of the real life world, which may too often have been generated negatively, bringing many negative effects in classrooms. To conceptualize boredom realistically, I explore boredom as an experience, not just as a mood, emotion, and/or reaction. Thus, I propose the 'experience of boredom' to explain the phenomenon of boredom in classrooms.

The phrase 'experience of boredom' stands on the phenomenological epistemology. According to Husserl, human consciousness is always the consciousness of something—intentionality—so that we cannot imagine the empty representation of consciousness. According to Merleau Ponty, a human is the body subject which lives in the lifeworld

perceived by the body, and located in the historical, cultural, and social context. Thus, human beings qua subjects construct their own world by themselves on the context of structure.

Based on this understanding of human recognition, I describe the experience of boredom along three dimensions following traditional categorization in educational theories. First, the elements which consist of the experience are body, consciousness, and structure. The interactions among the elements make the many dimensions of boredoms, that is, when the body interacts with sensory representation (body-body interaction), this boredom experience would be a situative boredom. A structural boredom emerges when the body interacts with the structure (body-structure interaction). This boredom could be related to social and/or economic reproduction. When the body interacts with consciousness, the whole interaction (body-consciousness-structure interaction), would be an existential boredom. The existence of otherness is the natural situation for human beings from birth. The subject was born to parents and a social relationship, which extends by growing up and socializing (inter-subject interaction).

3. Research methods and design

This study aims at philosophical inquiry about boredom, and existential / sociological inquiry of educational experiences. This dissertation employs a standard philosophy methodology; literature analysis, logical reasoning and exemplifying understanding with an argument structure found in phenomenology. Among the many philosophical approaches, this dissertation chooses phenomenology because it focuses on the theorization of human

experiences. As a theoretically interpretive method, it does not entail and does not rely upon any data collection such as personal interviews and field observations, which are common to empirical studies. This method not only allows the researcher to deal directly with the research gap at hand, namely theoretical considerations on boredom and its relationship with curriculum and theories of curriculum, but it also addresses the following problems inherent to the schools of curriculum theory.

3.1 Philosophical inquiry in curriculum study

According to Short (1991), there are various approaches to curriculum inquiry, and philosophical inquiry is one of the important forms. Short separates curriculum philosophy into three forms based on the conventional disciplinary forms of inquiry; conceptual analysis, ampliative criticism, and speculative essay. This is nothing other than categorization based on several philosophical traditions, making it close to impossible to explain the characteristics of curriculum philosophy. Therefore, by rejecting short's categorization if curriculum philosophy, I use the term 'curriculum theorizing' to refer to all the foregoing aspects, which directs curriculum studies with insightful, whole, and speculative philosophical arguments. In other words, philosophical inquiry about curriculum should analyze and develop the core concepts; criticize the educational field and structure; and, propose the holistic and comprehensive idea to the academic community.

As a curriculum philosophy, this study follows the philosophical justification method. Under the influence of social science, the mainstream of curriculum studies has become empirical studies. Researchers focus on data collecting and using simple operational concepts

to narrow the scope of study. An empirical approach to the present study is not adequate as it needs a holistic and conceptually direct inquiry method. The appropriate method for the research is more deductive than inductive, and more speculative than empirical. As Schubert (1991, p. 63) says, "[Speculative essays] are persuasive philosophical pieces that use analytic, interpretive, and/or critical literary style rather than rigorous data-based or other highly rule-bound systematic forms of inquiry."

This study treats phenomenology as a theoretical foundation. In the field of curriculum studies there were attempts to articulate the role of phenomenology. These attempts, however, were rather different from the position taken in the present research proposal. Short (1991) categorizes the phenomenological inquiry of curriculum as separated from philosophical inquiry. Thus, he explains a phenomenological study based on the tradition of empirical study differing from philosophical phenomenology. On the contrary, Pinar (1995, p. 45) explains that phenomenology has a wide range of methodologies and themes. According to Pinar, phenomenological inquiries are of three kinds roughly: the first focuses on the hermeneutical or interpretative aspect of phenomenological inquiry, the second strives to honor a philosophical tradition of phenomenology, and the third works on the space between phenomenology and post-structuralism. Based on Pinar's categories, this study could be allocated to the last grouping. Borrowing Park's (2015) expression, this study could be explained as a pendulum swing between phenomenological and post-modernist curriculum inquiry. To sum up, this study is speculative in nature and phenomenologically practical without relying or depending on empirical data.

Even if there are many variations of phenomenology, understanding Husserl's methods of phenomenology is critical, since they represent phenomenological ideology. To Husserl, phenomenology is the methodology to inquire into the essence of the phenomenon and to establish the foundation of philosophy. To achieve this aim, according to Danner (1979), Husserl suggests several steps to follow; *epoché*, phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction, and transcendental reduction. It is also important that Husserl's phenomenological process will be the basic ideology and methodology of the inquiry on boredom.

When humans recognize the world, human consciousness accepts it with theoretical attitude; it is diagnosed as a scientific and historical perception to Husserl. The first step starts from bracketing prejudices towards objects; *epoché*. By eliminating the polluted biases, we can prepare the steppingstones which can lead us to recognize objects as they originate from a naturalistic attitude. We call this world a 'life-world'. It should be the first step to escape from a social-scientific inquiry on boredom.

Next, through phenomenological reduction, we can keep the phenomenological attitude which keeps distance of the subject from objects on consciousness. In this process, we become an observer of our consciousness, and we can see intentional objects, which are not polluted by theoretical attitude and represents the world as it comes. Then, we can perform the free variation to find the essence of intuition; eidetic reduction. In this process, we try shaking and distorting the phenomenon in various ways until we can find the unchangeable things. As a result, we can inquire into the essence of the phenomenon.

For the last step, we can step back once more to observe the intuited essences, the world,

and the observer itself together: in transcendental reduction. This is the process to retroact to the self. So, we can recognize -in reverse- and understand the intuition of essence, phenomenological, naturalistic, and theoretical attitude because they are all constructed on the basis of transcendental subjectivity. Through this process, we can deeply understand the essence of phenomenon, the bias of first perception, the positions of human beings, and relationships among all of them.

To sum up, the first step is to escape from the theoretical world by bracketing our prejudices and keeping the natural attitude. Second is to create a distance from consciousness and observe consciousness seeing the objects as they come. Third is to inquire into the intuition of essence by free variation: finding unchangeable elements by shaking the phenomenon. Fourth is to step back to create more distance, and to enquire into the transcendental subjectivity by reversely and broadly understanding every attitude, reductions and world's relationship of phenomenon.

3.2. Thematic Approach

According to Adamson and Morris (2007, pp. 273-275), curriculum can be divided into four aspects: ideology; planned/intended; enacted; and experienced aspects. They help to understand the curriculum aspects by following the process of a curriculum operation system based on human recognition; from the idea, through the official system and performance, to human experiences. As they suggested, every aspect has its typical manifestations and research methods such as ideology – books – discourse analysis, planned/intended – policy documents – interviews, enacted – teacher and student *action* - ethnography, experience –

attitudes – narratives. It means every aspect could be itself a research and that inevitably each aspect should be isolated divided by human recognition. The strength of thematic / problem-centered approach for curriculum inquiry starts from this point.

Since curriculum operates in many dimensions interactively, it looks like a sequential linear process such as ideology affects planned / intended curriculum, which in turn affects and enacts curriculum. However, each dimension affects to another simultaneously and continually. Furthermore, if one is isolated from others, the curriculum cannot operate precisely. Understanding educational phenomena whilst penetrating through the multiple dimensions of curriculum based on specific theme could broaden our horizons of recognition.

Boredom in schooling environments could be studied using an analytical matrix intersecting human recognition framework with curriculum dimensions. Human recognition has been the subject of inquiry in various philosophical traditions. For example, Kant suggest an a priori framework of human recognition in time, space, and causality categories; philosophers of consciousness such as Husserl and Heidegger regard a human as a time existence in the intersection of time and causality; and, philosophers of body such as Merleau-Ponty and Langeveld regard a human as a space being in the intersection of space and causality. Therefore, to inquire into the relationship between the experience of boredom and schooling environment, every element of human recognition can occupy an axis of the framework. The other axis could be the curriculum dimension (Adamson & Morris, 2007), following the process of curriculum performance from top to bottom. To sum up, the framework and example of contents could be suggested as follows:

3.3. Exemplifying understanding (Beispielverstehen)

As a phenomenological inquiry, this study rejects biased and prejudiced interpretation, and tries to provide the opportunity to reflect and introspect to educators. To meet the advantages of phenomenology, interpreting and theorizing with examples can be a useful way. These examples are not drawn from empirical data, but they are 'Exemplifying Understanding' (Beispielverstehen). This helps us to recognize the educational reality without theoretically pre-constructive perspective by describing the scenes or anecdotes based on the experience.

'Exemplifying understanding' appeared by criticizing the paradigmatic acceptance of social scientific methodologies which self-regulated educational research as a social science in the 1970s. Lippitz said this is the phenomenologically disciplined and preserved method as a way of philosophical thinking cohering with our experience without theoretical filtering (Cho, 2002). Therefore, personally isolated understanding of the problem has limitations. Exemplifying understanding is a method based on common sense and sympathy to understand that which can be experienced in human daily life, with real stories and anecdotes, as well as understanding personal experience of past or present. Through this process, readers' experiences can also be reflected and replaced.

As a result, collecting anecdotes or stories will be an important mission for exemplifying understanding. Many empirical researchers misunderstand that the basic method should be participant observations or interviews to collect stories. However, this study is in the tradition of human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften), especially phenomenology. According to van Manen (1997, pp. 21-24), phenomenology is not an empirical analytic science; nor merely a

speculative inquiry in the sense of unworldly reflection, or a sole particularity or sheer universality, and does not solve the problems. For the phenomenologist, the objective and the subjective are not exclusive to each other; these all have their meanings and natures on the researcher's direction. So, the stories and anecdotes, which could be the data for this study, do not need to be collected in an empirical way. It is because these studies should find the critical examples to explain the existential foundation of human beings, rather than empirical data collecting, which can be an obstacle to a study. These examples can derive from reflections of the researcher, and also from the existential relationship surrounding the researcher. As Heidegger suggested regarding waiting for the train and participation at a dinner party, exemplification could be very common examples which have self-evidence by themselves.

Chapter 2: Extant discourses of boredom

This chapter aims to summarize and categorize the extant key discourses of boredom. Boredom has been experienced and discussed variously in Western traditions. Sometimes, it has been treated as an origin of evil, and other times, as a sign of laziness or unfaithfulness. Some classes have regarded it as a symbol of nobility while others thought it as a destiny of their suffering from slavery. Some scholars treat it as a disease of emotion, while others believe it as a power of historical changes. It has been commonly felt as a temporal emotion or feeling, or rarely as a mood in sub-consciousness. Recently, it has also been accepted as a proof of historical development and representation of public civilization. The perceptions and ideas of boredom are wide as much as human beings, and deep as long as its history.

What is the importance of these discourses about boredom for education? Schools are the places where teaching and learning happens, and the activities would not exist in a vacuum state. As schools are small societies representing historical and social contexts, the ideas of contexts have been concretizing into school life. Schools are a place where we can learn, teach, experience, keep, break, and develop all kinds of boredom discourses. Understanding the various discourses can be the background knowledge to understanding the modern schooling system through the lenses of boredom.

In this chapter, I categorize the discourses of boredom. Boredom studies have a long history, however, it is hard to find a plausible categorization about the traditions. Historical approaches have commonly been articulated based on the scholars, paralyzing the theories as

equals, or explaining the empirical efforts on the field. Why there are not enough attempts to categorize the tradition albeit there are enormous discourses about boredom? I have several opinions about this situation. An important reason is that the concept of boredom is ambiguous. There are many concepts and positioning; it is hard to find one exact concept, as it even seems enormous to many scholars. Next, the short history of an academic approach to boredom also can be a reason. Although there are many discussions, the full-fledged study of boredom started recently compared to other studies. It means there are not enough academic achievements for the categorization project. Most of all, the Heideggerian prevalent tendency stands as the biggest wall. The strong and profound concept of Heidegger makes other ideas seem elementary level or less-delicate. Especially, Heidegger's authority, as the greatest existentialist, is oppressing academia. It seems interpreting the boredom phenomenon in his stream becomes a kind of standard doctrine.

In this chapter, I categorize boredom discourses into three traditions: *Acedians, Mortalitists,* and *Conducivists*. *Acedians* are a group of thinkers regarding boredom negatively. *Mortalitists* argue that boredom is not simple, and it is something fundamental in human life. The third group is *Conducivists* explaining boredom with more positive perceptions as well as negative and deep understanding. This categorization is based on the basic perceptions of boredom in each group rather than historical time spans or academic areas. It is because of these that classroom activities are closely and directly connected to the different perceptions of boredom. 'Teaching and Learning' and school life attitude changes are based on the different perspectives. Consequently, this study aims to conceptualize boredom and theorize the pedagogy of boredom within the tradition of *Conductivists*.

1. *Acedians***:** boredom is the evil, hence, an enemy of human life

1.1. *Acedia* **and** *Acedians*

Commonly, boredom has been demonized in both daily life and academic traditions. In many studies, scholars start by explaining the meaning of *acedia* as the origination of their negative perceptions, and it is plausible to explain the tendencies of many of the following discourses. The widely known oldest word, '*acedia*' or '*acidia*', means "a lack of interest or caring, although it sometimes still carries overtones of laziness" ("Acedia", 2020) or "spiritual or mental sloth; apathy" ("Acedia", 2011). *Acedia* derived from the Greek '*ἀκηδία*', a combination of the negative prefix '*ἀ*' and '*κῆδος*', means care, grief, or concern. So, *acedia* was used to represent a state of lethargy and space-out without concern for life around, and 'kóros' was used for boredom and weariness. The word '*kedia*' had been related to 'evil'.

There is a story about Avagrius Pontikus illustrating the evil nature of *acedia* (Svendsen, 2006). In the story, *acedia* is treated as the noonday demon [*daemon meridianus*] taking a monk's spirit with uncertainty and putting him into fantasy of that the sun stops and stays still. If a monk gets trapped in this state, he cannot feel anything, and his vitality fades out. The monk, due to the devil, feels bored in his staying position, and in turn, this tediousness leads him to finish his cleric life. Boredom is not just an inner mental state making the clergy feel disgusted but a temptation pushing him out from God's life. In this way, *acedia* is associated with religious and moral guiltiness.

In his study, people who treat boredom as an enemy of human life are grouped as '*Acedians*'. The religious meaning of *acedia* lasted until the 14th century and boredom has

taken the helm of *acedia* since the 17th century. After modernization, religion lost its absolute position, however, the mechanism of treating *acedia* has remained in the view of boredom; as an enemy of human development. Many scholars are *Acedians*, so I suggest three representative philosophers in this chapter. The three share the common meaning of boredom from evilness to the barrier of human development.

1.2. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

Blaise Pascal is widely accepted as the first modern philosopher dealing with boredom in earnest (Svendsen, 2006; Koichiro, 2011/2014; Toohey, 2011). Pascal is the foremost figure in the *acedian* tradition as a bridge between medieval and modern philosophy. In his 'Thoughts [*Pensées*]', he tries to associate boredom with human ontological characteristics as well as the misery of religious unfaithfulness. Pascal's notion of boredom, consequently, is absolutely and definitely negative.

> Weariness. Nothing is so insufferable to man as to be completely at rest, without passions, without business, without diversion, without study. He then feels his nothingness, his forlornness, his insufficiency, his dependence, his weakness, his emptiness. There will immediately arise from the depth of his heart weariness, gloom, sadness, fretfulness, vexation, despair. (Pascal, 1660/2016, p. 27)

Pascal thinks unhappiness originates from human nature; "I have discovered that all the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber" (*ibid*, pp. 27-28). That is, human beings have no ability to endure the silent and stable state, in turn, this human nature is the root of unhappiness. It is concretized when

Pascal explains the contradictory of human desire. Human beings have a desire for stability and eternity in the present confliction and disturbance. S/he waits for the end of the present suffering and does activities to obtain the desired happiness. The eternity and stability seem to guarantee his/her happiness in the suffering moment. However, it does not take a long time to recognize that the end of suffering and the obtainment of stability and silence turns into the starting point of human unhappiness.

Pascal suggests that becoming a king is the perfect example of the recurrence of suffering and happiness. Wo/man commonly pursues a higher position. To someone, the king's position could be the final goal of their life. If s/he succeeds to achieve the position, the moment might be the happiest time of his/her life. After a while, however, the situation starts changing. S/he faces being alone and lets in the silence of the king's chair and bedroom. S/he cannot avoid thinking of every possible thing, which leads to thinking of his/her existence as who I am, where here is, what I am doing here, or how my life will be. S/he is going to be trapped into the sea of worries and cares, and finally, s/he cannot keep the disabled happiness going continually. The happiness of the highest achievement switches to fear, worry, depression and boredom. This is the reason why kings are always surrounded by many people and events for diversion to avoid existential crisis. "[I]f he be without what is called diversion, he is unhappy and more unhappy than the least of his subjects who plays and diverts himself" (*ibid*, p. 28).

Pascal argues that diversion is the necessary activity to save human beings from the unhappiness of boredom. Fortunately, human beings exist with the ability to 'do an activity'

to avoid painfulness. Human beings are easily absorbed by pleasurable and sybaritic activities such as hunting a rabbit, playing a gambling, studying hard for showing off and watching a play. Human beings "love noise and stir; … hence it comes that the pleasure of solitude is a thing incomprehensible" (*ibid*, p. 29). To Pascal, diversion is not only a desire for happiness but also the reaction to the miserable human nature for survival.

> Men seek rest in a struggle against difficulties; and when they have conquered these, rest becomes insufferable. For we think either of the misfortunes we have or of those which threaten us. And even if we should see ourselves sufficiently sheltered on all sides, weariness of its own accord would not fail to arise from the depths of the heart wherein it has its natural roots and to fill the mind with its poison.

> Thus so wretched is man that he would weary even without any cause for weariness from the peculiar state of his disposition; and so frivolous is he that, though full of a thousand reasons for weariness, the least thing, such as playing billiards or hitting a ball, is sufficient to amuse him. (*ibid*, pp. 29-30)

Pascal concludes that sincere faithfulness is the only solution to overcome the unhappiness of boredom, because misery is derived from the lack of God. As Pascal explains and assumes, human beings exist being trapped in the unhappiness of boredom. What Pascal wants to emphasize is not just an importance of faith or God as the source of happiness. He explains about the misery of human beings without God. Human beings cannot avoid the destiny of boredom and it is impossible to be cured by superficial diversions. Efforts to avoid boredom only leads to another starting point of unhappiness.

To sum up, Pascal proceeds the discourse of boredom through the theory of diversion. He attributes boredom to stability and silence, and it can be expelled immediately by simple physical activities. However, boredom assaults the mind repeatedly and continually because of the weak nature of human beings. The constant boredom leads wo/man into personal crisis, so it occupies the definite position of evil. Therefore, the only solution is faithfulness to God, the attachment to religious life. With the religious perception, Pascal's boredom is very close to primary *acedia* in Greek times, and his position is substantial as the frontier of *Acedian* in modern times.

1.3. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Immanuel Kant is one of the most representative Enlightenment philosopher in the western history. In boredom studies, he can be regarded as *Acedian* based on his perception of human development. The Enlightenment is the most important period to understand the modern schooling system because it is the basic ideology of modern society and justification of the schooling system. The characteristics and mentality of Enlightenment have kept the contemporary schooling system. Thus, to understand the argument of Kant majorly guarantees comprehending the large part of discourses in the modern schooling system.

In the early modern period, boredom was accepted as an ethical failure by the strong Enlightenment culture. To Kant (1784/2013), the world is where humans can learn about nature and knowledge of the universal principle; therefore, the purpose of education is on the development of the reason and rationality. Rationality is the objective knowledge explaining the structure of nature, and it is not subjective so widely trustable. At the end of the

educational process, human beings can achieve the freedom of reason by enlightening; the freedom "to make use of one's reason [*Vernunft*] in all public use" (*ibid*, p. 4).

Education starts to be treated as one of the most important factors to enlighten human beings and modern society. Thus, wo/man is the only being who needs education" (Kant, 1803/1900, p. 1) and, conversely, education is the method to make wo/man humanized. "Discipline changes animal nature into human nature. Animals are by their instinct all that they ever can be... But man needs a reason of his own" (*ibid*, p. 2). The core of humanity, i.e., is the rationality, and the development of rationality is the process to separate human nature from animals. For Kant, therefore, every obstacle disturbing the development of rationality is the enemy of modern society. Boredom is inevitably negative for Kant.

Interestingly, Kant deals with boredom in the context of morality cultivation. He divides vices into three categorizations and again, each of them into several characteristics; malice (ingratitude, envy, and joy at the misfortune of others), baseness (injustice, unfaithfulness, deceitfulness, dissoluteness of wealth, health, or honor is in the baseness category as a brutality), and narrow-mindedness (unkindness, niggardliness, and idleness/effeminacy). Although boredom was not articulated directly in this categorization, it is not hard to think that it can be put into the narrow-mindedness in the aspect that he connects idleness and boredom with emptiness of activity and lack of work. Vices are educational targets that need to be overcome by cultivating morality. Hence, Kant thinks boredom is one of the moral weaknesses of human beings and tried to overcome it by cultivating rationality. For Kant, boredom represents narrow-minded personality; accordingly, it is a negative moral attitude to

the enlightened wo/man.

Kant emphasizes the importance of work. "Man is the only animal who is obliged to work. He must go through a long apprenticeship before he can enjoy anything for his own sustenance" (*ibid*, p. 69). Education, therefore, has to focus not only on cultivating rationality but also on preparing occupation. Kant also associates the importance of occupation education with boredom, because work can be the core activity to moderate boredom. Kant obviously connects boredom with empty time or a lack of something to do, and he thinks it can be solved by work activities. It means that boredom occupies a part of life because there is too much time without doing anything. This idea gets refined when he explains about the relationship among boredom, work, and pleasure.

According to Kant, pleasure is not a possible emotion only by keeping a child from boredom. Because "the pleasure of life does not fill time but leave it empty. The human mind, however, feels detestation and discomfort in the presence of empty time" (Kant, 1920/1997, p. 153). As a rationalist, Kant thinks emotion is not meaningful to fill human emptiness. Emotion is only temporal to forget painfulness rather than a real good for development. In contrast to pleasure, work has a heavier meaning to Kant. "If we are not always thinking of pleasure, but will be patient in our work, we shall become useful members of the community and be kept from ennui" (Kant, 1803/1900, p. 120). In the same vein, Kant assumes patience is not negative but very positive as a symbol of development. Emotional reaction is not the criteria of good or bad to Kant, but the important thing is to keep humanity with the fulfillment of job activity. Even the first human being who lived in Eden seems not to be

exceptional in the perception.

> Just as false a notion is it that if Adam and Eve had only remained in Paradise, they
> would have done nothing there but sit together singing pastoral songs and admiring the
> beauty of Nature. Were this so, they would have been tormented with ennui, just as
> much as other people in the same position (Kant, 1803/1900, p. 69).

In summary, boredom itself is not a positive human experience for Kant. It is the symbol of laziness far from the development of reason and it also runs opposite to the purpose of enlightenment. The logical structure is quite similar to Pascal's, but the difference is that Kant treats human reason and the development of reason as God and the religious life of Pascal. Therefore, boredom as evil cannot be avoided in modern society, hence, should be eliminated. The limitation of Kant's idea of boredom is as clear as Pascal's—the purpose of human life is not the development of rationality, and emotion is not useless as such; it can be and should be ignored. Kant's concept of boredom cannot be compatible between boredom and busyness in modern life, and above all, busy boredom as the social common experience. I think that Kant could not recognize the most important aspect that his idea of teaching and learning makes human beings bored most.

1.4. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Friedrich Nietzsche, the third worth mentioning *Acedian*, does not assert any 'theory of boredom' in his studies. However, the term 'boredom' or 'tedious' repeatedly appears in his various writings. There are several comments about boredom in his books, and he understands boredom with its parallel terms; "boredom and burden" (1882/1974, p. 87), "the

poison that best cures boredom" (*ibid*, p. 93), "To ward off boredom" (*ibid*, p. 108),

"moments of discomfort, boredom, half-bad conscience" (1878/1913, p. 81) "In

compensation for much disgust, disheartenment, boredom" (*ibid*, p. 274). Nietzsche's

perception of boredom is not positive as the same as the other *Acedian*'s but shows his

uniqueness.

There are three pre-required points for explaining Nietzsche's discourse of boredom.

First, Nietzsche rejects the main stream philosophy; Christianity and Socratism: Especially,

the dualistic metaphysics of Socratism, the division between God and idols rolling as God,

and Western morality based on Socratism and Christianity. Second, unlike Christians, his

perception of human beings is positive, which is derived from the Dionysian Subject.

Wo/man has enough possibility to live a true life, to explain it, he coins the term super-human

[*Übermensch*]. The third is that humans can live a true life in an artistic life rather than

Christian and Socratist morality. Emotion is not useless but necessary for a true life.

Nietzsche treats boredom negatively as he rejects religion. In his interpretation, the

origination of religion is closely related to boredom. First, human beings were born by God's

breath, but humans are destined to be bored by God. "God in his boredom uses pain for the

tickling of his favorite animal" (Nietzsche, 1878 /1913, p. 182). God is a sadistic existence to

Nietzsche. God bothers for his/her favorite animal and never cares for human happiness. For

him, God has no reason to exist, so, 'God is dead'. Second, albeit rejecting God, the problem

between the founders of religion and boredom is still left. For Nietzsche, the founders of

religion invented "particular kinds of life everyday customs that have the effect of a

disciplina voluntatis and at the same time abolish boredom" (1882/1974, p. 296). In other words, boredom is played as the condition of the invention of religious rituals and cultures. Boredom, given by God, becomes the foundation of religious activities and it works negatively to humanity.

According to Nietzsche, in his 'The Birth of Tragedy' (Nietzsche, 1872/2013), art is one of the most important factors to recover humanity. He thinks that Ancient Greece was the period with the balance between Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics. However, since Socrates and his followers appeared, logical Socratism has occupied whole European thinking. The tragedy of the modern 19 centuries started from Socratism and its influence on Christianity. The Apollonian perception, the logical Socratism, beats the Dionysian's and the situation has kept up with modern morality. Nietzsche, however, rejects this tradition and suggests pursuing the Dionysian ideal. For the 'true life' of 'Socrates making music', Dionysian emotional factors are important to recover humanity. Thus, art becomes one of the most important human activities, and boredom transfers to the one reason to facilitate artistic activity. "Art is to drive away hours and moments of discomfort, boredom, half-bad conscience" (Nietzsche, 1878/1913, p. 81), Music "spells to charm always emotional ennui" (Nietzsche, 1882/1974, p. 255). It shows boredom is still in the negative area in his ideas. Although Nietzsche pursues the Dionysian idea, boredom is the gifted nature of human beings, so it is rejected to be a part of his pursuing.

We have to consider that Nietzsche's understanding of human nature is, on the one hand, very similar to Pascal's (Koichiro, 2011/2014). Pascal, as we have seen before, recognizes

that human beings are inclined to pursue suffering. Wo/man cannot stay quietly and stably in their chamber; therefore, s/he would willingly step forward to be suffered. Nietzsche also describes that human nature tends to crave for suffering.

> The Craving for suffering - When I think of the craving to do something, which continually tickles and spurs those millions of young Europeans who cannot endure their boredom and themselves, then I realize that they must have a craving to suffer and to find in their suffering a probable reason for action for deeds. (Nietzsche, 1878 /1913, p. 117)

The importance of Nietzsche's understanding of human nature is in the historical context. Before the World War, what Nietzsche felt European youngsters were totally bored. This means that the Europeans were trapped in the desire to suffer and tried to find a meaning of their life in the suffering. Even before the World War started, he could recognize the root of the misery in the public atmosphere, and he could predict the madness of violence. Boredom as the origination of all evil blossoms during and after Nietzsche's period.

   In brief, Nietzsche thinks boredom is the given misery by the sadistic God and misused by the religious founders and executors. The strong tradition has been established by Socratists and Christians, and with the ongoing suffering characteristics of human beings. It made Europeans attend the misery of war without hesitance. To recover our humanity, we are required to restore the Dionysian perceptions; accordingly, artistic activities are better suited than moral/Christian cultures. Then, we can live our true life, as a super-human, and can escape from the misery of boredom.

The limitations of Nietzsche are as obvious as other *Acedians*. In his ideas, the world has been constructed negatively from a long time ago, so it even seems impossible to overcome it. There are several movements, with postmodernist's trends, pursuing artistic aspects rather than just focusing on the development of instrumental reason. However, it seems far away to discard the Platonist and Christian traditions, especially, in education systems. Under the process of educational evaluation, the logical aspect is going to focus on in the stronger press. To assess the logical aspect is efficient, reliable, and objective, while the emotional aspect is not. Is this possible to bring us out from the boring system to pursue humanity?

The Dionysian standpoint does not involve boredom into their boundary. Nietzsche even explains that artistic activity is too far away from boredom. Why does he not involve boredom into the Dionysian perception? Is boredom really human nature that we have to avoid or escape? Is boredom not a topic of art? Can we keep our true life with boredom or not? Can super-humans live without boredom? If cannot, what is the relationship between true life and boredom? There are many questions to be answered to his ideas. Can we rebuild the world again or solve the problems in society with/through the phenomenon of boredom?

2. *Mortalitists*: boredom is an experience of death and meaninglessness

2.1. *Mortality* and *Mortalistist*

This section introduces the second group of boredom discourses, '*Mortalitists*'. This group proceeds their discourse based on a specific human condition; 'mortality'. Mortality means "the condition of being mortal or subject to death; mortal nature or existence" ("Mortality,"

2002). Every animal on the planet is going to die. It is not only a characteristic of human being but also of every living creature. Human beings, however, exist and keep their life by facing the ultimate fact that every person dies. The subject, who keeps the fact that we will die in mind, cannot avoid living differently from other animals. To that kind of group, boredom has the most special meaning rather than an evil or an enemy.

In the history of philosophy, this group is usually categorized as existentialists. Many existentialists investigate the life of human beings with ontological methodology. As old metaphysicians did in the past, they try to investigate the ontological characteristics of human beings. And they found human beings are the dying existence and can never avoid the fact. Modern society, which is different from middle age, makes the being more unstable by rejecting the firm ground of the religions, especially the religious idea of the after-death world. Death becomes the core topic and foundation, and the belief of the human ability of awareness is the condition of the existentialist's ideas. They try to see human beings' mentality in the context of modern society, and put boredom as an experience of nothingness, emptiness, meaninglessness from the destiny of death.

As a result, this study positions '*Mortalitists*' in the existential group of boredom discourse. There are many existentialists and *Mortalitists* in boredom discourse but three of the most representative scholars will be introduced in this section.

2.2. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Søren Kierkegaard was a Danish philosopher and theologian. The starting point of Kierkegaard's thinking is to realize religiously that life is meaninglessness and worthlessness. In his masterpiece 'Either/Or' (Kierkegaard, 1843/1944), Kierkegaard constantly states his skeptical and pessimistic view of life; "My view of life is utterly meaningless" (*ibid*, p. 19), "Life is so empty and meaningless" (*ibid*, p. 23), "what is the significance of life? (…) working for a living cannot be the meaning of life, (…) to say that the significance of life is death, seems again a contradiction" (*ibid*, pp. 24-25). Why does Kierkegaard experience his life as pessimistic or miserable, and what makes him feel empty and meaningless? The process to make the articulating point between human existence and suffering would be the answer to the above questions—boredom.

It might be true that boredom has a big significance and impact on Kierkegaard's existential theory. His theorizing starts revealing the diffuse phenomenon of boredom in the period. In his diagnosis, "boredom is the root of the all evil" (*ibid*, p. 237), and it is negatively perceived in many situations as in working place, education practice, or religious life; "how terrible tedium is – terribly tedious; I know no stronger expression, none truer, for only the like is known by the like" (*ibid*, p. 29). Based on the diagnosis of the period, he positions boredom existentially and rather extremely.

Kierkegaard suggests boredom as the condition of the world, human beings, and everything after God. This means that boredom pre-exists any other living creatures as well

as human beings. As the word exists earlier than light and darkness, boredom was there before the birth of the world.

> The history of this can be traced from the very beginning of the world. The gods were bored, and so they created man. Adam was bored because he was alone, and so Eve was created. Thus, boredom entered the world, and increased in proportion to the increase of population. Adam was bored alone; then Adam and Eve were bored together; then Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel were bored *en famille*; the population of the world increased, and the peoples were bored *en masse*." (*ibid*, p. 235)

Kierkegaard's explanation of the passage in Genesis might be insincere and inappropriate religiously but it is pragmatic to explain the principle of every existence; the expansion of existence by the dialectic principle. Boredom is considered as the metaphysical condition of beings in the thesis-antithesis-synthesis process. The only condition for starting a new being to the definite and almighty existence, to God, is boredom. The boredom of God is the only theoretical basis to the birth of the new world. Kierkegaard recognizes the later processes all happen in the same way of the birth of the world. Eve was born because God finds Adam's boredom to be pathetic, so does the other come to the world. Boredom becomes the necessary condition for the new start, the new life and the new action.

As assuming boredom as the necessary condition for everything, Kierkegaard asserts that boredom is inevitable to human beings. This inevitability of boredom is the key point that separates him from *Acedians*. For Kierkegaard, boredom is what we have to live with while *Acedians* try to avoid and eliminate it. Boredom is not a thing that can be overcome or

eliminated but is required to accept it. With the example of the busiest worker (*ibid*, p. 238), Kierkegaard explains that boredom cannot be annulled by work. If the wo/man doing the busiest work like a constantly buzzing insect says that s/he is not bored, it does not mean s/he is not bored but s/he does not know the true concept of what boredom is. To Kierkegaard, "boredom is partly an inborn genial aptitude, partly an acquired immediacy" (*ibid*, p. 238), as a condition of human beings; ontologically always with us.

Why cannot hardworking activities be a way to overcome boredom? Kierkegaard, for the answer, recognizes that boredom is closely related to meaninglessness rather than the overflow of time. He articulates that emptiness of meaning or meaninglessness is the core nature of boredom rather than just 'nothing to do'; "Boredom (…) is characterized by emptiness. (…) Boredom depends on the nothingness with pervades reality" (*ibid*, p. 239). This perception of boredom helps to explain the feeling of loss in modern life. Modern wo/man does not have enough leisure time but always in the busyness of life. The busy life, even not enough for breathing, does not guarantee our fulfillment of life - rather it pours our life with boredom; the loss of meaning. This boredom is far from the tedious of the nothing to do or repeatedness of situations but appears the meaninglessness of existence. It makes human beings "too long down out and desperately tedious" (*ibid*, p. 297).

In the same context, boredom is connected to the religious sphere. Kierkegaard explains that boredom is a special spiritual situation by the loss of meaning and a skeptical mental state from failing to find values. When feeling bored, wo/man finds transcendental meaning beyond common ones. If 'salvation' tries to involve 'meaning', the only souls with existential

boredom are possible. Human beings with skepticism and futility of life can only require the higher and absolute meaning, and they naturally desire religious existence. To escape from false recognition of self –Kierkegaard thinks that many people are in delusion of being true Christians– to recognize that 'everything is empty and meaningless' of existential boredom.

In short, Kierkegaard explains boredom ontologically and religiously. Boredom existed even before the world started, and even was conditioned for the birth of the world. Thus, it inevitably exists with human history, and work as the root of all evil. Boredom is also connected to the meaninglessness of life and death. Although Kierkegaard does not connect boredom directly with death, he makes many comments about the dread or melancholy of death. It is not hard to think that boredom is also derived from fact in his pursuing of death. As a *Mortalitist*, boredom of Kierkegaard implies that the shadow of the fear to death and the melancholy of life. As this ontological and religious characteristic, boredom cannot be avoided or discarded through secular activities. Kierkegaard suggests religious belief and faithfulness as the solution of boredom. Strong Christian sincerity is the only way to avoid boredom through chasing out evil and overcoming the fear and melancholy of death.

As an early *Mortalitist*, Kierkegaard's discourse is similar to *Acedians*: it is similar to that of Pascal in the religious aspect and also resembles that of Kant with negative perception. In modern education, schooling keeps its secularity in curricula. Religious education shifted into the mandatory public education system apart from the Church system. Therefore, Kierkegaard's solution for boredom, pursuing belief in God, is hard to be accepted by the modern education. Next, his negative perception on boredom could not be expanded further

from the *acedians*. Just like the origin of evil, boredom only exists as an object to endure. However, the core achievement of Kierkegaard is that he starts to investigate boredom existentially. Although the discourse is mainly based on the theology, as the frontier of the approach, it can be evaluated importantly.

2.3. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

A second *Mortalitist* is Arthur Schopenhauer. He deals with boredom profoundly but not from a religious perspective. As a critical follower of Kant, he starts his book 'The World as Will and Representation' (Schopenhauer, 1819/1969) with a clear epistemological sentence, "The world is my representation" (p. 3). The represented world is the phenomenon in mind is sensed by human bodies. Human bodies work as a channel between the Subject and the outside world. However, it does not mean that the representation is constructed objectively without any influence; rather, it is under the impact of the willing and striving of the inner world—the *will*. Every recognized thing becomes a phenomenon through the frame of time, space, and causality. A representation involves a shadow of an '*idea*' from the inner world. Therefore, Schopenhauer insists the *will* and representation are the recognition of subjectivity as well as recognition of world and *idea*.

Schopenhauer explains about boredom in the context of the modified or upgraded Kantian epistemology. According to him, human *will* is based on two sensations; pain and boredom. Recognition of lack and need facilitates human activities for satisfaction. Not every activity, however, guarantees the satisfaction of a result, and even the satisfied result also can cause pain or pleasure to wo/man. The pleasure of turning into fear can switch to emptiness

or boredom immediately, then it results in pain again. Pain or boredom become constituents of the basis of the *will* as well as positioning on each pole of the pendulum movement of human experience.

> The basis of all willing, however, is need, lack, and hence pain, and by its very nature and origin it is therefore destined to pain. If, on the other hand, it lacks objects of willing, because it is at once deprived of them again by too easy a satisfaction, a fearful emptiness and boredom come over it; in other words, its being and its existence itself become an intolerable burden for it. Hence its life swings like a pendulum to and from between pain and boredom, and these two are in fact its ultimate constituents. This has been expressed very quaintly by saying that, after man had placed all pains and torments in hell, there was nothing left for heaven but boredom." (Schopenhauer, 1819/1969, pp. 311-312)

Schopenhauer treats boredom and pain as constituents of willing to construct the world. The epistemological feature, therefore, gets associated with the view of life. Life in a painful and boring world is rarely pleasurable or happy. To Schopenhauer, "life itself is a sea full of rocks and whirlpools" (*ibid*, p. 313) so that boredom even has the power to push human beings into death. If boredom is at once so near a wo/man, s/he necessarily requires diversion and amusement, then it sets the human being in motion to get rid of the pain and burden inherent to existence. It is not easy, however, to succeed to solve the problem of being. It becomes, as a last, an evil which can drive the wo/man to the greatest excesses and anarch. The strict prison system, therefore, using boredom as a way of punishment "is so terrible an instrument,

that it has brought convicts to suicide" (*ibid*, p. 313).

Schopenhauer recognizes the relationship between boredom and death. An extreme boredom pushes human beings to suicide. He thinks human activity and alertness of mind continually postpones boredom. In his view, breathing is a process of drawing off death. Death is the fact which constantly impinges human beings. Human beings are trying to do their best to forget it or to overcome it. "Ultimately death must triumph, for by birth it has already become our lot, and it plays with its prey only for a while before swallowing it up" (*ibid*, p. 311). Boredom not only can push us to die but also comes to us as a sort of death.

Furthermore, Schopenhauer regards 'satisfaction' as the opposite of boredom. Under every human being's effort to get satisfaction, he talks about the relationships among the several kinds of humans' wills and emotions. Schopenhauer thinks that human happiness consists of transition from desire to satisfaction. This transition, from satisfaction to a new desire, goes forward rapidly. When this transition stops, the pain starts: "the non-appearance of satisfaction is suffering; the empty longing for a new desire is languor, boredom" (*ibid*, p. 260). Thus, the desire and transition to satisfaction is all floating on a sea of boredom, the moment we stop our desire, we cannot avoid falling into a cadence of empty longing, life-benumbing boredom, by the deadening languor, and finally to life-destroying boredom.

When doing a meaningless activity, we can recognize that boredom appears to us. Meaninglessness implies that the activity is not connected to personal life, family happiness, or society. A meaningless activity isolates us from the world; accordingly, the only physical or psychological movement is left without ourselves. Regarding the relationship between

meaninglessness and boredom, Schopenhauer thinks a little bit differently. He also believes

that emptiness and meaninglessness are closely related to boredom, albeit he did not connect

them directly. To Schopenhauer, however, boredom is not the thing aroused by a meaningless

activity. Boredom is always there in human recognition, representation, world and *will*. Life

is meaningless because we are all willing to die, so boredom is our living in the world.

Schopenhauer's perception of the inevitability of unhappiness is considerably skeptical.

Unhappiness is the foundational cornerstone, and human life is just a swinging between pain

and boredom. Human beings are basically a bored existence. Life is meaningless and just a

process of dying. Schopenhauer experienced the Napoleonic war, and during and after the

conflict, he faced meaninglessness, miserableness, starving and the loss of morality of human

life. With the same reason, he might have felt frustrated, and it made him switch to becoming

an atheist. In that aspect, we can understand his ideas as a whole and the limitations they

have. His place of boredom discussion is in the middle of the *Acedians* and the *Mortalitists*.

So, the latter aspect could be discussed at the end of the *Mortalitists* part.

2.4. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

In boredom studies, Martin Heidegger is accepted as the most influential philosopher. His

theory could be assessed as if he succeeded to compile all *Mortalitists* theories at an upgraded

level. He understands the meaning of boredom in modern life and also in secular human life.

Especially his connection among human beings, death and boredom makes him belong to the

group *Mortalitists*. He could be considered the Great Wall who tries to interpret the

relationship between human existence and modern society as well as explaining profound

boredom in the contemplation.

The position of boredom in Heidegger's philosophy is special. He describes boredom as the ground mood [*grundstimmung*]. As the word implies, it is different from emotion or affect which is accidental and shortly appeared and disappeared in our minds. And it is necessary to make human beings aware by philosophizing. As he borrows the phrase of Novalis' poem; "Philosophy is really homesickness, an urge to be at home everywhere" (Heidegger, 1983/1995, p. 5) Heidegger explains ground mood is like nostalgia. Nostalgia appears when a person stays far away from their hometown, and it works as the existential attraction when the being of a man-in-the-world (hereafter, *Dasein*) could not be aware of his/her existence. The ground mood, therefore, is necessarily there without regard to academic attitude or moral activity of being.

Heidegger subtitled 'world, finitude, solitude' in his book 'The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics' (1983/1995). This means that the fundamental questions of metaphysics/ philosophy could be explained by questions about the world, finitude, and solitude of human existence. There is a mood in the core as the fundamentality of human thinking and *action*. Philosophizing is the event that the mood covers a *Dasein*, therefore, the being would be absorbed by the ground mood. Human beings feel an unexplainable awe and wonderment about their being in the context of the whole world, which as the first step of philosophizing.

The fact that Heidegger treats mood as a fundamental matter is a milestone in the history of philosophy. Traditionally, human beings are regulated as the rational existence, and in turn, emotion and mood have been treated as inferior. Mood, especially, is categorized into the

aspect of body, i.e., emotion, so it has been treated as a side phenomenon of the representation and will. Mood has not been an object for philosophical investigation, rather it was treated as a disturbance for doing philosophy. Heidegger, however, would not agree with the reason-centric tradition, and rejects to put mood into experience of the third rate. Mood is not just a temporal and incidental emotion, but also not the dark and hidden sub-conscious world behind clear and dynamic perception. Rather, mood is the more fundamental thing primarily regulating human reason and will. If a human being is in a mood, the mood regulates the judgment of concept or rational perception. Therefore, "the fundamental concern of philosophizing pertains to such being gripped, to awakening and planting it" (*ibid*. p. 7). There is always boredom, as the ground mood, with human existence in his/her world.

We can recognize the existence of mood when we face the strong state of moods such as pleasure or sadness. We cannot feel and recognize if the ground mood is just 'there' in daily life. However, it is strongly influential if it always stays with us albeit we cannot recognize it. Mood tunes human beings without showing their existence and even makes us not consider it and not to keep a distance from it. It means boredom is already there, seldom chased out easily, and can re-appear at any time and any space. Human beings have no will to perceive boredom, and although trying to avoid it, just living together in daily life.

Heidegger explains the nature of boredom in the phenomenon of 'boringness' and 'boring'. First, boredom is temporal. Heidegger explains that to be bored means that human beings are in a monotonous and stifling time. In this constant monotonous situation, human beings do many activities to discard boredom; this is called 'kill time [*Zeitvertreib*]'.

Heidegger regards boredom as a kind of 'sense of time [*Zeitgefühl*]'. Second, boredom is twofold. Human beings sometimes have to go into boredom as well as escaping out from it. The darkness of boredom is not only the emptiness or nothingness but the essence for the philosophizing of *Dasein*. We can meet existential perception by philosophizing in the world of boredom. Therefore, it is important to bring hidden boredom into daily life. "What is required is the releasement [*Gelassenheit*] of our free, everyday perspective – free from psychological and other theories of consciousness, of the stream of lived experience and suchlike" (*ibid*, p. 91).

Heidegger categorized the forms of boredom as three; by something, with something, and profound boredom. The first form of boredom is the 'boredom at the train station'. If a wo/man arrives at a train station 4 hours earlier than the departing time, s/he has to wait and endure in the flood of boredom. Although s/he tries to read a book or considers some problems among personal or social issues, they do not easily make up. The waiting time leads him/her looking around here and there just to pass the time. After elapsing some time, s/he checks his/her watch, and confirms just several minutes have passed. S/he turns his/her eyeballs up and down to kill the time with meaningless activities. The killing time is an intentional busyness to turn our consideration from the pressure of time to another.

The reason why human beings are absorbed into a killing time activity in the waiting situation is to save him/herself from emptiness. The more effort to avoid boredom, the more being captured by objects in front of the wo/man, and the easier being lost in him/herself. The busyness means only that the looseness of time disappears so we just forget boredom. To

forget boredom means to forget time, as a result, forgetting him/herself.

The second form of boredom, "being bored with something and the passing of time belonging to it" (*ibid*, p. 106), is boredom at a Christmas party. We are commonly invited by a friend or relatives for Christmas dinner. Being not necessary, but we accept the invitation for a better relationship and also having nothing to do during the evening. If you attend it, as usual, there are proper foods, and talking and laughing are blossoming. Foods are delicious, friends are great, and the atmosphere makes us feel excited. After finishing a pleasurable and enjoyable dinner, we go back home with kisses and good-byes. On the way back to home in the car, a thinking suddenly appears in our mind; "I was bored after all this evening, on the occasion of this invitation" (*ibid*, p. 109).

While the first form of boredom is derived from the outside situation, the second one appears from inside the human being. It is not enough to bet on one's existence, no matter how good and beautiful the evening party is, i.e., the expensive dinner cannot satisfy the fundamental determination of our life. The time sharing our pleasure to others is letting ourselves into emptiness in the way of diversion or relaxation. Allowing time by attending the evening party also means that the human being does not pursue busyness. In this situation, the time comes to us as a form of leisure. This leisure is to let the human being into emptiness and nothingness as a way of diversion or relaxation.

The last form of boredom is that "it is boring for one" (*ibid*, p. 132). This is the deep and transcendental boredom that Heidegger could not exemplify. Heidegger comments "It is boring for one' to walk through the streets of a large city on a Sunday afternoon" (*ibid*, p.

135), explaining this form of boredom appears without any expectation and will. We do not need to care for boredom in the train station because we can discard it by killing time activities. We do not try to care for boredom at a Christmas party because we are at the party. Human beings, however, are forced to care for the profound boredom because it is the *Dasein*'s fundamental and essential way of existence. It is the strong emptiness which we cannot just let or ignore.

According to Heidegger, 'it is boring for one' is the most philosophical and 'profound boredom', because it comes to wo/men with opening its essence and deepness. In this state, every existence fades away and boredom permeates into the *Dasein,* making him/her careless and thoughtless. *Dasein*, then, exists not as a unique human being but as 'it'. In this way, human existence recognizes 'being left empty' with the mood of 'it is boring for one'.

'Being left empty' implies the 'being held' in another aspect. The profound boredom makes *dasein* reject him/herself but "all telling 'refusal [*Versagen*]' is itself a telling [Sagen], i.e., a making manifest" (*ibid*, p. 140). To reject the possibility of *Dasein* as a whole, paradoxically, is 'to point' the possibility of the existence of *Dasein* and 'telling announcement [Ansagen]' of unexploited possibilities of *Dasein*. Boredom pushes human beings into primitive existence in the profound boredom. At the moment, turning the possibility of individual existence, *Dasein* necessarily falls into 'solitude' separating from the world and otherness. Heidegger explains this moment as 'temporality'. The profound boredom roots into the temporality of *Dasein*.

The time in the 'it is boring for one' is not the special moment or the stream. The casual

time is meaningless to *Dasein* in the profound boredom. This time is nothingness, emptiness, and death as most transcendental, and the primitive horizon allows every *Dasein* recognizing his/her existence and the way of existence. It means nothing so that is most strong. It shows the boredom of the existence itself and lets us sense our existential solitude. Philosophizing is the nostalgia of existence, and the existential recognition of nothingness and emptiness as a *Dasein* running to death day-by-day.

Heidegger's discourse is philosophically meaningful in the aspect of deepening the discussion of boredom and elevating its meaning. To reveal the meaning of the mood of human beings and to position them on the main stream issue is already a huge challenge to modern philosophy. In the educational aspect, however, it requires a serious discussion challenging the basic issues. As the first, it is meaningful to overcome the traditional perception of boredom, which is treated as an emotion from the body or the floating object of representation, and turns the idea of the meaning of boredom, but it is still not enough to change the perception to be fully positive. He, rather, puts boredom on the assumptions of human existence, as emptiness, nothingness, and painful life, as a channel of self-awareness of *Dasein* so that it is still the passive meaning of boredom as a floating ship on the life of painfulness. The discussion of positive and active boredom is not enough.

Second, as a problem of almost all existentialists, discourses of boredom have been done at the individual level. It is quite stale to dispute if human beings are individual or collective, but the experience of learners in school, as the process of growth rather than adults, seems closer to the latter in the education field. Many failed pedagogic theories, which assume

human beings as individuals, show that learner's experiences are built and grown by collective activities and even their identities, and happiness are also inter-wined in-between plural relationships which are insufficient to explain the experience of boredom as an individual process. It is the ignorance of collective human beings and the avoidance of historical phenomenon derived from the collective experience of boredom.

As for the last, related to the Heidegger's primitive perception on human existence, is the assumption of human existence running to death. It is certainly the critique to the group of *mortalist*. Human beings are definitely the existence going to death from birth so that it is easy to feel the emptiness and meaninglessness of life. In the condition, it is inevitable to avoid the role of existential experience making human existence awaking the reality running to death. What can be the educational meaning of boredom in the mortal human condition? Is the boredom which a child feels really the experience of death? If a child is the dying existence, what is the meaning of the vivid dynamics of children's activities? How can we explain a child's active and explosive boredom if they are a dying existence?

A child's experience of boredom is the willing expression of aliveness and the condition of activity rather than just the awareness of emptiness or nothingness of *Dasein*. A child is the continual living existence as well as the existence running to death. A child is more relational than individual, dynamic and active than passive and lonely, and natal than mortal. This study is primitively a criticism of the Heideggerian/*Mortalitist* understanding of human condition.

3. *Conducivists*: boredom has its own meaning, value, function, and possibility

3.1. *Condūcĕre* and *Conducivists*

In the previous two sections, I introduced the two big streams in boredom discourses: the *Acedians* and the *Mortalitists*. The former treats boredom as the origin of all evil or the enemy of life, and the latter, as the fundamental human nature closely related to death. Because contemporary schooling basically aims at the development of human beings, it is more likely to be associated with the *Acedians*' idea. As the modern schooling system originates from the Enlightenment, it is plausible that the illuminist's idea is prevalent in the education field. Under the criticism of widespread examination-centered teaching, the efforts to investigate human existential possibility, as *Mortalitists* do, is justifiable. The struggling to build student and teacher abilities of reflective thinking in the fast changing society is definitely natural. In this moment, several questions are aroused from the before traditions.

Is boredom that bad and is it even a disease? Why we do not develop the medicine to cure it? Could there be an easier way to avoid boredom? If it is critical to philosophizing, why is it only connected to death? Can human beings philosophize only in the experience of death? How about a child? Children are commonly seen to be more bored than adults. Then, can they philosophize easier than adults? Or because they are always captured by the temporal boredom, do they have the possibility to do philosophizing or not? There are many great inventions or great achievements done for fun. How can they be explained? Can we think it is another aspect of boredom?

To answer these questions, I categorize a new group of boredom studies in this

section. I named it *Conducivists* as being neutral so involving positive perception to boredom.[1] The verb to 'conduce' has the meaning of "to lead or tend toward (a result); to aid in bringing about, contribute to, make for, further, promote, subserve" ("Conduce," 1891). The *Conducivists* are who try to understand boredom as a set of possibilities. That is, boredom is not only the experience of evil or enemy from the characteristics of death but also the concept involves the positive possibilities of creativity, productivity, reflections, and so on. In this view, boredom is a part of human nature conducive to activity, mindset, and creativity as well as an appearance of the experienced world.

The *Conducivists* try to see the functions or the meanings of boredom without any prejudices. They premise the reason of boredom existence as to not simply bother human beings but also to pursue other purposes. This group, however, does not beautify boredom. Some *action*s from boredom can result in big miseries or catastrophes as we can see from many historical accidents. Many people died by *action*s derived from boredom; as well, some volunteered to be a part of evil with a fault passion caused by boredom. It also leads people to suicide and facilitates the spread of vandalism in contemporary society. *Conducivists* try to find a balance of the perceptions, therefore, they seem to focus on positivity.

3.2. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940)

Walter Benjamin is a unique philosopher in boredom studies. He does not explain boredom

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[1] This concept derived from the discussion with Jae Park, my dissertation supervisor honorable. I have tried to find the proper expression for several years. It has happened with many philosophers openly in many conferences but finally chosen in the supervising process. I thank him for his patience, passion, thoughtfulness, and sincere consideration with my writing process.

explicitly in his writings but also uses many pages to show the phenomenon of boredom in the 18th and 19th centuries. To understand his discourse of boredom, it is necessary to start with his epistemology. Due to his epistemology, the concept of boredom is not explained sufficiently so makes readers struggle to understand the idea. His epistemology of an image shows that he is in the context of the phenomenological approach, and exposes the theory of boredom images in the process of modernization.[2] His perception of boredom is positive, interesting and beautiful as well as painful and annoying.

Benjamin argues that human beings recognize the world as 'image'. If there is an event in the world, human beings perceive it as an image. The more events occurring, the more images constructed. The many images start to make a group of images as 'imagery'. The subject experiences the events as 'image', and the continual events appear as a bulk of 'imageries'. So, they even leave our mental images, so finally, the imagery constructs memories, subjects, and the world. The world is experienced as a mode of imagery and 'Self' exists closer to the sum of imageries. If you remember a story you read at 10 years old, you can remember the images of the book rather than the detail later, languages, and logic. It is how we perceive and live in the world, and how we keep our subjects. To Benjamin, the subject, who exists as the physical body, is also a visible image in front of scenery, reality, and events.

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[2] Benjamin's theory can be confused with phenomenalism. But it has a big difference in the aspect of his concept of images. Benjamin does not reject the objective world and the influence of it. His image is not correctly related to copy or reappearance. They are not both physical and mental images, but also located in-between the images with its relative autonomy. It is not only the representation, but also not the physical images themselves. Therefore, they exist in human minds, and simultaneously have autonomy as a world, but also separated from the objective world.

Benjamin, based on this epistemology, argues the nature of modernity by the way of 'showing' rather than 'telling' under the frame/principle of montage. He reveals the ideological layer by showing the panorama of images without explanation and interpretation by the conceptual languages. This method is definitely adapted when dealing with boredom in his posthumous work 'Arcade Project' (1932/2002). He shows many different fragment images of boredom in the 18th and 19th centuries. Each fragment of boredom keeps its peculiarity but is intertwined dialectically in different times and spaces, eventually composing an imagery. As a C*onductivist*, he also recognizes the *conducivity* of boredom as well as the traditional darkness. "In which all human activity is shown to be a vain attempt to escape from boredom, but in which, at the same time, everything that was, is, and will appear as the inexhaustible nourishment of that feeling" (*Ibid*, p. 102).

Benjamin juxtaposes various images of boredom as panoramic photographs. For example, the rainy weather in Paris, the dust in revolutionary events, the scenery of salons, construction sites, labor activities, ceremony times, and so on. The images do not always cohere with each other but are also contradictory as he emphasizes the dialectic images in human epistemology. Such contradictions also appear at the starting point of the recognition of boredom with the question "what is the dialectical antithesis to boredom?" (*ibid*, p. 105), Benjamin explains boredom through the images of human activity derived from boredom: "All human activity is shown to be a vain attempt to escape from boredom" (*ibid,* p. 102), and simultaneously "Boredom is the threshold to great deeds" (*ibid,* p. 105).

Benjamin recognizes that boredom is experienced in epidemic proportions in the modern

period. There are huge phenomena as a reaction to boredom; he categorizes them into three situations of boredom. The first is 'to pass the time' which equals to killing time and to expel it; the behavior of gamblers. According to Benjamin, boredom derives from the waiting time with nothingness. Gamblers are people trying to kill time with nothingness and also trying to forget the waiting with the haziness of time. "Gambling converts time into a narcotic" (*ibid*, p. 12). The second situation is people trying to store time as a battery store: the stroller [the *flâneur*]. Boredom is not something painful but a slumber for existence. It is alike *taedium vitae* of Romans, so, it is lustrous and colorful as silk by wrapping us in our dreams. Strolling Paris and arcades in the city is as the embryo in the womb, "Existence in these spaces flows then without accent, like the events in dreams. Flânerie is the rhythmics of this slumber" (*ibid*, p. 106). The third type of people are those who wait. This person "takes in the time and renders it up in altered form—that of expectation" (*ibid*, p. 107).

In Benjamin's lens of modernity, there are many imageries as a part of the panorama of modern boredom. One of the outstanding aspects is the image of fashion—dandyism. In the modern context, Benjamin put boredom on the distinction of the individual. That is, "boredom [*Langeweile*] is always the external surface of unconscious events. Therefore, it could appear to the great dandies as a mark of distinction" (*ibid*, p. 838). Boredom works as an ornament to dandies, and it simultaneously involves unrecognized future activities. In this case, the dandyism and the fashion are not the aspect of 'new clothing', but the mental aspect of such activities. In the period of mass production, the distinction with 'clothing' is critical in the similarity of human beings. As Benjamin emphasizes the production rather than the consumption, boredom as the dandies' distinction could be the symbol of difference so it

implies 'better'. "Boredom-as index to participation in the sleep of the collective. Is this the reason it seems distinguished, so that the dandy makes a show of it?" (*ibid*, p. 108).

The next image of Benjamin's boredom is in the *labor* place. He shows how the mass production system makes factory laborers being put into the misery of boredom with Lenin's Sisyphus metaphor. The factory laborer's life is burdened alike the continual and endless rolling down of a rock. The development of intelligence and instrument pushes the working place to a "true hell of boredom" (*ibid*, p. 109), so this expanding modernization process makes Europe as a society of depression. His connection between boredom and modernity hits a peak with 'ideological boredom'. The hell of boredom in the working place and the epidemic pathological phenomenon in society is not just an inevitable civilization or development process. Rather, the by-products of exploitation of upper classes, and misery from the adaptation process. Modern capitalism, which has pushed people into the factory system, is to sacrifice the public's ideological boredom for the small but rich group's leisure.

Benjamin shows the images of boredom with the title of "Boredom, Eternal Return". 'Eternal return' is the fundamental concept of Friedrich Nietzsche, which implies that one thing returns to the same thing in the constant changing life because the now is the eternity of the past and future as a core essence. In 'The Arcade Project', the posthumous work of Benjamin, he did not connect the eternal recurrence part to boredom clearly. However, it is not impossible to guess his main argument line.

The narrative imagery of the historical events, the world, and the cosmos are recurring everlastingly. The transcendental and supernatural truth gives the sublime boredom to human

beings. "Nothing bores the ordinary man more than the cosmos" (*Ibid*, p. 102). In this eternal recurrence, human beings live in his/her now eternity as a 'super-human'. "The universe is a site of lingering catastrophes" but also the "monotony feeds on the new" (*ibid*, p. 111). The boredom and renewing exists in now and the essence of eternity, and the recognition of the recurrence are overcome in the misery of the dandies. In modern images, it is exposure as painful and ornament, misery and the sublime of distinction, and the object of endurance and pleasurable relaxation, that exists now and here as the core of eternity.

Benjamin's idea is unique in trying to show the images of modern boredom by showing the sceneries of 18th century Paris. The image which is chosen and how it is shown is the way in which Benjamin explains modern boredom. In his panorama, modern humans are bored, and they try to avoid it. They go to salons to overcome overflow boredom, and they also gamble to forget the pain of boredom. Dandies are walking around the city of light to boast off their ornamental boredom, and the arcades are expanded to fill the aesthetic desire of boredom. On the other side, laborers are keeping their miserable life like Sisyphus; human beings become a part of a machine under the violence of ideological boredom.

Despite the fact that Benjamin did not proceed with the theory of boredom, his way of 'showing' images reveals enough about the characteristics of modern boredom. As a *Conducivist*, his idea of boredom implies the conducive possibilities of boredom. Especially, connecting his recognition of boredom for the new start or the threshold for the new with the presence of boredom in the eternal recurrence clearly shows his *couducivity*. Boredom works for starting a new, and the new is the essence of now in the 'eternal return'.

3.3. Koichiro Kokubun

Since academic consideration about boredom has increased, the *Conducivists* idea is also expanding. One of the philosophers worth paying attention to is Kokubun Koichiro. He is a Japanese scholar dealing with boredom in the wide area like the sociology, economics as well as the philosophy. His book 'The Ethics of Leisure and Boredom' (Koichiro, 2014) introduces the discourses of boredom and interprets contemporary society by adapting the discourses. Especially, his critical upgrade of the discourse of Heiddeger is quite unique and plausible. Koichiro's concept of boredom has enough substance to be categorized into the *Conducivists*. In this section, I focus on his uniqueness and contribution as a *Conducivist.*

Related to the origination of boredom, Koichiro suggests a unique idea different from the mainstream boredom studies. There is a big discussion about the origination of boredom and whether it is a modern product or a human innate nature. Koichiro, however, does not belong to any of these but explains his own idea following the way of genealogy. Borrowing from the idea of 'settlement revolution' of Nishida Masaki, Koichiro argues that boredom derived from human settlement. According to the archeologist, the early erect bipedal humankind seems to have started 400,000 years ago, and humans set up their first settlement 10,000 years ago. It implies settlement is a quite recent incident comparing to the length of the nomadic life. Koichiro, however, points out that the traditional philosophies are all based on the 'settlement centrism' as if human beings settled down from the start of the species.

Koichiro explains that the settlement process leads the revolutionary changes of human life. In nomadic life, human beings did not need to be mindful of many things. There was

enough food in the environment, and if it was not enough, they could move to another place for food supplies. They did not need to have strong and big houses and could live as a member of nature. However, the incident of settlement changed everything drastically. First, they had to start cultivating for their food supply[3]. In turn, they had to build strong and good houses and storages to keep the food and surplus. They started making efforts to protect their property and establish many rules and laws to keep themselves from criminals, such as stealing, robbery, and violence. For hygiene, they started to think of trash and excreta problems. To stay in a place requests human beings to clean their trash and excreta up well, and also arrange the surplus in a proper way. The settlement of nomads scaled down the living space and placed the experiences of human beings. Settlers seldom move, so they expand and complexify their psychological and cultural space to use their space ability. The development of civilizations is also expanding human space ability to the artificial world.

Koichiro argues that the changes from the settlement aroused the experience of boredom, and the phenomenon has been deeper and more widespread with the development of civilization. The oblivion of the nomadic experience leads contemporary boredom studies,

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[3] This part is controversial in the historical fact aspect. Kokubun (*ibid*, pp. 69-91) argues against the mainstream view of human history as regard to the relationship between settlement and agriculture. In his opinion, food production is the result of settlement rather than the cause of it. Additionally, the impact of settlement has been under-estimated in history, because agricultural revolution is over-emphasized. He rejects the basic sequence of settlement process—a nomadism, food production, and starting Sedentism—and suggests the reversed order—nomadism, Sedentism, and food production. The Jōmon period (縄文時代, Jōmon jidai) is chosen as evidence of his argument, it is the settlement period in Japan without agriculture. In this study, I try to focus on his criticism on the settlement-centered view point rather than the detail discussions. It is the undeniable fact that we are in the context of the settlement-centered world view, therefore, to think about the nomadic nature of human beings seems significant as a part of our life. Hence, the half-nomadic life seems to be expanding in modern life with the development of technology and capitalism. It might be a strong method to interpret modern and post-modern society.

and as a result, boredom studies have a strong tendency based on settlement centrism. He suggests Heidegger as the definite example of settlement centric theory. Heidegger thinks that the nature of human beings is the 'dwelling'. Human beings are the necessarily dying existence so always feeling anxiety and meaninglessness. S/he could live in God's world in the pre-modern period, but after God lost the position of almighty, humans started to need the ground to support their two legs. It was the 'world', so human beings started to 'dwell' in the world as the 'being-in-the-world [*In-der-welt-sein*]'. 'Dwelling' is one of the fundamental modes of human existence, so it becomes the starting point of modern human life.

Koichiro's main contribution to boredom studies is on the criticism of Heidegger. He argues Heidegger is the definite example of the settlement centrist, thus, boredom is also discussed based on his investigation on human beings as a dweller. Koichiro thinks if we just put aside the settler's perception, many things can be explained simpler and easier. Human beings still have the nature of nomads as well as one of the settlers. This idea of the origination of boredom is continuously fed to his further discourse of boredom.

Koichiro's *conducivity* emerges in his interpretation of Heidegger. He reduces the weight of the profound boredom and extracts the importance of the second form of boredom. I introduced Heidegger's three forms of boredom in the previous section: boredom being initiated by something; boredom with something and passing the time belonging to it; and, profound boredom as 'it is boring for one' (Heidegger, 1983/1995). Koichiro also summarizes Heidegger's boredom and the relationships of the three forms of boredom simply but clearly; if a wo/man chose to be a slave of daily work to avoid the profound boredom, s/he

experiences the first form of boredom. If s/he chose the division to avoid the first boredom, s/he gets the second form of boredom. In the third form of boredom, *Dasein* faces the moment of awareness of himself with *fundamental determination*, it leads to the realization of the freedom of *Dasein*.

Many scholars have focused on the third form of Heideggerian boredom as an important characteristic of modern being. Koichiro, however, doubts the value and the role of the profound boredom, because Heidegger did not explain how *Dasein* will be and should do after the moment of *determination*. Koichiro, additionally, points out the close relationship and similarity between the first and the third forms of boredom. In the first form of boredom, human beings become a slave in their daily life. This life can be easier and more convenient to wo/man than doing efforts for awakening and *determination* through the profound boredom. The wo/man does not need to listen to the voice of 'it is boring for one' and can just keep the life of a slave. In addition, the *Dasein*, who is already determined to get the freedom of being, can meet the same situation being in the first form of boredom. The human becomes the slave of a work, which may be led by his former *determination*.

After the criticism of the profound boredom, Koichiro comments about the implications of the second form of boredom—being bored with something and passing the time belongs to it. He thinks that the second boredom is humane while the first and third form of boredom are slavish. The second boredom is entwined with the diversions in a special way, and also being with the activities. A human cannot always be pleasant and happy in the second form of boredom, but it is significant as it gives an opportunity to see him/herself. The second form of

boredom definitely reveals the human life itself being inseparable from boredom. Since humankind started living as a settler, boredom with something has become human nature.

Koichiro questions whether it is desirable or not living in the second form of boredom. To conclude, it seems that there are balance and stability of *Dasein* in the second boredom. Human beings face boredom as a necessity since 'settlement', and this fact has facilitated the development of civilization and culture. Art was born to decorate our settled places and instruments as well as to care for the basic necessities of life. A human being has squeezed and collected the wisdom to invent activities prospering our minds with boredom and in the time of boredom.

Human beings normally stay in the second form of boredom and are sometimes swinging between the first and the third boredom. So, the life of human beings is painful because living with boredom is normal human life. Then, are there any possibilities to avoid boredom? Koichiro argues it with Heidegger's idea of the 'environmental world of animal'. Humans are moving from an environmental world to another constantly. Living in the second form of boredom and trying to be diverse with various activities in many places. Living with boredom and pleasure is human life. However, we sometimes face boredom when the environmental life is broken. A human can be trapped into an object through events, situations, or art pieces. This moment, the being only can 'think' about the 'object'. 'Thinking' is the state trapped by something so humans are just being absorbed by the new environmental world emerging by the object. If the existence habituated to fall into an environmental world calls this animal,

this can be the moment of 'becoming animal'. That is, the way to avoid the boredom of normal human life is to become an animal.

Koichiro emphasizes that it is important to make an effort not to be a slave by falling into 'the first boredom = the third boredom' situation. Human beings have the ability to move from an environmental world to another world as a settled nomad so we can easily accept the breaking of our environmental world. Human beings can create a new world with new thinking by breaking the existing environmental world. This creation also affects the other's world so that humans recreate new environmental worlds interactively as daily life. There are overflowing things to push us to think in the world so we can accept the things by the learning and experience of thinking. We can wait for the becoming-animal by enjoying human life.

To sum up, Koichiro insists that human beings are nomad and settlers all at once so rejects Heidegger's simple assumption of human beings—a dying existence inhabited in the world. Human life is there normally with pleasure and boredom and swinging between deep boredom and the simplest boredom for diversion. We have the nomadic ability to move from an environmental word to another. We also can breakout out of the existing environmental world and create a new world. We can live as a human and also an animal with the ability of a nomad. Thus, Koichiro can be categorized as the *Conducivist*.

Last but not least, several questions about Koichiro's idea come to mind as a possible *Conducivist*. These questions not only can be criticism against his idea but also the problems, which I have to solve in my boredom theory. Koichiro repeatedly comments that our life is

painful because of the coexistence of boredom. By the way, can we be happy or pleasant in boredom or not? In modern society, many workers and students suffer from busy schedules. The moment we become a part of modern society, it isolates us and makes us busy to madness. In this situation, many people have the nostalgia of leisure time and even boredom. The mind 'I want to be bored' is impossible if it only exists as pain. As a score of studies suggest, boredom may have functions for further achievements or creativity of students. Can we regard this as a pain? If we only have to accept boredom is always with us, is this really always disgustingly painful?

3.4. Peter Toohey (1951-)

Peter Toohey is one of the most outstanding scholars trying to reveal the positive aspects of boredom by synthesizing and assailing the theories prior to him. In his later work 'Boredom: a lively history' (2011), Toohey deals with issues of boredom studies in broad areas, such as literature, psychology, economics, sociology, philosophy, and fine art. He draws on historical documents, paintings, sculptures, and constructions as well as academic studies. As a result, he succeeds to provoke controversy in the field as a member of the *Conducivists*.

Toohey's discourse starts with a criticism of the mainstream studies of boredom, especially against the *Mortalitists*. He points out that, prior boredom studies have excessively focused on existential boredom and treat the simple and temporal boredom worthless. In other words, the discourses, as of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Svendsen, have ignored the basic experience of boredom since they treat boredom seriously and want to put a noble meaning on boredom so they concentrate on, the so-called, 'the existential boredom'. Toohey,

however, argues that this deep boredom is not a real experience but only an object of discussion, so the first-dimensional boredom is more meaningful to our life.

> What is existential boredom? I don't believe that this brief survey has made an answer any easier to formulate. There are many similarities between acedia, melancholia, Nausea, and the tradition of seasickness. Are they sufficient for us to say, yes, here is existential boredom? Or, rather, is the concept such a broad one, so general in its application, so umbrella-like in its inclusiveness, that it becomes a chimera? My opinion is that this is so. There may be too many dissimilarities between acedia, melancholia, and Nausea for them to have clear ties within the lived experience. I suspect that this tradition is more the product of the intellect." (*ibid*, pp. 135-136)

Toohey even insists that the existential boredom might not be a kind of boredom. In his opinion, "Whatever the actual nature of existential boredom, it does not seem to share the emotional nature of simple boredom. Perhaps the similarities go no deeper than a shared name. That similarity may owe more to happenstance than to any profound psychological similarities" (*ibid*, p. 34). After rejecting the relevancy between the simple and profound boredom, he puts the former on emotion and the latter on mood. Toohey thinks that simple boredom has a value as much as emotion has, and existential boredom, although we do not know what it is clearly, are just the by-products of pedantic discussions.

Toohey's idea of boredom as an emotion is very decisive as the starting point of the *Conducivists* idea of boredom. He tries to connect boredom to emotion with the ideas of emotion scholars, such as Robert Plutchik (1980), William Miller (1997), and Antonio

Damasio (2003). To emotion researchers, negative emotions are not negative to human beings. Every emotion has meanings and roles and is rather helpful to survival. In the same context, if we look at an excrement of an animal or a carcass, we feel disgusted because they are positioned in the opposite side of survival. That is, disgust is an emotion causing human behavior toward the side of survival. Toohey treats boredom as a kind of disgust or mild disgust. If it is, boredom is an avoidance reaction to the 'disgusting situation' so it "protects us in the same way that disgust does" (*ibid*, p. 33).

In the same vein, boredom does not need to be cured if it is an emotion so beneficial to survival. Like disgust, boredom is a natural adaptive emotion rather than a disease, and it has its own values and usages. What we have to do is "to follow the advice of the emotion and to walk away from the situation that is provoking it" (*ibid*, p. 174). Boredom plays a role of an early warning signal for possible threatening situations. It is helpful to human existence by awakening individuals in dangerous situations, by protecting them from 'social toxins', and by leading them to further activities.

It is a long-standing debate whether boredom is a natural emotion or a modern product. This is similar to the debate of origination of emotion; Toohey comparatively explains the origination of boredom with the discussion in emotion studies. Toohey put the group, which assumes boredom as an innate emotion, into the 'essentialists'. In the essentialists' view, human beings experience boredom since the species starts, so it is not different from what animals feel. Toohey categorizes another group, which thinks boredom is a modern product, into the 'constructivists'. According to the constructivists, boredom is a reaction to the

environment and human beings are newly experiencing it in history. The social and environmental changes are the clear factors, especially modernity is the key origination of modern wo/man's boredom. Toohey does not choose any side of these psychologists' categorization, but suggests the idea of 'rediscovery'.

> Humans always have had the capacity for this emotion, I believe, but not all societies enable or require humans to experience boredom. To adopt the terminology of the philosopher John Searle: boredom may be regularly *rediscovered*, rather than *invented*. This notion of rediscovery may offer a more nuanced course between the two hostile extremes of constructivism and essentialism. (*ibid*, p. 156)

Despite the fact that human beings could have felt boredom from primary times, it has been re-discovered in the context of social and historical changes. To support it, Toohey explains the correlation between language and recognition. He thinks human recognition is not always linear to language albeit it seems the same. That is, a lack of words does not legitimize non-existence of the phenomenon. He exemplifies it with the case of 'defeat'; the noun 'defeat' starts to be seen from the 1600s, but it does not imply that the English army had never been defeated until the time. The old English might use another expression for the case of 'being defeated'. Toohey emphasizes that boredom is the same case. The words tedious, ennui, and boredom start appearing from the sixteenth century, however, these words not guarantee the non-existence of boredom in the pre-modern era. We are now living in this period, and we are rediscovering the boredom phenomenon in the modern context.

Toohey tries to investigate the usage of boredom, and two of the core usages are reflection and creativity. He connects boredom with mental ability not just of geniuses but also in daily life and classrooms. A research study in USA (cited *ibid*, p. 185) is suggested to show that boredom is helpful in order to push students into reflection and introspecting. It means that boredom leads powerful and positive mental activities. Boredom arouses the feeling of dissatisfaction against monotonous opinions or stale concepts and brings students to the critical and contemplative state. This aspect of boredom also can be a strong stimulation to boost up student's creativity. In the classroom, students can experience deliberation or daydreaming when bored, then, it also can facilitate imagining alternatives. The process is positive to classroom activities by refreshing and activating students' minds.

His efforts to associate boredom with self-reflection and creativity seems natural. In the moment of nothingness or business, boredom has the same mental process to introspect the self or to understand the situation in a whole picture. In meditation, humans can exist as an individual and also can contemplate his/her position as a member of a community. Wo/man exist as the Subject of the world, and simultaneously, also as part of the social and historical context. We are existing as both being-for-itself [*pour-soi*] and being-in-itself [*en-soi*]. Understanding 'Self' itself and 'Self in the world' are the starting points of human development and jumping from the present state.

Toohey argues that his emphasis on boredom's value and function do not signify that boredom is the panacea of every problem. It is true that boredom is definitely painful and hard to endure. His point is that conventional studies have put weight on negative aspects too

much without considering their implications and possibilities. And he is finding positive possibilities from the nature of boredom as a kind of emotion. Therefore, requiring points are to recognize that we are living with boredom as other emotions, and to learn how to deal with boredom. For this, Toohey suggests many ways to discard boredom. Interestingly, what he suggests are very common and ordinary: such as doing aerobic exercise, experiencing various things, listening to music, challenging mental activities and spending time fully. His effort to turn the view of boredom seems not easy to develop to activities.

Toohey is, for me, a *Conducivist* because he deals with possibilities of boredom. As commented before, he starts his conducive discourse by criticizing profound boredom. He does not agree with many *Mortalists'* ideas with existential boredom and rejects the correlations with temporal boredom, profound boredom, melancholy, depression, and other emotional crises. By the way, can we just accept his criticism without deeper theoretical discussion? Toohey differs with the *Mortalistists* on their human achievement, just with a simple discussion. Is this possible and desirable to reject the deep theories in a simple way? Svendsen's answer is worth listening to.

Regarding Toohey's presumption, Svendsen's (2017) dispute is very firm and clear. First, Svendsen points out that Toohey's concept is 'raw emotion', different from recognition. In Svendsen's view, pure emotion gives birth to the negative thinking to the existential boredom which is "a category whose basis is more intellectual than experiential" (Toohey, 2011, p. 6). It is controversial whether Toohey's emotion is raw or not, however, a point remains. Is it true that profound boredom is only the conceptual and intellectual idea apart from human

experience? Toohey answers that he cannot find similarities between simple and profound boredom, and even it is hard to identify the existence of boredom. However, as Heidegger said, it is the profound one which even cannot be exemplified. It is the ground mood of modern wo/man, so it seldom reveals its existence but always affects our lives. Is this the proper way to seek the ground mood with the emotionalist's empirical eyes?

Furthermore, Svendsen answers the 'no-similarity' argument that 'meaninglessness' is the core factor intertwining the two boredoms. Instead, Toohey does not talk about meaninglessness; I think it is because Toohey treats boredom as emotion. 'Meaning' seems closer to reason or rationality than emotion. When we are talking about 'meaningful', it is not just a feeling but related to personal growth or development. 'Meaning' is far from Toohey's concept of boredom. In the same vein, he rejects the relationship between boredom and suicide. In his opinion, suicide is derived from emotional painfulness, therefore, connection between boredom and suicide is unacceptable. The connection only makes suicide lightly recognized. As an emotion, boredom does not have room to be intertwined with meaninglessness for Toohey. Additionally, Toohey even states that doing a 'purposeless activity' is sometimes effective to discard boredom. To avoid boredom, "the activities must have not an end in themselves" (Toohey, 2011, p. 182). In my opinion, Toohey may answer that 'meaninglessness' is the accurate factor making profound boredom as intellectual. Svendsen's answer could not be accepted by Toohey on account of the gap of categorization.

If then, do we have to abandon existential boredom? This is my question to Toohey. Why could not Toohey accept the existence of profound boredom? As a modern being, can he not

feel the inarticulatable but definite existence a latent boredom? How does he think of the

bored mood in busyness? How can he explain boredom in over-interactive schooling lives? Is

this really just derived from a monotonous or repetitive environment? What is the meaning of

enduring boredom in modern times? Is there any reason why boredom exists in this way? His

way to dump intellectual discourse seems quite irresponsible. Or as questioning several times,

does he really think boredom does not exist?

Chapter 3: Reconceptualization of boredom

In the second chapter, I reviewed and categorized the extant discourses based on the different perspectives of boredom. Among them, Heidegger's discourse is the most dominant, and its influence is strong in the education field. His account of boredom through an existentialist prism is referred to as the 'experience of death', and the most common concept in education. Boredom is, thus, a profound experience connected to contemplation and reflection of the human existential pathway to death. Instead, this study suggests the reconceptualization of boredom theory in education with a post-Heideggerian approach, drawing on the corpus of the philosophy of Hannah Arendt.

According to Haladyn and Gardiner (2017), Arendt can be identified as an important thinker in boredom studies. Although she does not deal with boredom directly as a separate topic, boredom qua human condition occupies an important position in her existentialism and *action* philosophy, in particular, with the interpretation of *labor*. Although Arendt's concept of boredom has elements drawn from both *Acedians* and *Mortalitists*, I think it is possible that her idea could be developed to *Conducivists'* based on her theory of human beings. It shall be argued that her existentialism is more *Conducivitists* than *Acedians* or *Mortalitists*. The mismatch between her existentialism with discourses of boredom might derive from the fact that boredom was not her main topic but a secondary one in order to explain the corelationship between human nature and historical massacres. She might not have known the potential of her human theory for the philosophy of boredom.

This chapter aims to review Arendt's scattered references to boredom and interpret and intertwine them with her existentialism in order to gain further insights into the boredom phenomenon in education. In my view, a modified Arendtian approach can be a milestone to reinterpret the much-demonized boredom in the education field. Arendt's idea has a strong possibility to explain *conducivity* of boredom in pedagogy. This chapter starts with Arendt's hermeneutics of human conditions and activities. This first subsection will be followed by the presentation of Arendt's explicit/textual references to boredom, such as Greek slavery and in contrast with the characteristics of *labor* in modern society. The final section will be devoted to the conceptualization and categorization of boredom based on Arendt's understanding of human conditions and nature—*Natality*.

1. Arendt's theory of human activity

This subsection deals with Arendt's discourse of human conditions and activities. Explaining Arendt's definition of human conditions and activities is a prerequisite for understanding her philosophical anthropology. As Arendt confesses in her 'The Human Condition' (1958/1998, p. 79), her concept of human activities is unique and unusual. It is different from mainstream discourses and penetrates into her whole life writings.

1.1. Human conditions and activities

Arendt categorizes three fundamental human activities: *labor* [*arbeiten*], *work* [*herstellen*], and *action* [*handeln*], and suggests the corresponding human condition: *life*, *worldness* and

plurality. She starts with the simple explanation of human conditions and activities as a premise for her further discourses.

> Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body (…) The human condition of labor is life itself. (…) Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not embedded in, and whose mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life cycle. (…) The human condition of work is worldliness. (…) Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of thing or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality." (*ibid*, p. 7)

Labor is the activity appropriate to biological processes. Human beings need food and energy for survival, so this activity is inherent to the physical condition of being. Arendt defines *labor* as the 'definite activity for survival'; thus, it can be from agriculture, hunting, stock raising and plant collecting in the old times to various job activities in modern times. Supplying nutrition is inevitable whenever wo/men exist, therefore, *labor* always has been with human history, however, the phenomenon of *labor* has appeared variously in history. Arendt considers the modernization process as the extension of *labor* in society (*ibid*, p. 85). She explains the appearance of *labor* following historical discourses.

In Greek Antiquity, *labor* was restricted to the slave class. Slavery has ever since been the institution which imposes the burden of *labor* on the lowest class for the benefit of other classes in *Polis*. A freeman or fabricator in Antiquity was free from *labor*, and they were allowed to get involved in constructing or managing the world. Although they could live out

of *labor* due to the slavery system, for the same reason, they treated *labor* as contemptible. It was, therefore, the characteristic of *labor*, which turned some human beings into slaves. *Labor* is a natural need because wo/man possesses a body to feed, dress and rest in order to exist. Nutrition is an absolute need to survive, so, all wo/men without exception were in a way slaves of natural necessity. *Labor* is, thus, a necessary human condition although ancient philosophers such as Aristotle, in the 'Nicomachean Ethics', regarded slaves as non-human beings.

In modern times, the status of *labor* has changed. *Labor* started being glorified since Locke argued that *labor* is the source of wealth. This change led Adam Smith to accept the same idea as the base of the book 'The Wealth of Nations'. These intellectual changes made *labor* an issue of the public realm. By the time of Karl Marx, Arendt argues, human beings were considered as *animal laborans,* which led to the idea that wo/men are to some extent brought into existence or created through *labor* (*ibid*, p. 86). In modernity, the dividing line between human activities and products is blurred, and *labor* gradually takes a dominant, if not a hegemonic, position in society. The development of *labor* tools leads to mechanized agriculture and factory-centered industrialization. Master mechanics are pushed to abandon their mastery and they are given repeated and demeaning simplistic *labor* as a result of Fordism and its prototypical fragmented routine tasks. As a result, every producing activity becomes alike *labor*, and society becomes a consumer society.

Arendt's criticism starts from and focuses on this victory of *labor* in modern times. She does not miss out the point that *labor* is absolutely necessary to human life. However, as

Adam Smith and Karl Marx hoped, *labor* became the dominant source of collective wealth or common wealth and changed its position from the private realm to the public realm. This also implies that consumption meets no limitation in desire. Arendt, thus, says, "We live in a society of laborers" (*ibid*, p. 126), populated by greedy consumers. The *problématique* of this sort of *labor* and the consumer's society is not just the fact that we have enough wealth, but can unlimitedly consume and emancipate the *labor* class from exploitation. The main *problématique* is that "we have almost succeeded in leveling all human activities to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance" (*ibid*, p. 126). So, *homo politicus* or *homo faber* is hard to exist in modern society, wo/men have become a laborer. In the name of modernity, Arendt further elaborates, "Whatever we do, we are supposed to do for the sake of 'making a living'; such is the verdict of society, and the number of people (…) has decreased rapidly" (*ibid*, pp. 126-127).

As a second, Arendt distinguishes *work* from other activities "in their worldly, objective quality" (*ibid*, p. 89). Human beings in *labor existence* are unable to avoid the finiteness of life. Limitation of life is, therefore, an inextricable condition of *labor*, and it leads humans to aspire to eternity. An activity which shows this inevitable desire for eternity is precisely *work* in the Arendtian sense. *Work* does not relate to survival, however, it helps human beings to express their identity and carve themselves into the world. "Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings" (*ibid*, p. 7). That is, the worldliness becomes the condition of *work* and, the other way around, *work* becomes the constructing process of the world.

To show the clear difference between *labor* and *work*, Arendt uses a symbolic phrase: "The labour of our body and the work of our hands" (*ibid*, p. 79). It does not mean that hands are separated from bodies, and *labor* is possible without hands. It gives weight to the artificially built world through *work*. Bodies exist through biological processes and *labor* is a part of nature; hands build the artificial world to sustain a permanence of being. The world becomes, thus, a more stable and safe dwelling place necessary for human beings with a dying and limited body.

The world in this sense shows that human beings are not subservient of nature but co-exist or even compete with nature. To Arendt, the world is not just a part of the material universe but a whole made by the *work* of human hands. So, the purpose of *work* is to materialize human worldliness. The worldliness implies that human existence depends on the objective world. The objectivity of body is guaranteed by continuity and stability, then *work* keeps it by continually changing the natural earth: "Without a world between men and nature, there is eternal movement, but no objectivity" (*ibid*, p. 137).

According to Arendt (*ibid*, p. 144), the world is not nature that we face without any consciousness but objectivity of the worldness. *Animal laborans* is a servant of nature but *homo faber*, man in *work,* exists as the ruler and dominator of the earth. *Work* has a clear starting and finishing point contrary to *labor* that can only aspire for infinity. Workers can start doing things with their own image, and also can break their artifacts at anytime. "*Homo faber* is indeed a lord and master, not only because he is the master or has set himself up as the master of all nature but because he is master of himself and his doings" (*ibid*, p. 144). In this aspect, workers are freer than laborers and have individual subjectivity.

Work has purpose. That is, when *homo faber*'s *work* always towards an end. *Work* is an activity, a process and a means to achieve a goal. Purpose is the end of the *work,* but also motivation at the starting point: "To have a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end is the mark of fabrication" (*ibid*, p. 143). Furthermore, the process of fabrication is an instrument of the purpose. The purpose organizes and justifies the instrumentality and an achieved purpose turns to a new method for a new purpose: "All ends are bound to be of short duration and to be transformed into means for some further ends" (*ibid*, p. 154).

During *work*, *homo faber* is isolated from others, "The activity of work, for which isolation from others is a necessary prerequisite" (*ibid*, p. 212). But it does not mean there is no the public realm in *work*. *Work* "is connected with this space of appearances in many ways (…) Workmanship, therefore, may be an unpolitical way of life, but it certainly is not an anti-political one" (*ibid*, p. 212). Human beings are not just the makers of the artificial world and artifacts; they also exchange their artifacts. In this aspect, *homo faber* can be involved into the public realm, albeit s/he is different from the nature of *homo-politicus*. It does not mean that the world as a public realm is apolitical; rather, the world is the "space for politics" (Arendt, 2013/2016, p. 59).

The definite area of public realm for *work* is the exchange market. *Homo faber* brings artifacts that are products of their fabrication to the exchange market. This public realm of the exchange market is different from the political public ream. The core of the exchange market is the product of *work*, but the process of exchange of produce does not show the character of *homo faber*. Thus, the production becomes standardized for showing as "conspicuous

production" and "conspicuous consumption" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 162). So, the motivation which brings *homo faber* into the public realm is interest in the product rather than other human beings. The driving force of the market is connected to the power of the exchange of products, and this crucial process occurs in isolation rather than in human relationships by *action* and speech. This paradox of the public realm of fabrication and *work* appears in Arendt's term of 'world alienation'.

Arendt treats the *work* of art as the closest to worldness because of its outstanding permanence (*ibid*, p. 167). She uses the adjective 'permanent' rather than 'durable' because the *work* of art settles into the worldness and stability with the permanence. Arendt insists the origination of *work* of art is human thinking. Many art-pieces are produced but not every art-piece becomes a part of worldness. The usefulness, exchange value, and human desire are hindrances to make an art-piece a part of worldness. The *work* of art is the materialization of human pursuance to permanence, so it cannot be the usable.

As the last human condition and activity, Arendt suggests plurality and *action*. *Action* is one of the core concepts to Arendt as we can see in the title of her best-known *work* "The Human Condition" (the title of German version is '*Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben*' which means 'active life and the human condition'). In the same line with *labor* and *work*, the concept of *action* is unique in the Arendtian corpus. *Action* is the "activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" (*ibid*, p. 7). Naturally, *action* is positioned under the human condition of plurality as we all are living in-between others. In other words, plurality is the condition of the *action*, "the fact that not Man, talking

to himself in the dialogue of solitude, but men, talking and communicating with each other, inhabit the earth" (Arendt, 1970, p. 90).

The reason why *action* is core to Arendt's thought is that it is both the existential direction and ontological appearance of human beings. *Labor* and *work* are necessary to wo/men, however, Arendt treats *action* as the most prominent activity making humans humanlike. On this point, Arendt can be thought of as being in the tradition of Aristotle. When Aristotle divides human beings and animals, the ability to engage in political activity was a criterion. To Arendt, human existence is not just for survival, but also for humans to be world constructors and constant creators of human interactions. When Arendt explains the characteristics of *action*, she relates them to the political concept of Aristotle's *zoon politikon*. Many keywords in her theory of *action* clearly show this connection, such as speech and *action*, the web of relationship, uniqueness and uniformity, interdependence, the private realm and public realm, political relationship. All these terms will be explained later in the context of boredom and schooling systems.

Among the characteristics of *action*, it is pinpointable that Arendt equates speech with *action*, viz., word is deed. In common sense, *action* and speech seem separated, but Arendt argues, "speechless action would no longer be action" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 178). I interpret this idea derived from her intuition that the primordial and humanistic *action* is speech, which involves meaning and identity. When an *action* is meaningful, it is related to the subject problem as an actor, a doer, and speaker. Language also becomes meaningful when it comes with *action*. "No other human performance requires speech to the same extent as action. In all

other performances, speech plays a subordinate role, as a means of communication or a mere accompaniment to something that could also be achieved in silence" (*ibid*, p. 179). So, when human *action* roles as a human activity, it is always with language.

The most important feature of *action* is that it is closest to a foundational human condition—*natality*. Unlike Heidegger who emphasizes 'death', Arendt focuses on 'birth'. To Arendt, wo/men is the birthing and natal rather than dying and mortal. *Action* corresponds to the fact of birth, and the birthing characteristic of human beings is revealed through *action*. Details will be discussed in Section 3.3 on the process of conceptualizing boredom.

1.2. Vita activa **and thinking**

The term *vita activa* (lit. active life) naturally leads us to question about its opposites: *vita passiva* and *vita complavita*. Traditionally, human beings are considered as leading a twofold existence, that of body and consciousness. The philosophy on body usually has dealt with human instinct, emotion, and activity. From the Ancient Greeks time to the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment, the body was looked down upon and ontologically placed under the *ratio*-reason. Consciousness related to reason, rationality and contemplation were treated as the primordial human faculties.

Arendt, however, describes *vita activa* quite differently. It derives from her unique concept of *action*, thus, "*vita activa* presupposes that the concern underlying all its activities is not the same as and is neither superior nor inferior to the central concern of the *vita contemplativa*" (*ibid*, p. 17). Traditionally, contemplation has been treated as superior to human activities. However, Arendt denies this distinction. For Arendt, active life and

contemplative life are not separable, and *action* should be with thinking while keeping its humanity. When active life loses the contemplative life's thinking then human life becomes fully active life: "Only when the *vita activa* had lost *its* point of reference in the *vita contemplativa* could *it* become active life in the full sense of the word" (*ibid*, p. 320). Since Socrates separated philosophical life and political life, the separation of thinking life and active life has been a widespread tradition, while contemplation has become a priority (Jung, 2016, p. 214). To Arendt, this mutually exclusive idea is the origin of totalitarianism around World War II and the Jewish massacre by the Nazis.

The reason Arendt denies the superiority of reason is that she recognizes political life as an important form of *vita activa*. Furthermore, she denies *action* without contemplation because she recognizes such *action* leads into totalitarianism. Arendt started to philosophically link 'thinking' with action from the judgment of Eichmann—a war criminal—in Jerusalem (May 29th 1962). According to Arendt (1963/2006), Eichmann, who worked as a Nazi guard, appeared to her as normal and even banal rather than stupid or evil. In other words, an evil deed does not depend on evilness. To the evildoing of Eichmann, the evilness was not a necessary condition but, rather, evildoing was a trifle, which needs neither a conditional nor any thinking, hence, 'the banality of evil': "The humdrum of military service, that was something I[Eichmann] couldn't stand, day after day always the same, over and over again the same" (*ibid*, p.35). Eichmann's comments that boredom lead him starting the position does not mean his evil acting is derived from boredom. Possibly the boredom in his deep inside of consciousness, however, connects to disgusts and it expanded to totalitarianism in Arendt's consideration. For Arendt, totalitarianism would be caused by

damaging the faculties of thinking and judgment.

> I was struck by a manifest shallowness in the doer that made it impossible to race the uncontestable evil of his deeds to any deeper level of roots or motives. The deeds were monstrous, but the doer (…) was quite ordinary, commonplace, and neither demonic nor monstrous. (…) and the only notable characteristic one could detect in his past behavior as well as in his behavior during the trial and throughout the pretrial police examination was something entirely negative: it was not stupidity but thoughtlessness." (*Arendt, 1978*, p. 4)

What Arendt saw from Eichmann's interview is 'freewheeling' (i.e., acting irresponsibly) yet through 'functioning'. Arendt identified 'functioning' as the leading power of *action* without thinking; it is an abnormal mode of *action* and a feeling of pleasure (Arendt, 2013/2016, p. 77). Human beings, in the process of *action*, discuss issues with others, make a decision together, take responsibility, and think about the task. However, all these are eliminated in functioning. Therefore, functioning in the Arendtian sense is that human existence just rolls on following a track and the feeling of pleasure or enjoyment become the bigger driving force than an ideology or understanding of justice. For a bored human being who is stuck in the modern swamp of necessities, the rewards of pleasure and enjoyment while 'functioning' may be incentives to act irresponsibly and thoughtlessly, that is, freewheeling.

2. Arendt's explicit reference to boredom

Boredom in Arendt's writings is scattered in her main philosophy on human condition and phenomenology of history. Arendt's corpus has a tendency to connect boredom with *labor* among the three human activities. *Labor* is the core concept Arendt uses to describe modern society although *labor* obviously started with the daybreak of mankind.

To explain boredom, Arendt starts to analyze the *labor* of slaves in the Antiquity (Ref. 3.1). In modern times, the labor-centered structure has added boredom a new status of privilege, yet, as we have discussed with Eichmann's trial, boredom could have aroused contemptible violence during World War II. Due to this, perhaps, Arendt usually describes boredom as a negative experience, which is found in *labor* and social pathologies.

2.1. Boredom in antiquity

Arendt assigned many pages to explain *labor* in her best-known work 'The Human Condition' and it was for a reason. She regards *labor* as the prevalent human activity in the early human history to modern times. To Arendt, *labor* is an inevitable activity for human survival, but its relevance has expanded in modern times. Her analysis of *labor* starts with the institution of slavery in Greek Antiquity because the life of a slave is a prototypical and an extreme example of *labor*.

Slaves in the Greek time formed a radically opposite class from free citizenry, being regarded as a necessary existence to support human survival.[4] According to Arendt, slavery

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[4] Slaves were not regarded as humans in Greek Antiquity. Aristotle does not deny the possibility of slaves to be a

in Antiquity was far from the exploitation of *labor* power if compared with the Middle Ages and early modern times. Ancient Greeks thought that human lives are different from an animal's, so to their eyes, slavery was a way to keep them in the human realm with a certain level of dignity. Therefore, a free man tried to keep slaves' dignity just above the *animal laborans;* "at best the highest, of the animal species which populate the earth" (*Arendt*, 1958/1998, p. 84).

The foregoing perception of slavery clearly explains the nature of *labor*. The absence of freedom is explained by Arendt with Aristotle's categories of human beings (*ibid*, p. 12). Among the three types of lives (*bioi*), a free man can choose. Aristotle names 'life without freedom'. The first type being the life of slaves under the control of their owner; the second, the life of unavoidable *labor* out of necessity of life. To our modern perception, both seem closely connected to each other. The third and final type of life is the working life of craftsmen and the acquisitive life of merchants. A Free man's life is far from truly free if it is out of necessity and practicality rather than 'beautiful and elegant'. There is a parallel between slavery and *labor* in modern times—continuity and infinity.

Elaborating on the condition of slavery, Arendt does not connect it to boredom. One of the aims of the present dissertation is to make up this pending task. Instead, Arendt connects lack of freedom in slavery to necessity, which helps her to link ancillary *labor* to *labor* in the modern period. "To labor meant to be enslaved by necessity, and this enslavement was

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man but suggested two qualities slaves do not have; the faculty to deliberate and decide (*to bouleutikori*) and to foresee and to choose (*proairesis*) (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 84). With this standard, slaves were treated as the property of free men.

inherent in the conditions of human life. Because men were dominated by the necessities of life, they could win their freedom only through the domination of those whom they subjected to necessity by force" (*ibid*, pp. 83-89). Freedom is the condition of success out of necessity, thus, out of boredom.

2.2. Continuity, infinity, and necessity

Slaves in Ancient Greece faced necessity as a mode of continuity and infinity. Life was a continual repetition of physical *labor* for them. Every activity for survival was always the same in its goal, that is, life does not change. Slave's *labor* was to support the life of themselves, family members and their owner's interests. Pushing themselves into struggling to survive was the only activity for slaves. Arendt comments, by borrowing from Marx's expression, "the effort of labor never frees the laboring animal from repeating it all over again and remains, therefore, an 'eternal necessity imposed by nature'" (*ibid*, pp. 102-103).

The repeated cycle of life of *animal laborans* as a part of nature can be seen in the efforts to keep the world against nature. Preserving the world against the forces of nature is also an activity, which needs repeated and monotonous daily life. According to Arendt (*ibid*, p. 101), we can see this mode of necessity in Greek mythology, especially in the story of Hercules. Hercules' twelve tasks to escape from Hera's punishment is the most heroic *labor* as a protest to the subjection of Greek slavery. "The daily fight in which the human body is engaged to keep the world clean and prevent its decay bears little resemblance to heroic deeds; the endurance it needs to repair every day anew the waste of yesterday is not courage, and what makes the effort painful is not a danger but its relentless repetition" (*ibid*, p. 101).

2.3. Boredom of modern society

According to Arendt, *labor* has expanded its influence in modern times. That is, *labor* has become the core human activity and the importance has been increased beyond the mere mode of daily life. As noted previously, the recognition and position of *labor* in Antiquity was in the realm of animals rather than human beings. This recognition has increased and arrived in modern times passing through John Locke, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx. Recently, the recognition and position of *labor* has become common in daily life and has even expanded its boundary to clergy, intellectuals and even artists. Every form of *labor* in modern society clearly shows the 'victory of *labor*'.

In our overwhelmingly *labor*-centered society, we modern people can recognize the nature of *labor* that resembles that of slaves in Ancient Greek times. "Laboring means that man becomes a slave by necessity. So slavery is inherent in the condition of human life" (*ibid*, p. 83. Although we modern men are not properties of an owner, as laborers, we experience several other features of *labor* in Greek Antiquity. The imperatives of necessity push people to *labor* for survival, which has become stronger and generalized in modern times.

2.4. Consolidation of *necessity*

Arendt explains how necessity becomes stronger in modern times with the operating pattern of modernity; fertility of *labor* and the pursuit of productivity. The value of *labor* emanates from its fertility, that is, the ability to produce and reproduce. Indeed, fertility is the only hope which can liberate human beings from natural imperatives of *labor*. "The sudden, spectacular

rise of *labor* from the lowest, most despised position to the highest rank, as the most esteemed of all human activities, began when Locke discovered that *labor* is the source of all property. It followed its course when Adam Smith asserted that *labor* was the source of all wealth and found its climax in Marx's 'system of *labor*'" (*ibid*, p. 101). The autonomous or self-imposed pursue of productivity appears as a 'modern phenomenon': fragmentation through specification, the development of instruments, and the explosion of consumerism.

The specification is the mechanism through which the productivity explosively increases. At the same time, this is related to isolation. Isolation from the world is a basic characteristic of *labor*. "The *animal laborans* does not flee the world but is ejected from it in so far as he is imprisoned in the privacy of his own body, caught in the fulfilment of needs in which nobody can share and which nobody can fully communicate" (*ibid*, p. 119). Specification accelerates the process of isolation of laborers from the world. The division of the laboring process is the result of specification, and makes a laborer isolated from the process of *labor* itself. The last possible happiness of a laborer as a producer of artifacts is eliminated and left as a physical laborer with continual and repeated human activities.

The development of instruments goes in parallel with the consolidation of *labor* in modernity. This could be controversial if the instruments expand human ability or make human beings lose their role as autonomous agents and set themselves as a part of an instrument. According to Arendt (1958/1998), the advances of instruments have further turned human activities into laborized and routinized necessity. The development of tools and instruments contribute to the advancement of *labor*. The liberation from physical *labor*, that

is, the freedom from suffering and endurance by the development of technology can paradoxically drive human beings into *labor*, which is constantly repeated and meaningless. Arendt clearly expresses the limitation inherent to the development of instruments:

> Tools and instruments ease pain and effort and thereby change the modes in which the urgent necessity inherent in *labor* once was manifest to all. They do not change the necessity itself; they only serve to hide it from our senses. Something similar is true of labor's products, which do not become more durable through abundance. The case is altogether different in the corresponding modern transformation of the work process by the introduction of the principle of division of labor. Here the very nature of work is changed and the production process, although it by no means produces objects for consumption, assumes the character of labor. Although machines have forced us into an infinitely quicker rhythm of repetition than the cycle of natural processes prescribed—and this specifically modern acceleration is only too apt to make us disregard the repetitive character of all laboring—the repetition and the endlessness of the process itself put the unmistakable mark of laboring upon it. (*ibid*, p. 125)

Modern human beings as *animal laborans* are at the service of necessity and become a slave of constant and infinite repetition of limited sets of behavior. Boredom, established in the trap of production, tends to lead wo/men to overcome the hardship with counter-production experiences of consuming. According to Arendt (2013/2016, p. 64), human beings depend only on himself/herself during laboring and consuming. This is different from *work*, which transforms the space of the public realm. While in *action*, human beings connect

himself/herself to others. Thus, both *work* and *action* liberate human beings from isolation and instrumentalism. *Labor* relegates human beings to solitude, which makes them solely dependent on themselves. In this regard, consumption is in a way a placebo of real social relationships. In this way, life itself is a consumption; the rest is a consumption; and, personal interests in the world such as hobbies are also a consumption.

2.5. Boredom and thoughtlessness

Arendt comments about what phenomena follows boredom as well as about the origins of boredom. She explains it with an extreme example, namely Eichmann's trial. When Arendt (1978, p. 77) explains about the motive of crime in the World War II period, she suggests a concept 'functioning'. In Arendt's perception, war criminals like Eichmann had no motivation for killing Jews. They just wanted to take part in crowds' activities and feel some pleasure from this activity. They could feel the pervasive pleasure as a part of the crowd— power. Humans, however, lost experiences of decision-making, discussion together, reflective thinking in functioning, and just went with freewheeling with an inertia.

Arendt does not overlook a comment in Adolf Eichmann's trial, which triggers him to be a devil; "The humdrum of military service, that was something I couldn't stand, day after day always the same, over and over again the same" (1963/2006, p. 35). Whether Eichmann's comments are the truth or not was not important. As a designer and an enforcer of 'Adolf Hitler's Final Solution', and as he tried to recover the power of Nazis during the period of fugitives in Argentina, it might be closer to a lie than a truth. However, what Arendt recognizes from Eichmann's comment represents the fact that the Nazis were bored to

distraction when they started supporting the inhumane activities. The boredom of life connects to the totalitarian idea easily without judgment and willing through thinking.

Haladyn and Gardiner (2017) clearly points out Arendt's idea that the banality of boredom is strongly connected to the banality of evil in the stream of totalitarianism. They think that "the entire account of Eichmann's life and trial is punctuated by moments of his boredom that remain almost always banal in intention (…) but evil in result" (p. 10). Eichmann's hatred to humdrum gave him a reason to accept the position and to act up to the brutality. The 'evil' and 'evil deeds' were not based on the overdetermined sense of ideology or characteristic, rather, on the lack of willing and full of desire to be a part of a larger cultural or ethical perspective. As a result, they evaluate that Arendt initiates the stream of boredom research in connection with violence.

Eichmann lived as a military officer, which is, at least in his own account, a life of eternal necessity, constant repetition and routine. So are the lives of modern men as *animal laborans*. As *animal laborans*, the other modes of human life are invisible except for *labor* and consuming, and this 'blindness' make human beings completely depend on himself/herself. This biological and individual dependency isolates human beings to the point of total loneliness in the process of isolation (Arendt, 2013/2016, p. 67). Loneliness and 'boredom of loneliness' force human beings into the public realm to act. But this is act beyond the current state of life, therefore, human beings need to undergo change. Arendt calls this sort of change 'natality' and 'rebirth', which I will deal with next.

3. A new typology and conceptualization of boredom

The preceding sections outlined and summarized Arendt's writings that are either directly or indirectly related to the boredom phenomenon in schooling. In the first section (3.1), the basic concepts and ideas of human conditions and activities were explained. Several terms have more complex and distinct meanings, such as the words *labor* and *work* significantly differ from today's ordinary usage. These differences are not nuances or alternative meanings, but are absolutely fundamental to understanding her philosophy and the present dissertation's overall claims and suggestions. In the second section (3.2), the focus was on the debating condition of *animal laborans*, a human existence inextricably relegated to *labor,* which is reiterative, meaningless (*functioning*), unescapable and perpetual. This section (3.3) is to outline a way out from such an existential pitfall and it is Hannah Arendt herself, in my view, who indicates a *not* so uncommon and impossible way out—*natality* and *rebirth*.

3.1. *Natality*

Every condition and activity is meaningful to human beings based on the fact that we are born and dead. "All three activities [*labor*, *work* and *action*] and their corresponding conditions are intimately connected with the most general condition of human existence: birth and death, *natality* and *mortality*" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 8). Among the most general conditions of human existence, Arendt's focus is on *natality*, which stands on the opposite pole of Heidegger's *mortality*. While Heidegger discusses his existentialism from the fact that human life is going to die, Arendt proceeds her theory from the fact that we all were born. Natality is the foundational condition of all conditions as the beginning of everything. Human

beings come to the world through birth, and then every condition and activity allows us to be a wo/man until death.

Among the three human activities, Arendt strongly links *natality* with *action*. It does not mean *labor* and *work* are not rooted in *natality*. They are also keeping life and establishing the world for newcomers. However, *labor* easily puts human beings into the isolation and infinity of necessity as the escaping activity from death. *Work* is also hard to cut from the attachment to isolation, even though it is to overcome mortality by constructing the everlasting world. *Action* is the closest connected activity to natality as it is the beginning of 'new'. To Arendt, "the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. In this sense of initiative, an element of action, and therefore of natality, is inherent in all human activities" (*ibid*, p. 9).

The concept of *natality* implies that human beings possess a birthing existence not just a dying existence. This idea of Arendt came from the irrefutable truth that "human beings are born into the world" (*BPF*, p. 174). Arendt explains that birth has two dimensions—the *first birth* and the *second birth*. The first birth is the biological birth as a starting point of everything, therefore, it is the first and only one-time event. It is a unique and specific event, therefore, impossible to occur again. Birth gives life to wo/men bringing them into the world with a relational network. This inextricable condition of the first birth becomes the foundation of the second birth. The second birth is the social and political birth. "With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth"

(Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 176). In this study, the second birth will be called 'rebirth' in the tradition of education philosophy.

Arendt recognizes language and *action* are the core elements of the second birth. These two are named with alternative terms such as speech and *action*, word and deed, and *lexis* and *praxis*. Through language and *action*, human beings fabricate themselves into the web of the social world. This is a reiterative and continual event. Every human being wants to show their uniqueness and difference with their words and deeds, which lead them to the public realm and bring the news into the old world. Arendt says that initiation through language and *action* is inevitable for human beings. This insertion and *action* are not forced by necessity as in the case of *labor*, and not driven by usefulness or beauty as in *work*. *Action* of the second birth is triggered only by shared existence with others whom he/she wants. In this regard, other activities, namely *labor* and *work* could also be in the public realm, but the authentic meaning of activity in the public realm is only possible with actors.

The strong connection between *action* and rebirth derives from the nature of *action*. Arendt explains it as the human ability of 'beginning': "To act (…) means to take an initiative, to begin" (*ibid*, p. 177). Humans start to act with his/her initiative through birth. When a new person comes to the world, there is a given context and social network. Birth qua *action* is not in a contacting in vacuum space but in the given context and a web of relationship as a beginning. '*Archein*', the Greek etymology of the word *action*, shows the connection which means 'to begin', 'to lead', and 'to rule'. An actor is a person coming to the world through birth, leading their life and ruling their world.

The framework of *natality* through speech and *action* implies that *natality* is only possible in the diversity and relationality with others. Thus, Arendt says that *plurality* is the condition of *action*. As recognition of "the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter" (*ibid*, p. 7), *plurality* presupposes the otherness. When a human being comes into the world through the first birth, it is not only the individual, but also the relational event with the people who gives birth. Birth is a sign of the physical relationship between a male and a female, and the birth itself establishes the relationship between the birth-giver and the born. The life starts materializing in the mother's belly and continues with parents' care. The physical body of a newcomer is built in the mother's inner world, which in turn, interacts with the outside world. These interactions happen with sounds, touches, body heat, movement and emotions as the *lexis* and *praxis. Plurality* of the being already exists before the birthing *action* as there is a relationship in the uterus. *Action* is the most common type of activity in the human network, the process to building relationships continually human beings can "live on earth and inhabit the world" (*ibid*, p. 7).

Plurality becomes more obvious after the first birth, when the second rebirth occurs in succession. As an inhabitant in the world or a nomad in the world, wo/men lives in the web of relationships. "Plurality is specifically the condition - not only the condition sine qua non, but the condition per quam - of all political life" (*ibid*, p. 7)[5]. As a newcomer by birth into a family, s/he becomes a member of a community and society, thus, becoming 'us'. With birth

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[5] Arendt's 'political life' is possible to interpret largely as 'social life' or 'the life as a member of community' rather than the narrowly accepted 'political attendance'. As an Aristotelian, Arendt thinks humans are *homo politicus*, therefore, the 'political life' in her writing is related to *Vita Activa*. In this study, 'political life' also can be understood by replacing to 'education' or 'pedagogy', it is because of the relational characteristic of classrooms.

as the first relational and interactive activity, human beings continue their existence in the world through *action* and language.

In modern times, plurality implies equality of human beings but, not without paradox, also distinction and uniqueness. "We are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live" (*ibid*, p. 8). The uniqueness of individuals can be expressed by speech and *action*. As symbols of plurality, words and deeds unveil the identity of a human being. As a human being is unique by words and deeds, in turn, s/he generates plurality in the world. "If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualization of the human condition of natality, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality, that is, of living as a distinct and unique being among equals" (*ibid*, p. 178).

The rebirth (or second birth) is the beginning of newness and it is a unique but relational event. Then, how does speech and *action* appear, that is, rebirth reveals its appearance? Is there any linear principal or logical format which can explain the process of rebirth? The answer is simple: human speech and *action* are not perfect and they come with contingency. As rebirth means a continual beginning rather than one-time event, the newest comes into the world with a new way. That is contingency is the key nature of natality rather than necessity.

It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings and in all origins. Thus, the origin of life from inorganic matter is an infinite improbability of inorganic processes, as is the

coming into being of the earth viewed from the standpoint of processes in the universe, or the evolution of human out of animal life. (*ibid*, pp. 177-178)

Action and speech appear in the web of human relationships rather than organized and composed by the reason of absolute Subject of consciousness. The reality directs words and deeds, and this fact implies the characteristics of "the unpredictability of its outcome, the irreversibility of the process, and the anonymity of its authors" (*ibid*, p. 220). Every human *action* and speech come with contingencies (i.e., unpredictability, irreversibility and anonymity), thus the fact, newness is always getting into the world and can be expected. It is the contingency of human *action* which guarantees the continual renewal of human life. "Without action to bring into the play of the world the new beginning of which each man is capable by virtue of being born, 'there is no new thing under the sun'" (*ibid*, p. 204).

The contingency of words and deeds provide a new dimension to our understanding of human identity. The building process of something new in interactions with his/her surrounding web of relationship is the continual answer to the question of 'who am I and what kind of existence do I lead?' As J. Woo (2013, p. 149) elaborates with different jargon, identity and relationality is "escape, rupture, resistance, and questioning from having been". Rebirth is, therefore, learning from and counter-questioning the old, and in so doing, it outputs contingent newness. Thus, the newness from rebirth is not the result of logical necessity. Arendt pressed upon issue to the point of poetic prose, "new therefore always appears in the guise of a miracle" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 178).

3.2. Boredom to rebirth

Arendt understands that boredom occurs in-between activities as a crisis of humanity. Although she does not point out directly where boredom is, when arguing human conditions and activities, she premises that boredom is experienced between *actions*. She focuses on *labor*, because the position and influence of *labor* have been increased through the modernization process, therefore, boredom is the consequential by-product of an increase in un-*natal* activities. Arendt argues *labor* has emphasized and expanded its influence in the process of modernization. That is, boredom has become common and ordinary in modern society.

If schematized the idea of 'boredom to rebirth', boredom perches in-between rebirths; boredom is located between an *action* and the other *action*. The ability of beginning anew is representation of *natality*. Boredom is an un-*natal* phenomenon of state. Boredom permeates life when a natal human being fails to begin anew to notice the state of activities and life to us. The notice facilitates *action*s to reborn as a representation of *natality*. "If without *action* and speech, without the articulation of natality, we would be doomed to swing forever in the ever-recurring cycle of becoming" (*ibid*, p. 246).

As a condition of human activity, boredom is closely connected to *natality*. Boredom is located in-between activities as the way of *natality*. I think, however, that Arendt could not connect *natality* to boredom and it makes her discussion on boredom resembling *Acedians'*. She locates boredom only into the *labor* process, as the painfulness of the necessity. Perhaps it is due to her lack of a focused consideration on boredom itself or hostility towards

Heidegger's emphasis on boredom for doing philosophy. Through the experience of the World War II cum Jewish massacre, Arendt understands how modernity gives an impetus to wo/men to slip down the evil of human kind. In that situation, the negativity from her sub-consciousness is understandable because boredom worked as an element to facilitate demonic activities. However, for negative emotions like sadness, melancholy, or pain, boredom may be a relief and beneficial reaction to problems. That is, boredom is a body reaction to problematic phenomena, thus, a facilitation power. Boredom is a conducive condition and power toward rebirth against the modern wo/men trapped in necessity.

In this aspect, there is limitation to explain boredom as an experience of emptiness or death as many Heidegerrians refer to as "a sort of pallid foretaste of death' and 'a death within life, a non life" (Svendsen, 2005, pp. 40-41). Instead, in my view, boredom is an innate driving force of human beings desiring new rebirth, and a human condition to renew human life in-between activities.

3.3. Typology of boredom

Many scholars categorize boredom based on the modes of experience or the appearances of phenomena. Indeed, all well-known categorizations have observed phenomena combining with qualities of experience. Peter Toohey (2001), for example, rejects profound boredom but emphasizes simple boredom because he thinks that profound boredom are unclear experiences and different from simple boredom which we feel clearly. Martin Doehlemann (1991) argues 'the situational boredom' which is a reaction to a situation, and 'the creative boredom' which can be felt during struggling to create new ideas. Besides those, chronical

boredom (Rupp & Vodanovich, 1997; Gosline, 2007) explains constantly lasted disgust; and the boredom of surfeit (Svendsen, 2005) implies when humans stay in overflowing environments. Mostly, the types of boredom have been categorized by human experience related to phenomena.

The most representative categorization is Heidegger's allegory of boredom at the train station, boredom at Christmas parties, and profound boredom (See Section 2.2 *Mortalitists*). Heidegger phenomenologically divides the situations of boredom based on the situations 'without anything', 'with something' and 'just bored'; doing nothing in a waiting situation and being chained to a meaninglessly repeated duty without freedom, and the boredom which cannot be illustrated with any example, which is called 'profound boredom'. This categorization is the correct example for explaining boredom through combining experiences of being-in-the-world with conditions of the world. It reveals experiences of boredom when the being is 'empty', with 'something', and without 'meaning'.

This study categorizes boredom based on the nature of human conditions in contrast to Heidegger's or other typologies. It examines the origination of boredom for categorization rather than the observation of phenomena or experiential features. Back to Arendt's theory of the human conditions and activities, *natality* is closely linked to *action*, which corresponds to the condition of plurality. In other words, *natality* is the foundational condition of conditions, thus, a prerequisite of plurality. By the way, plurality is also pre-required for birth and rebirth, that is, for *natality*. Human beings start with the birth, and with the birth also starts relationality and plurality. The collapse of plurality signifies a collapse of the condition of

rebirth, therefore, it equals to a condition of boredom.

The collapse of plurality occurs at the individual or collective levels. Plurality premises two conditions: the plural particulars and autonomous interactions among them. Therefore, plurality collapses if one of the elements, multiplicity or relationality, is destroyed. As a first, human beings as an individual are enforced if the multiplicity factor is destroyed. In the modern era, discussions on the Subject as an individual have expanded in various fields, then they have been given an impetus to individual wo/men. In particular, the development of natural science and social science is forcing to recognize human beings as the universal singularity and as the absolute Subject, therefore, modern wo/men are confined to solitude singularity constructing the world alone rather than in plural existence interacting with others. This tendency has expanded to pedagogy theories, which have accepted the idea of 'scientific management', as Taylorism, Fordism or psychology. In this situation, teachers and students are focusing on the individual development of absolute subjects in a competitive world.

Similarly, universal singularity has been treated as a 'normal' existence. In this aspect, 'normal' implies the ideal type of condition, activity, state, and life. The scientific development regulates the states of 'normal' and the other states becoming 'abnormal'. As *natal* existence, wo/men are not the existence of stable and intact results but of dynamic and flexile processes. However, the characteristic of modernity forces wo/men to 'sound and healthy' states. This phenomenon emerges strongly in axiology, especially in the form of self-regulation. Historically, according to Elias (1939), civilization has been developed toward a way of complexity. That is, etiquettes and manners have been developed to the direction of

'higher to lower' and 'simple to complex'; as a result, every person starts to self-regulate their behavior as a symbol of civilization. The 'normal' human being knows how to regulate themselves, who are different from barbarians with un-regulated and un-civilized habits.

This tendency has become stronger since the modern age started, and in this stream, education has played a big role to support it. Schooling as a public good habitualizes ethical self-regulation, such as assiduousness, patience, rationality of modern wo/men through internalization of collective self-regulation. The process to document, politicize, and practice the self-regulation of 'normality' has been intensified through 'standardization'. Standardization appears when the result of the civilizing process is institutionalized and crystalized, and in turn, affects as ethical norm to regulate human behavior. So called the quality of condition, activity, state, and life are standardized by levels; they normalize the 'good' quality of human life to pursue step-by-step. As a result, every human activity is required to follow the standards in order to meet the goals and targets for the next criteria.

Second, human beings as the collective are enforced if relationality is destroyed. Plural people without autonomous relationship transfer to the form of totalitarianism. Since the Industrial Revolution, capitalism has taken out human beings from the relational community to each lethargic individual. Arendt calls them 'masses', "the chief characteristics of the mass man is (…) isolation and lack of normal social relationship" (Arendt, 1951/1958, p. 37). The scattered individuals cannot endure the loss of affiliated ground as religion, community or hometown, therefore, they become a fragile and dangerous existence. The society organized by these masses is the fertile earth for totalitarianism in order to give a birth of authoritarian

state. The collapse of plurality reveals the mortality of human beings; Arendt recognizes it very clearly.

> After murder of the moral person and annihilation of the juridical person, the destruction of the individuality is almost always successful. (...) For to destroy individuality is to destroy spontaneity, man's power to begin something new out of his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events. Nothing then remains but ghastly marionettes with human faces, which all behave like the dog in Pavlov's experiments, which all react with perfect reliability even when going to their own death, and which do nothing but react. This is the real triumph of the system." (*ibid*, p. 455)

The collective without relationality leads humans to being thoughtless; in turn, the thoughtlessness facilitates the collective being solid. Autonomous individuals disappear in a totalitarian society, where only the hierarchical process exists as a collective force. Personal meaning loses its importance, and the particulars become forced to equate personal meaning with collective meaning. Singularities only exist as a part of an organization body or a nation-state, and cannot pursue any meaningful life unless as a part of the whole. Individual autonomy and characteristics disappear in crowds, and efforts to make a new relationality are treated as a subversion or a criminal.

From the foregoing discussions on the collapse of plurality, we can draw some hints for the typologies of boredom. First of all, we can think about features of *natality*. Some Arendtians (Maschellein, 1996; Woo, 2013) suggest plurality, relationality, and contingency

as the features of *natality*. However, I insist plurality is rather a condition of *natality* as vice versa. Instead, I suggest 'freedom' as a feature of *natality* in place of plurality. It derives from the Arednt's emphasis on Aristotle's idea about the nature of human beings. Aristotle (1999) suggests 'freedom' as an important element of human beings for *vita active,* which separates wo/men from animals. Animals are trapped in the necessity of life and the limitation of bodies. The freedom for reasonable thinking and autonomy is a feature of *natality*.

The features of *natality*—relationality, freedom, and contingency—may also suggest the antithetical aspects: isolation, loss of freedom, and *necessity*. This antithesis appears when a wo/man fails to rebirth, that is, when a human *natality* could not be revealed. A wo/man cannot rebirth when s/he is isolated, has lost a freedom, and trapped into *necessity*. Naturally, these counter features of *natality* indicate the origins of boredom. These, in turn, can determine, in my view, a distinct typology of boredom. Thus, I categorize boredom into three types: the boredom of isolation, the boredom of unfreedom, and the boredom of necessity.

Boredom of Isolation

The first type is the boredom of isolation. Isolation is a state without chance to contact otherness. To Arendt, existence of others is a basic condition, and the interactions with others are the other condition for *vita activa*. Therefore, otherness does not only mean the existence of others but also involves relationships and inter-subjectivity. In modern times, human beings are basically solitary. Since Cartesian methodological skepticism, nothing is certain except the thinking Subject; wo/man becomes Der Einzelne standing on the world. Individual isolation is the necessary result rather than selective representation of contingency, and the

development of modernity has consolidated the situation. Universal individuality becomes the basic unit of structuralizing, so wo/men are left as singular in mass. Crowds does not guarantee *natality*, and isolation in crowds even intensify the state of boredom. Words and deeds of the solitary individual without relationality are not meaningful for rebirth.

The boredom of isolation is obvious in classrooms. Schooling systems started for mass education, but have not assumed the plurality of human beings. Teaching aims to individually transfer knowledge, skills, and attitude to the masses. Students occupy their desk in a dense classroom and try to learn teaching contents through information transfer. The interactions between teachers and students or among students seldom reveal subjectivity. Teachers try to stimulate students in the process of an expectable syllabus; students also react as a part of the learning process. The loss of subjectivity and relationality is widespread in classrooms, and the isolated individuals occupy space and time without *natality*.

Boredom of Unfreedom

The second type is the boredom of unfreedom. Freedom is a longstanding topic and there are huge variations as long as history. In this study, freedom does not mean wo/men can behave in whatever way they want. It is free will, subjectivity, and autonomy rather than the freedom of choice. As Arendt accepts Aristotle's idea, freedom is the core element for human nature. Free wo/"men might choose in freedom, that is, in full independence of the necessities of life and the relationships they originated" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 12), and "freedom as a living political reality (Arendt, 1951/1958, p. 466). Without freedom, speaking and *action* are mere obedience of order, situation, and structure rather than breaking an old and initiating a new. In

this situation, human beings cannot be reborn.

Schools are a place where student's freedom is regulated in the name of discipline. This is not borrowing Foucault's insight on schooling in 'Discipline and Punish' (1975/1995), but our common experience of schooling obviously includes the loss of freedom, that is, schools as prisons. Regulating student's freedom is accepted as normative or presumed by educationists or parents because of student's incompleteness of physical mental development. Every decision and activity are regulated by rules, signs, tables, sounds, eye sights, and relationships. Even 'violence' works to reveal the position of each other, not just for teacher-students but also for student-student relationships. As a representative of discipline for all, boredom of loss of freedom is rather obvious.

Boredom of Necessity

The third type of boredom is the boredom of necessity. In Arendt's discussion, necessity is mostly connected to the 'life of human being'. Every human being lives their life from birth to death. We cannot escape from the recurrence of struggling against death, so "all human beings are subject to necessity" (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 31) "Natural community in the household therefore was born of necessity, and necessity ruled over all activities performed in it" (*ibid*, p. 30). In this regard, the first and second types of boredom have their unique peculiarity but are connected to this type of boredom. Isolation and unfreedom become hardened and deepen under necessity. Therefore, the former are linear to the boredom of necessity, thus, necessity is the strongest and deepest aspect of boredom.

The common characteristic of both, the biological process in man and the process of

growth and decay in the world, is that they are part of the cyclical movement of nature and therefore endlessly repetitive; all human activities which arise out of the necessity to cope with them are bound to the recurring cycles of nature and have in themselves no beginning and no end, properly speaking; unlike working, whose end has come when the object is finished, ready to be added to the common world of things, laboring always moves in the same circle, which is prescribed by the biological process of the living organism and the end of its 'toil and trouble' comes only with the death of this organism." (*ibid*, p. 98)

If then, was a freeman in antiquity free from boredom? They were free from the necessity of life. Every physical *labor* was burdened to slave classes, and the freemen's job was to make social relationships and do some political activities in the arena. Words and deeds were their lifestyle, and the freedom of reason was their proudness. By the way, there are many records that they were bored, and even thought of them proudly as a symbol of their class. Why could not they avoid boredom? They were relational and free but why did they experience boredom in their *vita activa*? The left aspect of necessity is the way to understand the phenomenon.

A basic principle of necessity is on the causality: cause and result. Human beings are going to die, so energy is required. The required energy can be supported by *labor*, so *labor* is a burden to ordinary people. Ordinary people find a way of *labor* based on their surroundings. My family members are supporting my survival in the net of relationships, and so do I. In this way, the boredom of necessity derives from a basic society based on the supremacy of reason: the principle of causality. The cycle of cause and effect works on

everything in necessity and it is widespread in the expansion of modernity. The scientific or academic way of thinking enforces the systematic schooling system and learning process. A bulk of causality occupies the modern schooling system, such as the process of step-by-step, target-oriented curriculum, repetitiveness and the continuity of learning process, challenging expectedness and controllability, and following the regular course; students and teachers cannot escape from the trap of crystalized necessity in classrooms.

The conductivity of boredom

Boredom has *conductivity* to trigger various activities but not every activity guarantees rebirth or leads to mortality. The boundary line between mortality and natality is on the freedom of reason. For rebirth, thought, judgment and willing guides the direction of speech and *action*. Without the activities of reason, speech and *action* can fail to be natal or to be thoughtless. *Actions* without 'thought' make wo/men freewheeling to functioning in the collective, so can lead us to the inhumane result by the process of necessity. The pleasure of freewheeling and functioning is the temptation to avoid boredom rather than rebirthing. When a wo/man plays a role as part of a whole, s/he can feel pleasure of functioning as ecstasy to avoid boredom of unfreedom with fantasy of collective meaning.

Thus, each type of boredom can be understood based on the *conductivity*. As I reversely draw the types of boredom from the features of *natality*, each type of boredom is the human faculty to recover the features of *natality*. First, the boredom of isolation is the conducive faculty to recover the relationality; second, the boredom of loss of freedom is for recovering freedom; and last, the boredom of necessity is for contingency. If we simply think of the

classroom, it is easily observed. *Action*s and integrations among students in recess shows how much their classes were a lack of freedom and isolation. The scribbles of students in their textbooks show that how much they desired to break the old rules and causalities in knowledge transfer. The conductivity of boredom coexists in classrooms and plays a role for rebirth of students.

Wo/men in the trap of *necessity* can experience the fear of contingency, unexpectedness, and uncontrollability. Human beings are not only bored in *necessity* but also in the overwhelming contingency, unexpectedness and uncontrollability. However, the latter is boredom from fear rather than the characteristics of *natality*. When the new comes into the old, it appears with the shape of 'damaging'; therefore, the fear from the uncontrollable damage is natural. In addition, the limitation of sense is the origin of this tendency. Human beings simultaneously have both fear and expectations to the world out of sensation. So the world out of perception becomes the object of myth or barbarianism. It also applies to contingency. Human beings trapped into continual necessity are hyper-afraid of contingencies so they cannot avoid boredom in necessity and boredom in the fear of contingency.

Chapter 4: Curriculum of Boredom

I introduced and categorized the discourses of boredom in Chapter 2 and conceptualized and established the typology of boredom in Chapter 3. Now, in Chapter 4, I try to set this project into the curriculum field. Boredom discourses were categorized into the categories: *Acedians*, *Mortalitists*, and *Conducivists* (Chapter 2), which will be applied to curriculum studies.

The core of curriculum study is anthropology and the purpose of education. If the understanding of human beings and the purpose of education are different, the ideas of other educational factors become different, and the perspective on boredom also changes. Traditionally, educationists divide the purpose of education into two—the internal purpose and the external purpose. Depending on the purpose, the whole approaches to educational issues, such as teachers, students, contents, teaching methods and evaluation will vary and so does the perceptions of boredom.

In terms of human perspective, *Acedians* are close to the group who advocates the theory of 'human development' who are called developmentalists. They share the same perception on human beings, society, politics, and history under the name of modernization. *Mortalitists* are connected with the group that tries to pursue humanistic education and support the intrinsic purpose of education. They think that children's *telos* is more important for their happiness, therefore, that education should not oppress students with the reason of human development. *Conducivists*, I suggest as an alternative perception of curriculum study based on *natality—vita activa.*

1. Traditionalists as *Acedian*

Looking at modern education based on the category of boredom, *Acedians* occupy the mainstream. This may seem obvious in modern education, where schooling follows a national curriculum and is managed by the state. I will discuss, hereafter, how today's school education demonizes, expands and reproduces boredom.

1.1.Modern society and schooling

Arendt argues the modernization process with the expansion of *labor* (See Chapter 3.2). Human beings acquire autonomy out of slavery, which enables them to find the way of survival by themselves. In the pre-modern period, class background determined one's job: an offspring of a farmer was to be a farmer; that of a noble was to be a noble. In modern times, this became a self-decision problem, and jobs for people were not fixed. Industrialization only made this tendency stronger and led people to be a laborer in a factory or related business. The change of industrial structure made people unable to keep their survival with traditional agriculture, and there were unexperienced activities and freedom of job choice. The free wo/men voluntarily found a job in the fields being able to support themselves, and they willingly accepted the position of laborer. *Labor* is not on the slavery class anymore, but every wo/man becomes a laborer.

Life in modern society and laboring requires different habits to wo/men compared to the pre-modern and agricultural era. At about the same time, people started thinking about childhood and the right of education. Youth, childhood, and adolescents have become the important period as a process toward adulthood, which require non-adults to be separated

from 'adult activity'—*labour*. According to Aries (1960/1962), the concept and importance of childhood started in the 16th century. "[T]here was no place for childhood in the medieval world" (*ibid*, p. 33) as a child was characterized with incompetence and incapacity. Thus, being a child and the period of youth and childhood were totally neglected or fantasized. Children were the object of interest as a monkey or an angel would be. Modernization leads us to discover the concept and importance of children and highlighting the education process to become an adult.

Schooling performs an important role to maintain the *labor* centered modern system. The education process for non-adult disciplines children as a future laboring adult. The students are treated as deficient beings; therefore, discipline becomes the process to transform barbarians into civilized wo/men. As Ernst Haeckel's famous phrase 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' (1903), teaching involves the connotation of disciplining students for the characteristics of adults. Adults, in modern times, means the people who have the basic ability of reason, judgement, habits, and endurance which can keep their job.

Fear and the way of survival play an important motivation to students and their parents in schooling. Fear pushes students into job preparing activities, and the way of survival becomes the students' guidelines to follow. Economic instability makes students attached to the preparation for future survival rather than personal characteristics, inherent capacity, or interest. The trap of *necessity* is enforced to children although they are out of 'adult' activities, therefore, education activity becomes the *labor* and preparing *labor*.

In this context, the external purpose of education influences wo/men powerfully. The

majority of wo/men want to achieve education for a better future. The 'better future' has many meanings but the economic aspect is the most basic aspect. When we divide people into classes, although official class systems have all disappeared in law, we use socio-economic elements as the criteria of classification. So, the desire to achieve a better life through education is closely related to the social economic situation. Social economic systems and the *labor*-market regulate the boundaries of jobs. In the agricultural era, farming skills were the core contents for learning. After industrialization, learning the life habits of laborers became the key elements to learn. Learning motivation is related to the desire of having a job, economic status, that is, the way of survival. Public curricula have become the racecourse to *labor* activities.

1.2. Scientific approaches to curriculum development

'Scientific' is a keyword in curriculum development studies. The efforts to develop a curriculum scientifically have increased and expanded from the Enlightenment. Intellectuals of the Enlightenment, emphasize the development of rational faculty and the education for discipline. Since the Industrial Revolution, school education and curricula have been affected, as in other academic areas the flow of scientific management, such as Fordism or Taylorism. This tendency has been reinforced by combining with social science and psychology.

As opposed to the pre-modern era when education was only allowed for the noble and clergy classes, all people have become the object of schooling in modernity. It was required that everyone, as a member of a modern society, should acquire basic knowledge, skills, and attitude regardless of their social class. Such a situation is also related to economic aspects,

which require large social laborers throughout the industrialization process. Schooling has fulfilled a role as the laborer supplier of the modern economic system, and efficiency and standardization of the producing process have been adapted to the education system.

Franklin Bobbitt's idea exemplifies how school education reflects and supports socio-economic systems, and that the 'scientific' idea works well in curricula (1924). To produce an efficient and standardized laborer, he adapted the concept of 'job analysis'. Job analysis is the process of investigating the characteristics and essentials of the job, the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform a job brilliantly through analyzing the behavioral or mental patterns of a particular job and of veteran experts. As a job analysist, Bobbitt (1924) postulates an ideal 50 year old adult to analyze the necessary elements for curriculum development. Through comparison with the exemplar, he could check and standardize the deficit of a child and in turn, the teaching contents could be developed to support the child's future working life.

Bobbitt's approach to modern curriculum study was followed by a score of thinkers such as Werrett Charters, John Dewey, and Boyd Bode. Ralph Tyler was perhaps the most influential scholar in the field. His codification of curriculum studies, 'Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction' (1949), is still working as a basic canon and direction of curriculum development from the national level to the classroom level. The basic principles of curriculum development suggested by Tyler are (*ibid*, p. 51):

- What educational purpose should the school seek to attain?

- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

- How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?

- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

The foregoing can be simplified to educational purposes, contents, teaching methods, and evaluation. These elements are derived from management theory for scientific management. The industrialists needed to improve productive efficiency, so they developed the target-oriented method to facilitate factory workers experienced behavior. The early curriculum scholars adapted this 'scientific' method to curriculum development and, in turn, the four aspects became "the basic or fundamental components of curriculum studies" (Morris & Adamson, 2010, p. 7). The subsequent studies in the field have been additional footnotes to the Tyler's principles.

This tendency was consolidated with the development of psychology. The development of behavioral and cognitive psychology, such as John Watson, B. F. Skinner and Jean Piaget, are closely connected to curriculum development. The behavioral psychologists argue the scientific approach to human minds. They think that utopian society can be established through the proper and effective control of the environment—stimulation, in turn, facilitates the idea of 'educationism' or almighty education: Everyone can be anything regardless of their inherent, personality, tendency or interest through 'good' education. The most behavioral psychological approaches in curriculum studies, such as Skinner's programmed instruction and Benjamin Bloom's mastering learning are all in the same stream.

Jerome Bruner is worthy of attention with the cognitive psychology approach, because he was the person in charge of the national curriculum development when the requirement of scientific education in the USA was approaching a peak by the Sputnik Shock (1957). The satellite launch affected the education policy of the USA, and his idea of discipline-based curriculum was passed through the Woods Hole Conference (1959). At the conference, the participants concluded that the failure of the US education derived from the progressive education which enforced students' freedom and experience rather than the subjects itself. Thus, the scientific approach which developed the curriculum called 'the discipline-based curriculum' started.

Bruner postulates an ideal type of adult in his 'the process of education' (1960), the scholar group in academia. He thinks that students can learn the same fundamental and basic principles of knowledge, and the same learning way of knowledge, and same attitude toward learning and inquiry with scholars. A discipline or science has its basic idea or principles which shows identity of the subjects, therefore, if a curriculum is organized with them, students can join the proper and desirable learning activities. If the learning contents can be suggested to students with proper instruction which cares for their cognitive capacity and ability, it is possible to teach them at the same level as scholars in the subjects.

The scientific approaches to curriculum development have several assumptions. First, the strength of the external purpose for curriculum activities. They assume an ideal type of education result as a future laborer or worker, hence, required. In such an ideal, personal *telos* or interest is not an object for consideration but the producing required for wo/men to support

social and economic needs. Second, in the same line with the former, human beings are treated as animals as we respond to rewards and punishments. In this context, students are enforced to follow a scientific curriculum with no freedom in curricular activities.

1.3. Globalization and Global standard

Neo-liberalism expanded with and through globalization. Globalization has been accepted as an absolute value, so education starts doing a role to support the globalized world. A new type of human beings is required in the globalized world, and s/he is called a global citizen, global talent, global human resource, global leader, or global laborer. Under this discourse, education needs to produce the required global somebody, and the scientific tendency of education becomes more reinforced with Westernization.

Values spread variously, among them, an obvious one is comparison. Comparison mostly happens in the way of making a ranking list. The most influential example is the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter refered to OCED) Program for International Students Assessment (hereinafter referred to PISA). OECD carries out the test every three years, and notes on their online webpage the result of the test and ranking. "[I]t tests 16-year-old students from all over the world in reading, mathematics and science. The tests are designed to gauge how well the students master key subjects in order to be prepared for real-life situations in the adult world" (OCED/PISA webpage). Based on the PISA results, the gauged numbers, the so-called 'education quality' in every country is compared and determined between the best and the worse.

PISA has its intentions and assumptions. "The intentions of PISA are related to the overall political aims of the OECD and the underlying commitment to a competitive global free-market economy" (Sjøberg, 2016, p. 5). To keep the standard quality of produced results of education for global laborers, education keeps the so-called ideology-free or neutralized curriculum based on target-oriented education. Hence, it assumes that education can transform human beings. The identity, history, culture, religion, and talent of an individual or the collective are not considered, but only the test results. It seems plausible because the un-standardizable aspect is impossible to compare, however, the results of PISA affect the curriculum of every country as a canon of pedagogic activity.

The university ranking system is also a significant element to support global laborer production. The expansion of life expectancy and the development of civilization requires a longer education period. The development of science requires smarter laborers, and place of work evolves into diverse forms. Higher intellectual skills are basic requirements in many industries and university education has become compulsory in the economic field. A university title has become the certificate for seeking a job, and has also become the activity of or for *animal laborans*. University education has become the activity for job preparation, and jobs have started to regulate university activities.

In the stream, the university ranking system is the result of efforts to compare universities and to make a ranking list for the standardization of laborer production factories. In the globalized world, job providers want to use better human resources, therefore, the job ability-oriented curriculum is required to schooling and higher education. Based on strong

economic needs, the ranking system guides the direction of university policies and activities, and also affects the schooling system.

Global university rankings also influence schooling experiences. Based on the standard for better rankings, universities require the 'standardized' ability to students. Many schools target putting their students into better and prestigious universities, so they manage the curriculum implemented and experienced differently from national guidelines. This phenomenon facilitates the curriculum for instrumental knowledge out of religion, ethnicity, and political value. The 'practical' knowledge is emphasized, and the practical becomes the absolute value. To get into a higher-ranking university seems to guarantee better jobs, that is, better paid and stable *labor* activity.

This phenomenon also occurs at the global level, in turn, it affects the language problem. Under the globalized system, wo/men can find their way of survival out of their motherland, therefore, their mother language. English dominates world academia and schools, and it enforces achieving language ability more than their mother tongue. Living, thinking, studying and laboring with enforced second language is also a kind of social working as a strong standard. Better English ability guarantees better jobs and higher incomes, so the stability of survival. Learning English has become a job preparing activity, and it works as the strong instrument of survival.

The more important thing with the global importance of English is that the English subject has become a canon so it positions it as being compulsory in every non-English speaking nation. It is the situation that its importance at the global level is enforcing it into

the local and personal level. In curriculum studies, the three Rs—reading, writing, and arithmetic—occupy the position as basic learning contents for a long time. Based on social development, the required basic ability has increased, and English occupies a space in that. Therefore, English is not the optional subject but a necessity, without which, students could be deprived of their future job.

English occupies the special position in modern curricula apart from other choices of the subject. Although many students have no plan to leave their home country for a job, they are required to learn English. It is not only a compulsory subject but also the most assigned subject in many nations. Students experience 'learning English' mostly under the needs of 'globalization' as if they are learning a bible in Latin in the middle ages. In a 'schooled society' (Illich, 1971), the scores of TOFEL/TOEIC have become the basic criteria for employment albeit not being related to their future job. The certificate and scores are used as an entrance of job activity, and the ability is seldom used in job activities. The meaning of English is placed only on the starting point of job activities and on short trips as a means of recharging for better *labor*.

1.4. *Acedian* boredom and isolation of human being

The public schooling system is crucial for national development wherein boredom is an obstacle. Yet education partakers appear to be trapped in boredom arousing situations: isolation, lack of freedom, and necessity. Education thinkers have denounced this problem. John Dewey (1900/1966) explains the waste of the modern public schooling system while pointing out 'isolation' as its core element. He says, "All waste is due to isolation" (*ibid*, p.

64). Isolation for Dewey is not only at the personal level but also at the organizational level. It involves "the isolation of the various parts of the school system, to the lack of unity in the aims of education, to the lack of coherence in its studies and methods" (*ibid,* p. 61).

However, Dewey does not connect isolation to boredom directly. His concern is more on the isolation of the organization of the education system. As he is a philosopher insisting on experience-centered education, it is natural to connect the waste of education to the opposite status of interest: boredom. Dewey insists the importance of experience in many aspects. The foundational starting point of education, the aims of education, are also not different. In his opinion, "An educational aim must be founded upon the intrinsic activities and needs (including original instincts and acquired habits) of the given individual to be educated" (Dewey, 1916/2004, p. 116). Education should aim at children's meaningful experience, and the meaningful experience starts with the interest of individuals. If the educational mechanism and environment are isolated from society to the interest of children, it is a waste of education.

2. Individualists and humanists as *Mortalitists*

The criticism against the development-centered curriculum has started since its very inception. The target of the criticism is on the purpose or aim of the curriculum as the foundation of development. Modern education intends for the development of human resources and completion of a required standard, but has lost the respect and manifestation of humanity. For those who value the internal purpose of education, development-centered

modern education is nothing more than a factory-based production that prepares people to live as *animal laborans*. Therefore, those who emphasize the internal purpose of education insist that the direction of educational research and practice begins within human beings and focuses on the maturation of personal experiences. To them, the interest in boredom is the cornerstone of the manifestation and maturity of this humanity and, thus, has an existentialistic humanistic tendency.

2.1. Curriculum, experience, and *homo faber*

The discussions of humanists and existentialists in curriculum studies are reminiscent of the idea of *work* and *homo faber* in Arendt's discussions about the human condition and activities. In the analysis of Arendt's human activity (Chapter 3), *work* is an activity that constitutes the objective world by using the hand, unlike the *labor* for physical support. Arendt clarifies the relationship between *work*, human beings and the world in the first paragraph of the chapter on work in the human condition:

> The work of our hands, as distinguished from the *labor* of our bodies—*homo faber* who makes and literally "works upon" as distinguished from the *animal laborans* which *labor*s and "mixes with" —fabricates the sheer unending variety of things whose sum total constitutes the human artifice. They are mostly, but not exclusively, objects for use and they possess the durability Locke needed for the establishment of property, the "value" Adam Smith needed for the exchange market, and they bear testimony to productivity, which Marx believed to be the test of human nature. (*HC*, p. 136)

The Latin word *faber* was originally used to refer to a craft or an artist who worked with hard materials such as metals and wood. The Latin Vulgate bible of the Antiquity, for example, refers to Jesus as the *fabri filius* ('son of handyman' in modern English) (Matthew 13:55, Vulgate). Henri Bergson described *faber* as a human being who makes and uses tools. Arendt defines *homo faber* as a wo/man in the process of embodying values by making up the objective world with nature and realizing the desire for eternity. In other words, the process of which wo/men creates an artificial world through *work* is the process of forming and realizing his/her identity that carves the continuity and value of oneself into the world. In the process, creating and using the tools, which Henri Bergson (1907/2005) comments, is an inevitable consequence of using nature to create an artificial world.

In the curriculum field, *humanists* emphasize the intrinsic purpose of education, and focus on the development and growth of individuality of learners. Additionally, they also emphasize the socialization of students as a result of personal growth in education. School is the place where personal growth and social needs meet. "[We] cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature at first hand, with real things and postmaterials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and the knowledge of their social necessities and uses" (Dewey, 1915/1966, p. 11). It focuses on individuality and personality; in addition, on the process of growth as a member of the world through the relationship with the world. The expression, manifestation, and identity formation of personality is a natural educational process that constitutes the world where people must live with others.

The core process of *work* is to construct an artificial world through the transformation of nature. Therefore, it differs from the painful hardship of *labor* which is inevitably following the rules and principles of nature. Wo/men achieve self-affirmation, satisfaction and confidence through the process of *work*. While *labor* pursues the pleasure of consumption through the results and consequences of an activity, *work* directs the joy of personal experience of transforming materials and objects of nature through the violence of human hands; in turn, it brings happiness as a result as well as the growth of process.

Establishing self-confidence, satisfaction, and self-esteem in the process of constructing the world through individual *work* are not different from educational experiences emphasized by child-centered curriculum scholars. Building an identity of children through *work* that make up the artificial world is not different from the realization of the internal purpose of education which expresses individual personality and pursues social meaning and communication. Meaningful experience is the core element of humanist education, which is the process of establishing the world.

Human beings gain confidence, satisfaction and confidence through the process of work. While *labor* pursues the pleasure of consumption derived from the results and consequences of an activity, *work* directs pleasure from the personal experience of transforming materials and objects of nature through the violence of human hands, therefore, it brings the growth of prospective growth as well as the happiness of result. Self-confidence, satisfaction, and self-esteem, which can be felt in the process of constructing the world through individual activities, are not different from educational experiences emphasized by

child-centered curriculum scholars. To build a child's identity through the activities that make up the artificial world is not different from the realization of the intrinsic purpose of education, which expresses individual personality and pursues social meaning and communication.

Work is also persistent and repetitive, but different from the one of *labor*. The persistence and repeatability of *labor* appear in relation to the survival of wo/man and the power to support it. Newborn babies and older people are free from *labor* because they do not have the *labor* force. However, wo/man with *labor* force must keep laboring for the survival of the person or family, continuously and repeatedly. The non-laboring hours are used to consume the output of *labor* and are, thus, again getting into the restriction of *labor*. "*Labor*, caught in the cyclical movement of the body's life process, has a beginning or an end" (HC, p. 144). However, *work* is the most 'divine' in that its beginning and end are clear. It is not entangled in the necessity of nature; it can be started and ended by the will. Its continuity also depends on human will. Wo/men can destroy their artificial world by their own hands. It is an activity composed entirely of individual will and effort, and is an independent reality.

The *work* of *homo faber* is personal in that it is a process of constituting the world as a place for human life and a process of organizing his identity and engraving it into the world, and as a last, proving and objectivizing him/herself. It causes boredom as it assumes certain targets and runs constantly toward it and temporarily isolates individuals from freedom and pluralism. Arendt (HC, p. 167) explains art as the most *work*-related activity. The artifacts of art do not belong to any purpose or usage but stay there for the existence. Art-pieces are the

most intensely worldly of all concrete things as the characteristics of permanence. Their continuity is not influenced by the destructive power of nature as they do not exist for the specific purpose but only exist themselves.

The *work*-related characteristics of the idea of humanists in the education field, therefore, direct boredom. They intend the authentic education out of the purpose of survival, and effort to establish the personal worldliness of each student. The individual characteristics of *work* and child-centered education are even on the origins of boredom. The establishing process of the world extort the freedom of children, and also put them into the isolation of individuality. Although *work* is the activity which makes the world have plurality, children are naturally put into the isolation of *work* to finish the task of meaningful experience.

2.2. *Mortalitists* and the darkened boredom

The existentialists and humanists in the curriculum field emphasize meaningful experiences through *work*. The emphasis on *work* equals the emphasis on one's life. In *Mortalitists'* point of view, *life* is a process of developing and forming oneself within a finite life, which is certainly different from that of Arendt. To *Mortalitists*, life is walking on a path towards death, which makes a meaningful life and experiences meanings other than surviving through maturation. As for being mortal, educational activities and the development of competencies become important for a human being to leave a permanent piece of him/her behind in the world. Then, the purpose of education for them becomes developing oneself as *homo faber* beyond *animal existence.*

To humanists and existentialists, boredom is something depressing and profound in that it allows us to think about the meaning of life and humans by letting us experience death in our daily lives. The life of a human with a finite end makes it significant to find a meaning in life, and boredom is understood as an introspective and reflective experience which offers one a chance to perceive the importance of life. In education, the significant activity of human beings who constitute the world, boredom is considered as an important process that reflects the educational meaning and promotes growth as human beings, not animals. In this sense, boredom is 'contemplative' rather than active. Curriculum ideas that emphasize the importance of pedagogical experiences and the contemplative characteristics of boredom can be easily found in empirical and ontological curriculum discussions.

Bruner turns from the psychological development perspective into a phenomenological and ontological perspective in his post-middle curriculum research, in which he deeply reflects on the experiences of humans and people concerned with education. Especially, he realizes the contemplative characteristics of boredom suggested by scholars and understands that boredom is the basis for deeper academic reflection. He agrees that boredom is rather negative and painful. According to him, children feel a variety of pains in the process of learning, which are beyond their control and are subject to overcoming. "Part of the difficulty that the young child experiences is in controlling his level of arousal or activation. He is labile becomes over aroused, frustrated, or dormant with fatigue or boredom, to degrees that he cannot control" (Bruner, 1983/2006, p. 111). However, at the level of intellect, boredom appears in different ways. Boredom does not exist as mere pain or obstacle to learning, but as a facilitator that affects deeper and more detailed work.

Having read a good many journals and diaries by writers, I have come to the tentative conclusion that the principal guard against precocious completion, in writing at least, is boredom. (…) It is the boredom of conflict, knowing deep down what one wishes to say and knowing that one has not said it. One acts on the impulse to exploit an idea, to begin. One also acts on the impulse of boredom, to defer." (Bruner, 1962/1997, p. 27)

Bruner seems to have a clear understanding of the difference between the boredom experienced by humans in *animal laborans* and humans as *homo faber*. Boredom for children who have not yet achieved full mental and physical growth depends on the child's growth level and the type of activity, which is why growth is both a pain and a foundation. This is quite contemplative and allows for maturation over time. Bruner recognizes the boredom of humans as an *animal* and humans as a *faber* whilst acknowledging the educational meaning.

2.3. Heidegger and educational experience

Existential curriculumists who seek human maturity and development through genuine experiences place great importance on the leaping and growth that humans experience as *Homo Fabers*. For them, development and maturity do not take place in Piagetian stages, but rather, in the form of a momentary leap that human agents experience and make significant changes in the process of exploring and forming the world. In this case, boredom is the basis for children as Homo Fabers to achieve rapid growth through contemplation. This is similar to the process of Heidegger's 'doing philosophy', and it is a subject of investigation by existential curriculumists.

Reflective thinking is a very important concept for humanists or existentialists. Van Manen mentions "Reflection is a fundamental concept in educational theory, and in some sense it is just another word for 'thinking'. To reflect is to think" (van Manen, 1991, p. 98), and I think this is a succinct statement explaining the status of reflective thinking in curriculum research. This is the case of emphasizing the practical aspects of applying the power of rational thinking that reflective thinking has to real life. Many empiricists, including John Dewey, emphasize the importance and significance of reflective thinking, because they believe that not only significant experiences in life, but also intellectual breakthroughs can be achieved through reflective thinking. Thus, the fact that boredom elicits an outlook on an individual's life and the world, it is possible to connect with reflective thinking.

Paul Gibbs (2011) most clearly links the meaning of the authentic experience of human beings through Heidegger's boredom—doing philosophy to an educational meaning. He believes Heidegger's profound boredom allows humans to experience 'the moment of vision' by helping them face the world. Heidegger's moment of vision is the decisive moment when we deny the existence of one being confined and decide the authentic mode of Dasein. That is, this means Heidegger's process of doing philosophy, in which human beings can awaken as beings, and a moment made by the manifestation of profound boredom. From Gibbs' point of view, pedagogically, this is human's recognition and insight of the world, edification and building of oneself.

Thus, Gibbs considers educational tasks to be ambivalent. It is "to encourage new space to reveal one's profound boredom with the world as it is every day, and to provide the

technical, moral and intellectual skills to make sense of this newness" (Gibbs, 2011, p. 611).
In other words, it is the job of education to acknowledge and provide children with time and
space to proceed beyond, and to develop the skills and intelligence to address boredom, as the
boredom that a child feels, especially profound boredom, is a matter of course and reveals the
authenticity of the phenomenon. In other words, education should appreciate boredom and
recognize 'supporting characteristics' that help build one's own world while boredom as a
potential must be maintained.

Gibbs recognizes that the moment of vision is not something that can be intentionally
formed in the curriculum and classroom. For Heidegger, "education is understanding the
essential being of our world of which we are a part" (*ibid*, p. 611). Hence, what educators
must do is to let learners find and experience the 'ways of restoring meaning' in the formal
and empty curriculum of the modern schooling. For this, Gibbs suggests Richard Rorty's
'edification': "edifying discourse is supposed to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves
by the power of strangeness, to aids us in becoming new beings" (Rorty, 1979, p. 360). To
this end, Rorty argues that all stakeholders must participate in the process of edification.

3. Toward Curriculum of Boredom

In the flow of traditional or empirical curriculum research as previously discussed, boredom
was not addressed as a major topic. In traditional developmental discourse, boredom was not
of interest as the topic of discussion because the view of boredom itself was negative. In the
existential discussion, the inner purpose of education and the significant experience of

children were of more interest. Therefore, boredom, even though important, was neither an insurmountable object nor something too deep or dark to deal with in school education, so seldom discussed in earnest.

3.1. Conducive possibilities in education studies

The possibility of boredom being able to be perceived positively in curriculum studies should be analyzed by considering changes in the human profile required in the social and *labor* markets. The development of tools, machines and automation at the work site have rapidly reduced the demand for assembly line workers. Technology development makes it unnecessary for humans to be in every aspect of production, a series of simple and repetitive acts, and, instead, requires the ability to accomplish a variety of other activities. Machine's ability with stronger power, steadiness and lower cost is what drives humans out of *labor*.

Socio-economically demanding vicissitudes affect curriculum. When developing a curriculum for national school education, the curriculum is structured in order to generate an ideal type of workforce with talents and competencies reflecting the times. A national curriculum aims to nurture students to attain an ideal profile. Writing a curriculum implies the analyzing abilities of students, categorizing them into a developmental level, and creating educational contents, teaching methods, and evaluation methods for them. In this context, the redundancy of a large number of workers means that the ideal worker profile has changed, and education has to shift its focus from mass production workers to more specialized and qualified people. There is now a need for humans with the ability to understand and control machines in the *labor* market and to diagnose and solve problems when they arise. In

addition, it calls for human beings with ideas who can solve endless problems and increase productivity. In other words, the human profile required is not a skilled wo/man who has the patience to perform a given task silently and sustained manner but one who can flexibly adapt to the constantly changing world and explore new things.

Rather than humans with the ability to overcome repetitive tasks and pressure, education out to produce people with the ability to instantly judge and choose responsive activities in a variety of situations, and to start something new. Rather than the ability to learn from the old traditions and accumulated knowledge, the attitude of feeling bored of the past while finding novelties is perceived as a more positive ability. Rather than being able to endure boring things and reach standardized achievements, social changes that require the ability to overcome and subvert boring situations have emerged.

The premise needs for overcoming the existing world and be able to start a new one is the ability to look at the old world from a negative point of view. In a world where reason has become the most important ability, 'critical reason' played a role, but at the stage where the importance of emotion is recognized and its role is discussed, boredom takes up a part of such a position. In other words, boredom is not just a mere displeasure or disconformity, but an active resistance to negative situations. Therefore, boredom in school education is a psychological state of resistance and a critical response recognizing the problematic situation in a given educational environment or content education. The pedagogical discussion of this can be understood in Ang Chen's following comments:

Perception of boredom results when an individual encounter a task that requires

mechanical, repetitive, and tedious work. From an educational constructivist perspective, however, boredom is defined as a student's resistant and rejective emotion to the learning experiences. Perception of boredom is likely to result in less control of attention, slow information processing in learning, and consequently produce learners' resistance to the content and school. (Chen, 1998, p. 2)

Student boredom in class and school is no longer a symbol of laziness and insincerity, but resistance to old things. It is not a dense and analytical conscious resistance like critical reason, but a perception that humans experience through their body and activity. Therefore, students, the main actors of education, are consciously aware of problems in the world.

In addition to boredom as a resistive perception, the view of it as a more active or functional mental state also supports this, which can be found in the psychological approach to education. The psychology field, after expanding its domain to neurology, has rapidly grown and at the same time, strengthens the tendency to see humans as brain-centered. That is to say, all human phenomena are the result of brain activity and so is boredom. An important approach in neurological understanding is that boredom is the result of the brain activities (Dal Mas & Wittmann, 2017; Danckert et al., 2018; Ulrich, Keller, & Grön, 2016). Boredom is not an empty or null experience but a full and dynamic experience.

The process of psychological discussion about boredom seems to be similar to the development process of the discussion on sleep. In the past, sleep was recognized as the same as death. In other words, as a wo/man dies, all human organs in the sleep are transformed into the process of dormancy, which was considered a wasteful time when nothing happens.

Therefore, a short-sleeper was recognized as a hardworking, smart wo/man with a fruitful

life. However, the development of sleep science has been confirmed as a full state where a

variety of activities such as body and mental recovery, data processing, memory

consolidation, and problem solving, rather than an empty state in that the process of sleep

simply does nothing. This seems the same in the understanding of boredom.

In the *acedian* perception, boredom is a null or empty experience, and regarded as a

meaningless experience, but this invigorates the discussion about the function of boredom

with the development of neuroscience. In other words, it is not an empty state, just like sleep,

but a full/dynamic state with a variety of brain activities being done. James Danckert and his

colleagues (2018) comprehensively analyzed the psychological discussion of boredom,

which, through the accumulation of neuroscience's findings on boredom, analyzed the state

of boredom in two aspects: the default mode network and the salience network.

First, when human minds wander as boredom, unlike being intent on a task, a part of

brain named the default mode network works (DMN). "The DMN is a collection of brain

regions including the posterior cingulate, precuneus, and medial prefrontal cortex that has

been associated with 'off-task' thinking – anything from internally focused thoughts (i.e.,

thinking of the past, imagining the future) to mind-wandering" (Danckert et al., 2018, p. 100).

Boredom is the default mode, causing dormant state or internal thinking activities without

focusing on purpose-oriented activities or tasks given from the outside and, therefore,

phenomenon such as space out or day dreaming appears. Space out or day dreaming is the

phenomenon of mind-wandering, which explains the inner activity of boredom that the

human mind can create pure internal thinking, rather than just reaction to surroundings or a particular task. Zoromodi explains the cognitive aspects of boredom as follows:

> This gets to the heart of why mind-wandering or daydreaming is different from other forms of cognition. Rather than experiencing, organizing, and understanding things based on how they come to us from the outside world, we do it from within our own cognitive system. That allows for reflection and the ability for greater understanding after the heat of the moment." (Zoromodi, 2017. Chapter 1. para.34)

Second, when a wo/man is bored, the salience network is activated in the brain, which serves to detect and screen information in the surroundings. It connects different areas in the brain and serves to determine the order of priorities. "The SN is important for detecting behaviorally relevant events in the environment ultimately to engage the CEN when needed. In a sense then, the SN switches between the DMN and the CEN in response to goal-relevant information" (Danckerts et al., 2018, p. 6). In the context of this boredom, as with DMN, the salience network is activated, meaning that boredom is in the realm of emotion or feeling and, at the same time, in the realm of cognition. This explains that there is dynamic cognitive activity in boredom, not just feeling a phenomenon of malaise.

Human beings receive a great deal of information consciously and unconsciously through their senses while awake. This massive amount of information is categorized into what is needed and what is not, and what to put into short-term storage and what into long-term storage during sleep. At this time, dreaming is a process of organizing this data that is recognized in the surface of consciousness and is a form of dynamic cognitive activity rather

than static. Some neurologists view boredom as a sleep-like state of awakening and perceive

it as an active state of consciousness where human cognition organizes data.

Boredom, an essential activity in the process of information processing, is not just a

passive and negative emotion of discomfort or annoyance but an active and positive brain

activity that can organize information and come up with new solutions. Therefore, this is not

a simple emotional moment, say a mood, but a complex mental and neurological state that

includes brain-fade, information processing, pausing and reposing. Reflections, rapid growth,

insight, structural understanding and creativity, usually recognized as important in children's

educational experiences, are the results of being able to organize new sensory information

and to discover significant/new meanings in relationships among existing background

knowledge. Boredom is a supportive phenomenon, and also a basic and essential mental state

for shaping many desirable educational experiences.

There is also a view that boldly reveals the *Conducivist* positioning of boredom.

Strong demand for creativity is natural in the context of fast socio-economic changes. The

concept of creativity may vary, but the common tenet is the ability to produce new ideas

beyond the extant. If this is plausible, rather than the ability to learn from old traditions and

accumulated knowledge, the state of feeling bored by the past and trying to find new ways is

a positive way of articulating what creativity is. Rather than to endure boring things and reach

standardized achievements, social changes that require the ability to overcome and subvert

boring situations have emerged. Brunner shows an accurate perception of this. "Boredom is a

powerful phenomenon—a poison to the intellectual in large doses. And like many poisons, it is a rather benign stimulant in small doses" (Brunner, 1962/1979, pp. viii-ix).

Boredom acts as an important catalyst to start the new. The beginning of novelty can appear in many ways. As Arendt said, novelty is manifested through language and *action*. Language and behavior are the most active and routine ways to start the new and are also frequent educational experiences. It is very natural and does not require much effort. It is a manifestation of the basic *natality* of human beings who start newness, and a daily relationship establishment through *action*. Brunner's novelty through boredom is closer to novelty through rational effort and critical thinking. Boredom as the process of constructing the world and building oneself enables us to imagine and build a new world and brings power to renew ourselves. In other words, it is the boredom of *homo faber* and the constant effort of human beings who build a new world.

3.2. Curriculum and *vita activa*

The reason why *action* and boredom are important in education study is that the weight of *action* for children is different from adults. To understand this, we need to simply remind ourselves about Arendt's understanding of human activity. As Arendt comments, *labor*, *work,* and *action* indicate different activities and they have different roles and conditions. Among them, *labor* defines every activity that supports human survival. However, categorization and explanation are not entirely valid in the case of children. To be precise, rather than *labor*, the survival of children depends on *action*, through acts and words that stem from *plurality*. The closer to the *first birth* s/he is, the stronger connection to *action* for survival.

Human beings come into the world through the first birth. The first birth is an inter-transactional activity among people, and it is not only achieved by child him/herself, but also given by his/her parents. Children are transferred from the *world in utero* to the *extra uterine world* through the process of birth, and parents accept building a new relationship as a miracle. Newborn baby's or child's activities for survival are different from *labor*. Their activity is quite individual and self-centered but have a power of relativity or interventional. Every activity of child draws the parent's attention, is interactive, and helpful to their survival. Children deposit themselves in a relationship with their parents for survival. Locating on the inevitability of isolation through repetitive activities is impossible to eudure for children, which paradoxically is negative for their survival. Children can survive only through *action* and growth by building a relationship with their parents. Therefore, it is plural and relational as well as helpful to survival, that is, half-borrowing from Arendt, *animal activa*. In this process, children can become a person who can *labor* for the survival of oneself and their family. In other words, the birth of child is not necessarily expressed selectively or intermittently but is always inevitably present.

Therefore, *action*, *labor* and *work* are not clearly distinguishable in a child's life. Since 'childhood' was born in modern times, children are free from *labor* until reaching adulthood, and solved their survival through relationship with their protectors. All of a child's behaviors and experiences are perceived as a process called 'growth', leaving various activities mixed. Here, boredom also exists in more diverse ways than adults. Boredom is constantly present in a child's life. A kindergarten teacher whom I met in the International and Interdisciplinary Conference on boredom (2016) shared an experience:

The child's experience on boredom is huge and dynamic. If they are bored, they express it with their body and actions. They roll down the ground and shout "It's boring!" in an exaggerated way. It shows how much they are affected and hate boredom.

Some Arendtians seem to recognize that the categorization of Arendt's human activities should be altered to some extent when it comes to educational settings. For example, Maschelein and Woo suggest that when explaining the political thoughts by Arendt, they should all be replaced with education or educational *action*. According to them, it all makes sense, and even helps to deepen our understanding of the educational phenomenon. This is quite valid in that Arendt is in Aristotle's tradition. The meaning of politics, which Arendt talks about in her many books, is not in its narrow sense, but in a broader sense that encompasses all social activities among humans. Thus, when political activities become *action*, all human *action*s become social activities of the *zōon politikon*, as defined by Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics). Educational activity is basically a process of developing human beings that society needs; a process of establishing one's identity and forming a world; and, finally, a political process of establishing relationships in pluralism. Thus, every act of a child becomes an educational activity, which is an activity of a future job and a survival way of explaining the meaning of the present existence.

The *Conducivist* view of boredom embedded in curriculum theories cannot be but controversial. Boredom is a natural/world occurrence in modern school education. Attempts to use boredom as a teaching instrument are difficult because of the uncontrollability of

boredom. This is because it is impossible to predict which result will be triggered by boredom. Nevertheless, because it has various positive effects, if trying to use boredom as an educational method, it is important to allow them to stay in boredom. For this to happen, they emphasize giving students time to do nothing. However, it is the case where only the simplest form— boredom in a state where nothing is to be done—is assumed, ignoring the various types and dimensions of boredom. Allowing children to be bored is a limited approach that considers only simple practice that does not reflect other types and dimensions of boredom.

This does not mean that a practical approach to boredom in the curriculum should be dismissed. Boredom is always present in the curriculum as a condition of various human activities, especially of *rebirth*. Therefore, this should be a topic that can be discussed, and a topic that needs to be discussed. Hence, how can a *Conducivist* approach to boredom be discussed when it comes to curriculum? What practical phenomena and aspects of boredom can be discussed in curriculum studies?

The concept of 'practical' has been discussed in a variety of ways by many scholars, but a pedagogically significant approach is an understanding of 'praxis'. Praxis is one of the most discussed concepts in curriculum studies, especially in the re-conceptualists. Paulo Freire's explanation of praxis is worth noting: "the praxis: reflection (thought) and *action* (practice) upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1968/2000, p. 51). Important here are reflection, *action* and transformation. These three factors, which remind us of Aristotle's discussion of praxis and theory in 'Nicomachean Ethics', allow us to understand the meaning of 'practical' in a very specific and profound way. In general, when we think of practical, we

think of the instrumentality or usability of a subject. It is considered practical when being used in the real world to produce tangible effects. However, this is the practice with a narrow sense without the various and wide meanings of praxis. In other words, we can say that an object is practical when it is helpful to understanding and thinking, leads to an *action*, or is morally meaningful. This can be applied to the discussion of boredom. If we think about the educational praxis of the conducive boredom, it is more than just thinking about how it helps to bring about the educational effect. This can be simply structured as follows:

- Reflection – how can the current curriculum and educational experiences be understood through boredom?

- Action – how can boredom guide the development of curriculum/program/ and classes?

- Ethics – how can boredom be perceived and act as a curriculum element in the discussion of value education or educational ethics?

3.3. Boredom as Educational experience and phenomenon

William Pinar (1981) uses the category of 're-conceptualists' for the methods of curriculum research. It is a concept referring to people who use a new perspective of curriculum rather than an existing developmental perspective. The concept of *Currere* is used to refer broadly to the perspective of inquiring into all educational experiences in a metaphoric racecourse. There are many studies of re-conceptualist, which reveal the educational experience of boredom, whether they intend it or not. In studies, boredom works as a prism to show the

experiences of education stakeholders and social environment as an influential mechanism.

Looking at the perspectives and research methods of curriculum re-conceptualists with the prism of conductivity of boredom can help to actively and deeply understand students' experience of schooling. Recognizing students' experiences in school activities helps deepening to understand school education. A deeper understanding of experience comes from differences in perception. Understanding a child's experience with an *Acedian* perception of boredom and with a *Mortalitist's* or *Conducivist's* perspective can make a difference not only in the level of understanding educational experiences, but also in its practicability in the future.

Phillip Jackson, a pioneer re-conceptualist, analyzes in detail his children's school experiences in his book "Life in Education" (1968/1990). Before analyzing the students' experiences, he describes the educational environment of school: "repetitive, routinized, and compulsory aspects of classroom life may give the impression that school is an unpleasant place to be" (*ibid*, p. 41). Jackson recognizes that the various characteristics of the modern schooling show that it is organized in a highly authoritarian and uniform way.

Jackson addresses boredom and assigns to it a great importance, while discussing various discomforting memories of schooling. For Jackson, boredom is one of the biggest causes of children not successfully adapting to school life and educational activities. He stressed that students generally perceive the classroom space where "feeling of tedium dominate" (*ibid*, p. 43). In other words, in the school environment where unpleasant experiences are common, students naturally perceive boredom as one of the discomforts.

Children recognize this quite concretely. Jackson argues that it was such a regulated space where classes were conducted in the same way with the same posture in the same-looking classrooms, and were organized in a modularized educational time frame: "children are in school for a long time, that the settings in which they perform are highly uniform, and that they are there whether they want to be or not" (*ibid*, p. 6). In addition, awareness of the content of education separated from the meaning of life was recognized as a major cause of boredom: "feelings of boredom arising from the meaninglessness of the assigned tasks or the overwhelming attractiveness of life outside the class" (*ibid*, p. 42).

In the re-conceptualist tradition of curriculum, the premise of boredom is basically negative because it was discussed when *acedian* perception of boredom was mainstream. Thus, a child's experience of boredom is not addressed in depth. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the causes of boredom is "overwhelming attractiveness of life outside the class" (*ibid*, p. 42). Jackson analyzed in considerable detail the uniformity and authoritarian aspects of school education, and the education contents and management of schools separated from children's lives through the prism of boredom. He suggests 'attractiveness' of the world outside school as one of the causes of boredom as he dialectically contrasts it with the 'unattractiveness' of school education. Indirectly, he suggests that discomfort inside schools makes external activities more pleasurable. Jackson seems to recognize that a school education's tendency to arousing boredom serves as an important catalyst for students' interest, pleasure, and passion for life outside school.

Another study linking educational experience to social class is the Paul Willis's

"Learning to Labor" (1977/1981). His point of discussion is on the *labor* class students'
'resistance' rather than boredom. but we can interpret the relationship between boredom and
students' choices through his detail discussions and examples. The *labor* class[6] student's
school life is not same with other class students. The *labor* class students reproduce their
class by choice of taste and activities, where boredom plays a significant role. In his study,
the students of the *labor* class internalize and expose the various aspects of their parental
class to behave; boredom serves as a criterion in the choice of educational activities. In the
following dialog:

> PW   What's the opposite of boredom?
>
> Joey   Excitement.
>
> PW   But what's excitement?
>
> Joey   Defying the law, breaking the law like, drinking like.
>
> Spike   Thieving.
>
> Spanksy   Goin' down the streets.
>
> Joey   Vandalising (…) that's the opposite of boredom - excitement, defying the
>   law and when you're down The Plough, and you talk to the gaffer,
>   standing by the gaffer, buying drinks and that, knowing that you're 14 and
>   15 and you're supposed to be 18. (Willis, 1981, pp. 33-34)

All behaviors that conform to authority and system become boring and the reverse

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[6] Willis uses the term 'working class' in the book 'learning to labor'. However, it is changed to '*labor* class' in
the present thesis because *labor* is matched to the Hannah Arendt's definition of *labor, work,* and *action* of Hanna
Arendt, which is adapted to this thesis.

becomes pleasurable. To lads, adapting to a teacher or studying hard are feminine, so this unmanly attribute is boring. Therefore, vandalism, violence, and resistance to authority become the standards of behavior, whereas enjoyment, scenes, tactics, and picking a way of fighting are interesting. Masculine confidence, dramatic presentment of events, solidarity in a same circle, and judgement with wit and wisdom, which are not overly moral, operate as the core value to supporting them.

What we can see in Willis' writing is the 'standardization' of school education. School education focuses on developing the intellectual skills and physical habits that are required by the 'middle class' among the various educational contents and necessary in the *labor* market. However, the appearance of schooling as boring and unattractive to *labor* class students. It is because that, first, school education is different from their class features so that they feel 'isolation' in their school experiences. Second, they feel weak and wimpish, given the 'lack of freedom' from the higher and authoritative school system, with teachers and administrators having more power and force than themselves. Finally, various rules and school activities become boring as they are tied up with the constant necessity of study and rest.

The *labor* class students chose to escape this boredom through manifestations of '*action*'. Through various *actions*, they are trying to acquire their excitement and pleasure as a process of rebirth. The process of rebirth is achieved through relationships with their peers in the same class. Peers are so-called 'lads' who communicate through violence, rebellion, and vandalism. Their destructive *acts* are not just resistance but a process of peer communication that reveals and acknowledges their identity. Rather than the words and deeds used in the

classroom, *action* of destroying the old and bringing the new appears in the direction of 'thoughtlessness' which Arendt comments about. Boredom and the boring environment, as the object of contempt and scorn, are the only cause that led them to the direction of pleasure. The way of opposition thoughtlessly in the perception of *labor* class is to push the students back into the process of class necessity. In other words, the resistance of the children to boredom, combined with thoughtlessness, pushes themselves into their class reproduction. They are rolling into the constant and permanent life of physical *labor* à la Sisyphus.

3.4. Boredom as a guideline of curriculum development

Boredom is a fundamental educational experience in the modern school education system. Therefore, developing curricula and educational programs without understanding boredom is the same as developing without awareness of whether the purpose of the educational program is for *animal laborans*, *homo faber*, or *vita activa*. As a process of developing a thoughtless curriculum, it naturally leads to the development of a curriculum for *animal laborans*, driven by socio-economic needs.

Then, what does it mean to develop a curriculum that reflects the conducive characteristics of boredom? As discussed earlier, the occurrence of boredom is a natural human condition for rebirth. Humans constantly experience the process of rebirth since they are born until they die and are constantly bored between rebirth and rebirth. The effort to get rid of boredom in class is a challenge to the impossible and, therefore, a greater focus should be on understanding the meaning of boredom that occurs during various human activities and transferring its conducive energy into the next curriculum activity.

What is more important is to develop education programs that integrate diverse human activities. Human beings are partly an animal, a fabricator, and a *politicus*. Curriculum is mostly perceived as boring because it is organized for survival of individuals or for social development. Such educational programs isolate many of the learners from life, relationships, and content, and deprive them of freedom through discipline, training and coaching. The constant pursuit of uniformity and routine leads to the trap of necessity and, in turn, the trap of necessity inherent to modern curriculum which sets students into a hamster wheel of constant pursuit of uniformity and routine.

There is a need for curriculum theory to be open to the *conducive* potentials of boredom and prevent modern students from falling into deviancy or totalitarianism. As Arendt said, the duty of education is to preserve the *natality* of students.

Chapter 5: Axiology of boredom in the classroom

This chapter discusses the axiology of boredom with a pedagogical perspective. As noted in Chapter 4, the practical approach to boredom in education can be discussed in three aspects: Understanding, Implementation, and Value. This chapter deals with the axiology of the three aspects, which have already been briefly addressed in categorizing discourses on boredom (Chap. 2). In the same chapter, boredom was categorized based on how to perceive it; those who perceive boredom negatively look at it as *Acedians*, and those who connect with the meaning of life contemplate it as *Mortalitists*, those who acknowledge the positive side of boredom and explore the possibility as *Conducivists*. This categorization sets the direction of the discourse of value theory of boredom. Therefore, this chapter first explores the possibility and direction of value theory approach to boredom and, then, embodies the value theory of boredom (axiology) for the education and curriculum studies.

1. Values and boredom in school

1.1. Possibilities

Axiology of boredom can be regarded as a contradiction or unnecessary because boredom is commonly treated as an emotion. Emotion is a kind of body reaction to surroundings, so, to judge whether it is good or bad, or beautiful or ugly sounds weird. This weirdness is also similar to the other perceptions, for example, the boredom as a mental state or as energy. It can be

considered ambiguous to put into the realm of judgment because they are considered a natural human response to the environment or an organic response to protect one's homeostasis. Some others might argue boredom is *per se* a value-oriented phenomenon, so, boredom inquiry already involves axiological perceptions. If so, boredom would be in the lifeworld rather than in the objective physical reaction.

The gap derives from the difference of epistemology of boredom. If the former recognizes boredom as an objective phenomenon (*Erscheinung*) or emotion, the latter recognizes it as a phenomenon in human representation (*Phänomen*). In the former case, boredom is value-free as a thing-in-itself (*Noumenon*) generated by the changes of the natural environment. In the latter case, boredom is value-dependent because it affects human life, behavior, the direction and perception of consciousness. In the present study, boredom is explored based on the theoretical discussion of Hannah Arendt under the phenomenological tradition.

The phenomenon of boredom does not exist as an objective object, but as a representation of human consciousness and perception, or pre-exists as a form of 'mood' at the base of the representation, so that it is intentional to object, that is, borrowing from classic Phenomenology, Intentionality. As human consciousness always aims at objects, so does boredom at *rebirth*, and the value of boredom is determined by the direction taken by the manifestation of natality.

Deed is regulated by value. Wo/men not only judge and act in a way that benefits them but in a way that they think right or enjoyable. The aesthetic and ethical view of an object defines individual or social activity. That is, the axiological consciousness of individuals also works as the core norm of society and it also happens in the classroom where the new generations learn

the social and historical norms. The classroom is one of the most ethics-intensive places in human society as child's existence positions between formal learning and pleasurable/informal activities. The beauty and goodness, as the core norm of school activity, are meaningful to understand the modern schooling. The studies of ethics and aesthetics of boredom is, as Svendsen said, dealing with the meaning of boredom in human life:

> "Boredom has its own moral. That is closer to the truth. I do not believe that boredom as a phenomenon can be a platform for any substantial moral philosophy, (…) but I do believe that it has something to tell us about how we live" (Svendsen, 2005, p.133).

The effort to understand human life through the axiological inquiry on boredom has its purposefulness in the over-aimed schooling for human resource development. Arendt comments that wo/man is 'plural existence' so the schooling ignoring plurality poses ethical problems by itself. School as a social space where human interactions take place is an arena of moral actions: "Morality originates in-between human beings, not 'in' individuals. Morality is about how we relate to one another: it is not a matter of internal moral 'substances.' Morality originates in-between and establishes itself in terms of human relations" (Williams, 2007, p.2).

1.2. Values of boredom

The core concerns of Axiology is 'truth', 'good' and 'beauty'. These simple terms of value are quite complex when they enter into the domain of boredom. This chapter will mainly focus on the good and on beauty. In general, the discussion of truth refers to ontological truth and intellectual truth, which deals primarily with the discussion of the nature of an object and its relationship with human beings. In Chapter 3, the nature of boredom and its relationship with

humans were discussed. This shows the value-oriented aspect of boredom because understanding an object was a process of revealing the truth. So If I start with axiological questions of boredom, Is boredom good or bad? Is boredom right or wrong? Is boredom beautiful or ugly? What is the meaning of the goodness and beauty of boredom in education? The answers to these unfamiliar questions can be found in the fundamental understanding of every value.

Goodness

An axiology of boredom could start with the foremost and simple question: "Is boredom good or bad?" As the modern/contemporary schooling mostly follows the *Acedian* tradition, boredom is commonly recognized in the negative sense—Bad It is common to find that a bored student is immediately labeled as bad and deviant, and a boring teacher is a standardized incompetent teacher. A boring teacher is thought to be unable to imagine, who lost key teaching qualities and abilities. One day, in a seminar about qualified and experienced teaching, I met a teacher and asked her about the boredom of teachers.

> Researcher: Thank you for sharing about what is good teaching. I can understand you are a good teacher and the class strategies are great. By the way, I have a question in a different aspect. Don't you feel tired or bored with the fully sincere attitude and the enthusiastic teaching method? If you feel it, how do you deal with it?
>
> Teacher: Teacher does not feel bored with students at teaching. Does mom feel bored with her baby? No. Students are the same as babies to teachers. Teaching is never boring.

This answer clearly shows us the common perception of boredom in our school present day, especially in the East-Asian context, where the 'modern' / effective/developmental education is widespread. Boredom is connected to indiligence, insincerity, and inability, and confessing boredom is sensed as a sin of bad teacher. The *Acedian* perception is quite common and rooted in the classroom. However, as we categorized the perceptions of boredom, there would also be many *Mortalitist* or *Conducivist* perceptions of boredom. In the axiological context, not only perceptual discussion of boredom but what lies beyond would also be possible. In order to understand this, it is possible to start with a general discussion of goodness.

Tomas Alvira suggests dimensions of goodness in his textbook of metaphysics; it is quite useful to inquire about the goodness of boredom. According to Alvira (1991), goodness can be defined in three categories; something which is good *per se*, something which reaches its end, and something which spreads goodness. As a first, the 'everything which is good,' refers to ontological goodness or 'good nature' inherent to a thing. An ontology of boredom to inquire about the nature of boredom followed by a study of its perfection is unrealistic and meaningless. Boredom is not a crystallized object, so even the existence is quite ambiguous. Many scholars have suggested different concepts and the other new concepts are being suggested continually. Possibly, as David Londey said (cited in Toohey, 2011), it might not exist because of its ambiguity: "Better (…) to think of boredom as a grab bag of a term covering emotions such as frustration, surfeit, depression, disgust, indifference, apathy, and that feeling of being trapped or confined" (*ibid*, p.4). To inquire about the ontologic perfection of 'nothing' or 'ambiguity' is the challenge to impossibility and even meaningless, hence it is boring.

In the present study, boredom is explained as a human condition and an innate faculty,

which exists in-between various activities; as a sign of being isolated, lacking freedom, or trapped in necessity, boredom is a power to immanently (self-originated) facilitate *rebirth*. Boredom is a normal, common, and natural state in-between human activities, so its ontological perfection is impossible to be recognized and calculated. IN other words, it is impossible to judge the ontological goodness of boredom, so, it cannot be said whether it is good or evil in its entirety. That human being has several kinds of faculties as if reason, emotion, or body itself cannot be the object of axiological discussion.

The second definition of goodness as 'that which reaches its end' is also a problem about the purposefulness of being. The ontological concept of boredom implies purpose and aim, which provide a clue for axiological discussion. Boredom in the present study is defined as a faculty which aims at *rebirth*. As a driving force to lead a wo/man *rebirth*, the purpose of boredom is to begin anew or to be conducive to *natality*, and thus facilitating the natal human activity. Boredom is good insofar it leads to the new birth, and enables the actor to break free from the olds and establishing the news. Conversely, boredom would be bad if boredom fails to renew and, instead, it drives an actor into a deeper/chronical boredom such as a pit of necessity. It means that derailed from its purpose, boredom goes bad. Hence, under the concept of good as 'that which reaches its end', a chronical, continual, and 'deadly' boredom is bad.

As for the third definition, if good is 'that which spreads goodness' then the good and bad of boredom will be valued by its phenomenological outcome. In other words, the action as a result of *rebirth* becomes the criteria to judge the goodness or evilness axiologically. As every action cannot guarantee the goodness, so does boredom. When newness comes into the old world, it appears to be destructive. Destruction is *per se* violent but the consequences can be

different. Boredom brings newness in a form that destroys the suffering of *labor*.

What is important at this point is to consider boredom in its socio-historical context as well as the individual history. Demonizing boredom is a typical phenomenon in the modern schooling system but it hasn't been always so. In Greek antiquity, boredom was not recognized negatively as it was a status symbol of the noble class (See Chapter 3). It was a symbol of 'freeman' to someone and vanity of homo sapiens.[7] In the Middle Ages, Christians treated boredom as an element of disturbance between God and human beings, so a bored believer was assumed to be in need of corrective discipline. Boredom was thus a symbol of spiritual weakness if not evil. The latter partly caused the Protestant reaction against traditional Catholic asceticism such as monastic life and celibacy. Instead, Protestantism suggested determinism regardless of human efforts for salvation, thus highlighting the idea of 'sola fide' (faith only). The Weberian 'modern and industrial' interpretation of Protestantism's impact on the economy is not always consistent but it certainly has explanatory power for the case of American progressivism. With the upcoming of the modern age and its emphasis on human rationality, a bored person became a symbol of insincerity. The rational mind and enthusiasm for the golden *ratio* became the foremost good to modern society. Meanwhile, its antipodes of boredom and laziness became the symbol of 'evilness'.

Beauty

The second key to deal with Axiology is aesthetics. Along with the ethical approach, the aesthetic approach to boredom sounds rather unfamiliar. How can we deal with the aesthetical

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[7] Certainly, it is controversial the only noble class could be bored in Antiquity, but it shows the perception of the times of boredom.

aspects of boredom that are out of reach of the five senses? What is the meaning of aesthetical understanding of boredom and what does it mean pedagogically? Is boredom beautiful or ugly? Can beautiful or ugly boredom be distinguished? I start the discussion with the fundamental questions of aesthetics.

What is beauty? This simple question has been asked by philosophers for a long time as the first question in aesthetics. Among them, an interesting and meaningful connection between pedagogy and boredom is the view that beauty is a type of goodness. Alvira explains this in terms of possessing and known; "Every good thing engenders joy when it is attained; beautiful things, however, give rise to a special delight simply by being known" (Alvira, 1991, p.166). In other words, human beings feel joy when they acquire goodness, and beauty makes wo/men pleasure just by looking/sensing at it. The pleasure, of course, does not end in look, but can be felt when deeply recognizing an object such as an art piece, so, it has a contemplative character and it resembles the *cognitive beauty* in Thomas Aquinas.

> The beautiful is the same as the good, and they differ in aspect only. For since good is what all seek, the notion of good is that which calms the desire; while the notion of the beautiful is that which calms the desire, by being seen or known. Consequently, those senses chiefly regard the beautiful, which are the most cognitive, viz. sight and hearing, as ministering to reason; for we speak of beautiful sights and beautiful sounds. But in reference to the other objects of the other senses, we do not use the expression "beautiful," for we do not speak of beautiful tastes, and beautiful odors. Thus it is evident that beauty adds to goodness a relation to the cognitive faculty: so that "good" means that which simply pleases the appetite; while the "beautiful" is something

pleasant to apprehend. (Aquinas, The Summa Theologica, I-II, Q. 27, Art. 2)

When discussing the goodness of boredom, we talked about the ontological perfection of boredom, its teleological goodness, and its good influence. Applied to the Aquinas' aesthetics, the possession of the perfect *natal* boredom, the goodness of the result, the good influence show the goodness of boredom, which becomes beauty when we recognize it and feel pleasure. In other words, if a wo/men feel pleasure by recognizing the situation of boredom, it becomes beautiful, and this beauty remains a positive cornerstone for the growth of an individual and the world-building. With truth, goodness and beauty in education can be recognized as important factors for the holistic education; *verum bonum pulchrum* of Plato. The beauty of boredom is a good example of the realization of whole-person education.

The discussion of beauty varies considerably more than goodness. Beauty as the reflection of Plato's idea, Divine beauty or beauty simpliciter of Augustine, and structural beauty of Kant are all discussions about the perfection of an object except at different times. In other words, it is a way to be considered beautiful when one object reflects the most perfect existence, or when it forms a structure that is close to perfection itself. As discussed earlier, this study is based on phenomenological epistemology; so it focuses on boredom as an experiential phenomenon of human being rather than the perfect boredom as an objective object. Therefore, the aesthetic discussion of boredom should be focused more on the aesthetic perception/attitude of boredom.

Alvira (*ibid*, pp.170-172) has made some distinctions about the perception of beauty, which seems quite phenomenological even with Husserl's perspectives. First, Alvira divides the perceptions of beauty into three: What each person likes; what each person 's taste is; and,

what each deems beautiful. Furthermore, he argues that 'what anyone deems beautiful' is where the beauty of objects is; otherwise the discussion of beauty and ugliness of the object itself, is very fluid depending on what the object is. Alvira recognizes that subjective preferences or taste of an individual cannot be the object of beauty, and clearly understands that only aspects of beauty within inter-subjectivity can be the object of discussion. It is, in other words, the criterion recognized by a social being or by the public as a member of the contemporary period can be a criterion leading to a discussion of beauty; therefore it is, "Both ordinary experience and artistic experience reveal that natural beauty, as well as the beauty arising from human activity, transcends man and is based on the nature of things" (*ibid*, p.171).

In short, for the value theory of burnout, compared with the field of performance or *esse* of burnout itself, the social existence as the context can be seen in the burnout of human beings in the mutual subjectivity or in the pleasure and conflict of cognitive objects.

To sum, the axiological discussion on boredom is not in the domain of perfection or *esse* of boredom itself, but rather in the pleasure and disgust of the perceiver or emerging boredom in intersubjectivity or individual agents as contextual social beings. Therefore, the perception of boredom or the perception of the object of boredom is the criteria for measuring the beauty of boredom. If so, how can we deal with the relationship between the value theory of boredom and pedagogy? How can numerous discussions of value theory be combined with the pedagogical idea of boredom?

1.3. Axiologies of boredom in the era of *animal laborans*

The basic premise for discussing the axiology of boredom is contextuality. Therefore, people's

inter-subjective perception of boredom as an object of relative value rather than absolute value is the core of its interpretation. As a plural existence, wo/men not only stand toward the world as human agency but also share and interact with common values in a common relationship. The modernization process, the beginning and basis of school education, is the main context for sharing such pluralistic values.

In the conclusion of the book 'The Human Condition', Arendt explains the process of modernization as expansion of *labor*, in which its position and influence. The triumph of *animal laborans* appears as a *labor*-centered/privileged society and the defeat of *homo faber* and the loss of *vita activa* (See Chapter 3). In addition, Arendt explains the highest goodness drawing on Christianity in the modern era—life. She argues that the meaning of life in Antiquity and the Old Testament is different from the New Testament. Plato abhorred slaves because they didn't keep their dignity as human beings through suicide (Arendt, 1958/1998, p.316), and the life problem was the only one among the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament as equal (*ibid*, p.317). Since the New Testament, Arendt argues, life starts to the definite goodness so nobody can kill and even commit suicide for immortality. Lately, the meaning of life in modern society has consolidated with an increased *labor* activity.

> The modern age continued to operate under the assumption that life, and not the world, is the highest good of man; in its boldest and most radical revisions and criticisms of traditional beliefs and concepts, it never even thought of challenging this fundamental reversal which Christianity had brought into the dying ancient world. No matter how articulate and how conscious the thinkers of modernity were in their attacks on tradition, the priority of life over everything else had acquired for them the status of a 'self-evident

truth,' and as such it has survived even in our present world, which has begun already to leave the whole modern age behind and to substitute for a laboring society the society of jobholders. (*ibid*, pp.318-319)

The long-standing tradition, which recognizes life as the highest good of human beings, has positioned the core value by connecting with modern society. First, Arendt argues that the value of contemporary capitalistic society lies in the New Testament tradition. This claim coheres with Max Weber's idea (1930/2005), that modern capitalism starts and develops based on the Reformation by Calvin and Luther. Thus, the expansion and globalization of capitalism through the modernization process is based on the ideology of life as the highest good, that is, the conservation of life by the *labor* and consumption become the core goodness of the modern society and, in turn, it becomes the axiological foundation, which trap human beings into the trap of necessity.

Life as the highest good is the backbone of axiology of highly-speed capitalistic modernization. A case in point is East Asia compared to other parts of the underdeveloped world, even though their religious and cultural identity is different from western Christianity. According to Weber (1930/2001), capitalism is connected to the Christian concept of 'calling'. Becoming rich was not an explicit good for Christians for a long time: "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). But it underwent a drastic shift when Calvin interpreted the 'calling' with the job activity so that working hard and getting rich by effort becomes closer to the good life. In pre-modern Confucian societies, meanwhile, sincerity and diligence were the basic virtues while commerce and industry were treated as lower class occupations. The social class

system and hegemony of humanism were the main reasons for East Asia's slow modernization.

In addition to sincerity and diligence, respect for life is also a deeply rooted value in the East Asian culture. The idea of life esteem is closely related to the basic culture of East-Asian Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Tang, Y. & McLean, G., 2016). East Asian development of capitalism is not just an economic westernization, but also the chemical combining of axiological articulation with life as the highest goodness and the sincerity and diligence. Therefore, the life of an East Asian student, for example, is a profound experience of western capitalistic modernity and the axiological necessity.

Harmony (調和) and stability (太平), in addition to the thought of life respect, ideas that have strongly influenced people's perception in East Asia for the longest time are harmony (調和) and peace/stability (太平). The most important social value in East Asia is peace based on the stability of the world (平安) and the harmony of yin (陰) and yang (陽). When the harmony of yin-yang is broken, problems come up and peace of the stability of the world people collapses. Therefore, the harmony of yin and yang, the stable operation of the state and society. Thus, the harmony between yin and yang and the stable operation of the state and society become absolute values.

The aforementioned East Asian perception of harmony and peace is linked showcase of mankind's tendency to pursue structural stability after modernization. The intentionality of life to pursue a harmonious and stable life is also manifested in the aesthetic perception of structuralism. East Asian aesthetics, for example, seeks to be colorful but simple, full but empty. Too full or flashy is not balanced with simplicity or emptiness, which undermines the

perception of the world. Unbalanced or unharmonious fly in the ointments are unwelcome; 3 or 4 to balance, or 100 or 10000 to signify perfection. This context is placed at the bottom of modern aesthetics and exerts a great influence on modern value theory.

2. The victory of 'interesting' over interest

2.1. Interest, the pedagogic fantasy and failure

Interest and motivation are normally considered as opposite concepts, and they are both key issues in classrooms and education studies. No matter how good a teacher is, it is impossible to deliver the teaching content or make learning experience to students without motivation and interest. Conversely, students with full motivation and interest can learn a lot from any situation, even if they are in a poor environment. The importance of interest and motivation in educational activities cannot be overemphasized, and so is to cultivate the attitude/habit/feature has been discussed diversely and deeply in the modern educational discussions.

Discussions to improve children's interest and motivation in education have been grouped into two types: by external mechanisms or internal mechanisms. Discussions seeking an external mechanism have begun by the behavior psychologists, and many have been discussed by scholars who have taken management and administrative perspectives into education. Many educational activities seek to induce motivation and interest through a variety of rewards and punishments such as giving performance stickers and numeric scores as grades when children attain accomplishment. It is widely used in educational institutions at various levels as a way of motivating students. For developmentalists, this is the most representative way to discuss

how educators want to produce *animal laborans*.

Theories on child's interest have been discussed more deeply by the progressive pedagogists who look more into child's internal growth than developmentalists' external mechanisms. In the continually contested discursive space between the external and the internal purpose of education, the mainstream educationists follow the axiological direction of the 'internal purpose' of education. However, modern people who are dragged by external purpose have developed theories to arose students' interest and motivation as if these are the only bridge between the internal and external purpose of education. In any case, the discourse of 'interest' rose above all others and in the conflict between the normative direction of educational discourse and the secular concern for social role as *homo-politicus*.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'Emile' (1762/1889) suggests naturalism would be the foundational idea of developmental psychologists in education. In his account, education should follow the human developmental pace, which should be slow without rushing. Education in a fast pace cannot be absorbed by children, and it also causes loss of interest in learning. Rousseau thinks the first target of education is shaping the body of the child, and even suggests not teaching a language until the child wants to learn by himself. The famous proposition, 'mother's love spoils child', is to warn that the pedagogy and teaching contents tailored by adult's experience and perception can eventually defeat the internal purpose and highlighting the external purpose of education.

Rousseau insists on the cultivation of a child's natural and social skills, especially focusing on learning through a child's voluntary experience. Since a child is completely different from

adults and must learn various things voluntarily and experientially, so the method of education should be 'negative and temporizing education'. In other words, engagement by teachers/parents in education should be kept to a minimum and follow nature's order and pace. If it is not done, a child will lose interest in learning and will not grow in the right way. Interest is an important factor for children's spontaneity, "Tokens of interest and of kindness go farther and are of more use than any gifts whatever" (*ibid*, pp.59-60).

John Dewey was perhaps the first one who set 'interest' as the foremost educational ideal. Dewey etymologically analyzes interest as 'inter-est' or 'inter-esse', that is, being in between; "interest marks the annihilation of the distance between the subject and object; it is the instrument which affects their organic union" (1896, p. 429). Dewey's concept of interest is different from 'interesting' which means surface response or transient stimulus. If students are interested in what is going around them, it will bring them pleasure. The reverse process, from pleasure to interest, is not warranted.

> There are two types of pleasure. One is the accompaniment of activity. It is found wherever there is self-expression ... This sort of pleasure is always absorbed in the activity itself. It has no separate existence in consciousness. This type of pleasure is found in legitimate interest. Its stimulus is found in the needs of the organism. The other sort of pleasure arises from contact. It marks receptivity. Its stimuli are external. (Dewey, 1896, p. 428).

For Dewey, interest unifies the object with the subject. Therefore, it is a continual process rather than a temporal reactive phenomenon. Interest is an active state of the subject toward the object

as the unified existence and intentionality of human nature. "To be interested is to be absorbed in, wrapped up in, and carried away by, some object. To take an interest is to be on the alert, to care about, to be attentive." (Dewey, 1916/2001, p.132). Interest is accompanied by the intellectual state as well as the emotional or affective state. It is a contemplative condition to observe the process and to be meaningful to the development of the subject. "whatever furthers action, helps mental movement, is of interest" (Dewey, 1913, p.20). At last, as Dewey stated, "self and interest are two names for the same fact; the kind and amount of interest actively taken in a thing reveals and measures the quality of selfhood which exists" (Dewey, 1916/2001, p.358). Interest is the subject's effect experiencing the value of the object so that it is the expression of the identity. In other words, interest is the more than 'mere pleasure' and it might be the core of educational activity.

Jerome S. Bruner (1960) examined the innate purpose of education in historical and political contexts, for example, the Russian success to space-orbit Sputnik, which forced the external purpose of education. 'The structure of knowledge' can be the core idea which is closest to 'interest' in his discourse. According to Bruner (1960), it is impossible to teach every knowledge to student in contemporary world as the quantity of knowledge and technology have explosively expanded. Therefore, students' educational experience is a process of acquiring a 'structure of knowledge', which should be done in the same way that experts' and scholars' experience in each field. "In essence, it consists of learning initially not a skill but a general idea, which can then be used as a basis for recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered. This type of transfer is at the heart of the educational process - the continual broadening and deepening of knowledge in terms of basic and general ideas"

(*ibid*, p.18). Buner explains it is possible to achieve through the way of 'discovery learning' and he comments on the benefits of the 'discovery learning'.

> Consider now what benefit might be derived from the experience of learning through discoveries that one makes for oneself. I should like to discuss these under four headings: (1) The increase in intellectual potency, (2) the shift from extrinsic to intrinsic rewards, (3) learning the heuristics of discovering, and (4) the aid to memory processing. (Bruner, 1961/2006, p.58):

Bruner thinks that the experience of discovery is the most important learning to connect the internal and external purposes of education. Through the finding out experience, learners can learn intellectual thinking as Newton did. As a psychologist, he thought we can develop student's innate interest through the discovery learning method in an intellectually stimulating environment.

Ralph Tyler, the pioneer of curriculum development, also emphasized the importance of interest. According to Tyler, it is very important to develop student-centered objectives in education, where students' needs and interests are the most important sources of educational objectives. First, Tyler insisted that schools establish the desirable level of behavior and development that are required to students, and understand the gaps between their current needs and interests with the objectives. This is the basis for setting the purpose of school education. Second, Tyler explained that evaluating students' interests is an important factor in setting educational objectives. Students who are interested in a particular topic can have deeper and more effective educational experiences than the students who are not. Therefore, teachers can

gain educational benefits only by understanding students' interests and reflecting them in their educational activities. Tyler insisted that this must be done through the correct activities such as questionnaires, school records, interviews, and parent interviews.

For Tyler, interest is not only an important factor to organize the level and depth of educational activities, but also a factor in determining the purpose of education. The impact of Tyler encourages educationists to set teaching objectives and goals; choose and organize the learning contents; and, evaluate the process based on the structures. Interest is valued instrumentally because it is used as a fundamental source throughout curriculum development and it can be thought as a narrow concept of interest for producing *animal laborans*. However, this seems to reflect some of the ideas of progressive educators, including Dewey, in an attempt to use it as a fairly comprehensive concept.

As can be seen from above, interest in pedagogy and curriculum research has been studied widely, variously, and deeply in the field of curriculum, and its importance has steadily been gaining momentum. Although the concept of interest varies in-depth and level depending on the regional position in which each scholar stands, in general, interest is perceived as a very complex and multifaceted concept. Interest is recognized as one of the key elements to connect the intrinsic and extrinsic purposes of education. Student interest is also one of the most important values in the development and implementation of curriculum or in the student's experience. It occupies an important position that can be regarded as the target of educational activity itself to emphasize the self-learning or autonomous learning.

2.2 Goodness in Classroom: interesting

As the highest good in curriculum studies, the discourse of 'interest' has been developed widely. The emphasis is, of course, diverse in the realm of educational practice and research both inside and outside the classroom. If so, how does the emphasis on 'interest' appear in the classroom? Is it valued and doing a role as many educational philosophies or curriculumists have discussed and emphasized? In the view that school education is a reflection but also a foundation of modern society, to see how has interest been understood in modern society can be helpful to understand the discussions on interest in classroom or academia. Svendsen's contemporary comprehension of interest raises a fairly significant topic to the education area; "today's interest is only directed towards the interesting, and the interesting is that only a moment later one finds indifferent or boring. The word 'boring' is bound up with the word 'interesting'" (2005, p.28).

In contemporary society, 'fun' is achieving a position of the absolute good. The pre-modern axiology that worthy things are boring and the nobility lacks fun is losing its power. The phenomena are being socially diversified and widespread, such as the repetitive prevalence of interesting elements in the entertainment industry and the combination of humor codes in various fields. Populist politics that have a 'show' element are gaining power rather than righteous and activist politicians, and the overflowing Social Network Service phenomenon broadcasts interesting rumors that spread powerfully rather than right, objective and true information. Among the various values, fun becomes more and more established as goodness, and boredom begins to be perceived as undesirable nearing evil.

This is noticeable in the context of education. The above-discussed pedagogists' efforts are

intended to ensure the spontaneity and completeness of child's growth by letting them have more authentic 'interest' experiences. However, in the situation of education acknowledging and supporting the victory of *animal laborans*, interest have lost its authentic meaning and role, and narrows its meaning to avoid boredom. The narrowed 'interest'—interesting— means a pleasure of the senses chasing away boredom, which is a normative criterion.

The research of Raufelder and her colleagues shows the above phenomenon clearly. According to their study (Raufelder et al., 2016) on German adolescents, students' perception of who is a good and bad teacher depends on the 'interesting' element. The students in their study categorize a good teacher with three themes with three substances each rendering nine elements. Among all elements, 'motivation' and 'humor' are the boredom related elements. The results of the study is quite meaningful. Students report that their motivation is affected by a teacher in terms of developing an interest in the subject or finding enjoyment in the lesson. Among the teacher's personal characteristics, 'humor' is noticed as the most important characteristic of a good teacher. For students, humor is not just a joke but also important skills to facilitate learning and to communicate well between teachers and students.

The result of the survey comes to no surprise. From the experience of schooling, most of us know that an interesting and humorous teacher is good. A more illuminating point of the Raufelder and her colleagues' research is on who is a bad teacher: "Students often identified the 'bad' teacher as boring, repetitive, disinterested; rather inconsistent, untrustworthy, and biased. In particular, students denounced teachers' disinterest in their academic achievements, which sometimes escalated into ridicule or scorn on the teacher's part" (Raufelder et al., 2016, p.39). This suggests that students often recognize the uninteresting teacher as a bad teacher. In

addition, negative evaluations of other elements are also significantly related to unpleasant experience and boredom in students. Teaching methods without variation are not welcomed because they are monotonous, and the merely curriculum-based teaching is criticized.

We may find that the emphasis on funny and humorous teachers, or classes, prevails in school education today, even if it is not Raufelder's work, especially in East Asian traditions, where the importance of school education and university entrance process has been emphasized. This appears clearly in various ways, and it is understandable how much interesting is inevitable as opposition to boredom and how boredom is treated as an 'unnecessary object'. "Boredom is not connected with actual needs but with desire. And this desire is a desire for sensory stimuli. Stimuli are the only 'interesting' thing. (Svendsen, 2005, p.27)"

Fun and humorous teacher is recognized as a good and competitive teacher in and out of classroom. To be interesting is positioned not only as a feature of a good teacher but also to enter the realm of teacher quality or essence. This is not just a matter of students' preferences but is further complicated by the issue of shadow education, which is raging throughout East Asia. Throughout East Asia, not only the national curriculum but also the shadow education system is prevalent. Shadow education is the private tutoring system to repeat the same learning contents as a form of prior learning, relearning, or in-depth study from the national curriculum. This is a kind of investment made by students and parents to get higher scores in the college entrance exams based on the current curriculum. It emerged and expanded during the short modernization period because education and examination were useful as a social ladder of hierarchy, where lower- and middle-class people could overcome their socioeconomic backgrounds and move upstream. It is a consuming and persevering process that aims to gain

a high score in exams and get a better place in a specific gateway to the 'better university', which will determine how they will survive in the future. It is boring in that the same learning content must be repeated, it is carried out in parallel with the school curriculum after school, and it is more 'evaluation-centered practice' than the school curriculum.

> In some societies, private tutor market their services by offering more enjoyable and effective ways to learn than are typical in mainstream schools. Promises of a 'fun, activity' approach, perhaps supplemented by computer software and other aids, may be very appealing to families disenchanted by dry, traditional and teacher-centered approaches in mainstream classrooms. (…) In this respect, teachers in the mainstream can learn from the shadow. (Bray, 1999, pp.82-83)

The power of 'interesting' to overcome boredom is normatively robust. In the shadow education space, which is regarded as a mire of boredom, students can overcome the isolation and unfreedom of boredom through teachers' fun ability. It is like the constant and everlasting *labor* of slaves in the trap of necessity. 'Interesting' as diversion becomes the absolute good to endure a hard life.

The laborization of school education and the massification of shadow education disrupt the concerto of semester and vacation. History has been established on the balance of the repetition between tension and relaxation. Micrea Eliade (1959) explains it as the continuity of 'the sacred and the profane'. The tension of discipline and sincerity and the relaxation of freedom and release have been repeated, and the flow of history has been stable. In the case of modern education, the institutionalization of the semester management has been achieved

through the repetition of tension and relaxation. Of course, the vacation system appears in various ways depending on the local characteristics; a long summer vacation system or the short summer and winter vacation in similar periods. Whatever it is, the concerto of tension and relaxation is the basis of the schooling process, so it lies at the students' educational experience.

Co-education of semester and vacation is an institutional mechanism that makes the contemplative value of boredom somewhat meaningful in educational experience. Leisure in vacation, which is seldom being experienced during a busy period of the semester, not only allows students to do various activities, but also boredom and reflection from the emptiness impact on the students' self-reflection. In other words, the spare time for *work* and *action*, the activities reconstructing boredom derived from the spare time, and self-reflection through the leisure and activities enable positioning boredom as an educational experience.

In the East Asian contexts, it has been a long time that vacation lost its function and meaning. Shadow Education breaks down the quadratic function between tension and relaxation of schooling, and leads students into a series of tensions. Additionally, the process of preparing the content for the next semester during the vacation makes school education as a continual mastery of already equipped knowledge, not an opportunity to experience the new learning content. Weekends, the time of relaxation during the semester, are even transformed into review times where you repeatedly master what you have learned during the week. In other words, the same learning content continues in the way of *labor* without the time of relaxation by means of the 'transfer' of knowledge. For learners, boredom is a naturally occurring 'poison' and 'interesting' is the only antidote.

Repetition through the same teaching method of the same learning content is like the mastery of the *labor* process in the *labor* site. The process of *labor* is the process of mastery through the continuous repetition of the same activity. Skilled laborers are able to achieve their goals of improving productivity and, in turn, put themselves into the trap of *necessity*. Educational experience also becomes a trap of boredom through repetition of schooling and shadow education, not the process of learning new things, growing self, or creating new things. Students get stuck in the *Acedian* boredom through the restless repetition of the formal sameness as delivering knowledge. The education for producing *animal laborans* dominates the educational experience of students not only in school but also in off-school education.

What's more surprising is that this is happening not only in schooling but also in universities and academia, where future teachers are cultivated, new educational theories and methods are developed, and even experienced teachers are re-educated. The most popular topic in teacher education today is 'fun' or 'how to escape from boring class'. In order to break the traditional notion that classes are boring, that is, a bridle of boring used in mathematics, science, and English, numerous educational contents are established or reorganized under the title of 'fun English', 'fun science', 'fun mathematics' and so on. Activities, teaching methods, academic seminars or conferences are often run under the name of 'fun.'

The Triumph of *animal laborans* and the supporting educational conditions are currently forcing 'interesting' to education partakers as a potent good. In this situation, how can we recover the meaning of 'interest'? The recovery of interest means the recovery of true educational experience, which allows us to understand the perception of the good boredom. If interest remains as fun and as the opposite value against boredom in the education to produce

a*nimal laborans*, the recovery of educational interest can be completed with an educational experience that allows boredom to be parallel to interest. In other words, the restoration of existential and conducive interest and boredom is the recovery of the sacred and the profane in educational activities, which facilitates escape from the *Acedian* boredom.

2.3. Education for *homo faber*, recovering interest

I have discussed how strongly the East Asian values impact the *Acedian* boredom dominant mainstream which narrows interest down to interesting along with the victory of *animal laborans,* despite of numerous pedagogical studies and efforts on interest. The demonized boredom is to solidify its place in the process of modernization, to coexist hostilely with the interesting, to make education partakers unfree, isolated from the world and trapped in necessity. Arendt's argument of the victory of *animal laborans* is finally the triumph of interesting and triumph of *Acedian* boredom in the field of education.

The point of the discussion about interest is to restore education for its intrinsic purpose. When interest can play an educational role for the one experience (Dewey), the phenomenological experience (van Manen), the discovery learning (Bruner) wo/man can experience the world as *homo faber* through building themselves. With the authentic interest, boredom reveals its existential characteristics and can facilitate expanding the horizons of perception in student's learning. In the education of *homo faber,* boredom is on the contemplative moment for reflecting that leads students to establish the world. The coexistence of boredom and interest in learning experience leads student's internal growth, which is the purpose of *homo faber /* existentialist is achieved.

Interests and boredom are also the conditions of educational activity and experience and are continually appeared as birth and death are the conditions of human existence and activities and are constantly appeared in life. Thus, the pedagogical consideration in boredom should be the same as that of interest, which is the starting point for the emergence of education from the *labor*-centered education to the human-centered, world-centered and relationship-oriented education. Acknowledging and understanding boredom and pursuing interest is a way of releasing interest from the narrowed interesting, and therefore the recovery of interest is the recovery of boredom and the recovery of educational meaning.

If then, how can we overcome this in the systemic modernized environment? How can interest regain its original role and enable the intrinsic purpose of education to be expressed as the core of education? The idea of *natality*, a characteristic and a foundational condition of human beings, provides some clues. Wo/man is the *natal* being who can rebirth through the dynamics of boredom. The *Acedian* boredom is a phenomenon that occurs naturally when one loses freedom, relations with otherness or falls into a trap of necessity. *Action* is an important human activity that can begin newness through the process of *rebirth*, so initiation through relationship is a basic condition for recovery of interest.

The system and environmental aspects formed through the modernization process can eventually be reborn through human activities. The *Acedian* boredom is an ontological response and willing phenomena of human being in a trap of *necessity* to begin a newness. In the educational activity, *action* begins through the relationship among education partakers. Although there are many different members at school, the most basic units are teachers and students. If you add one, it should be parents who are in charge of the pre-school education as

the most important aspects of out-of-school education. It is difficult to change the modern structure because of their innate power and the power of the historical context. Thus, what breaks this structural necessity is the social/political *action*, and, as Herbert Marcuse (1964) stressed, teacher is the first hope to trigger the education reform. The change in behavior through personal reflection is quite powerful, but in terms of structural *necessity*, it can result in a minor deviation and not a significant trigger.

Since education and schooling are strongly and deeply rooted in society, it is not easy to change the role of schooling without social changes. because social forces define school education very strongly, it cannot be denied if social change occurs. However, education is a value-oriented activity, and being given the role of the secular clergy in modern society, teachers have a desire for a good education. Such aspiration is also the basic premise of its role, and the correct recognition of the object determines the direction of the aspiration. In other words, the teacher's perception of reality and ideal direction about interest and boredom is the foundation for the change of educational behavior and experience. As Max van Manen (2002) states that pedagogy is the teacher's guideline, teachers' educational awareness and aspirations are the guidelines of educational behavior and experience.

3. Beauty of boredom for pedagogy over *Acedians*

This section discusses axiology of boredom with focus on aesthetics. The extant of inquiries on aesthetics of boredom have generally been analyzing art-pieces on the subject of boredom or an art triggered by boredom. In other words, mainstream aesthetics considers boredom as an

element that triggers artistic creativity and to discuss it as a subject of inquiry. What does boredom mean aesthetically? What does the aesthetics of boredom mean in pedagogy? These are the questions to be answered in te following section.

3.1. Connecting aesthetics, boredom and pedagogy

When discussing the aesthetics of boredom in education, the first thing to consider about is how to establish the relationship between boredom, aesthetics and education. The discussion could be organized into: First, about the beauty of boredom itself; second, the relationship between boredom and aesthetic experience; and, third, the aesthetic function of boredom in education. As discussed in the section 5.1, the discussion of the beauty of boredom itself is as intricate as boredom's conceptual ambiguity. Instead, it is more productive to discuss the relationship between boredom and aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic function in education.

When discussing sense of beauty in aesthetics, one of the main issues is the aesthetic attitude toward object. In other words, the aesthetic experience is determined by the human attitude toward the object. There is an important aesthetic concept which has been emphasized by many aestheticians, such as Kant and Schopenhauer. Kant argues in his book 'Critique of Judgment' (1790/2007) that four special elements—disinterestedness, universality, necessity, and purposive without purpose—must be fulfilled in order to judge beauty; he singles out disinterestedness [*Interesselosigkeit*] as a core attitude. For Kant, disinterestedness means having pleasure in the object itself, not the pleasure of owning or benefiting from the object when a pleasure is felt by any object. Kant seems to apply the same principle of his ethics to aesthetics, namely his categorical imperative: Always treat others as ends and not means.

Kant's pursue of incorporating values has been further emphasized in the works of Schopenhauer with more contemplative and ontological aspects of disinterestedness. Schopenhauer (1819/1969), in the beauty aspect, helps to find *idea* that exist within representation that is pure, unwilling, painless and timeless, and thus are identifiable by the cognitive subject. For Schopenhauer, *idea* is a mediating concept between representation and willing because he thinks that wo/man can look into the reality at the bottom of the phenomenon through art artifacts such as music. Furthermore, human beings have a specific attitude, which Schopenhauer, borrowing from Kant, disinterestedness is the contemplation of artistic will-ness [*willensosigkeit*]. In other words, art has an attitude that allows us to confirm *idea* of reality through contemplation without willing.

The problem of disinterestedness in the aesthetics of boredom provides room to discuss the attitude between subject and boredom; What is then the attitude of the partakers or members of education that makes us sensible the beauty of boredom itself? In terms of disinterestedness, the moment a cognizant perceives boredom, it becomes an aesthetic experience if it provides pleasure. In other words, the moment you recognize boredom, you will recognize the *idea* of the object – boredom – that emerges in consciousness. What does it mean then to be pleased/pleasured even though boredom does not benefit the agent?

A premise is required to discuss the fact that something benefits humans, that is, it is necessary to understand the situation of sensing or owning an object itself is beneficial. The perspective of 'profit' or 'benefit' is closely related to the concept of ownership. It is not the aesthetic experience that owning an object gives one some pleasure. Having an object brings me financial or social benefits, which means it can be meaningful or make me superior for

survival. From the standpoint of the *erkenntnissujekt* that assigns to possession the highest importance, owning boredom is not a beautiful or enjoyable experience, but an experience of displeasure or disgust. That is, boredom is negative to *animal laborans* as it is aesthetically not worth to possessing, and is therefore perceived as an unpleasant and disgusting experience.

Attitudes to boredom vary according to the mode of human being. In this dissertation, the life modes are classified into *animal laborans*, *homo faber*, and *vita activa* based on the human activity and condition (Arendt, 1958/1998). Every mode of human being has different attitude to art pieces and so does to boredom. Boredom is also a matter of ownership in the field of education because modern education is driven to produce *animal laborans*, therefore, it is a problem of profits as well. Hence, boredom becomes a disadvantage, an unpleasant experience, and a way of being replaced by immediately beneficial experience of interesting.

If a person takes pleasure in boredom, it reveals that his/her mode of being is not *animal laborans*. If so, what mode of being corresponds to boredom as the object of disinterestedness? A hint for this answer is from the appreciation theories of art, which discusses whether artwork is viewed as a tool or purpose. In other words, being able to enjoy an artwork without any profits is in line with the attitude of treating it for the purpose of artwork, which means that the artwork is meaningful to the individual's life as it is or at its face value. In other words, it means that the beauty of an art piece is worthy because it brings about internal growth combined with the existential context of the cognitive subject. It is a profound experience that allows us to understand an individual's identity and its connection with the world. This leads to connect with Heidegger's profound boredom, and also with the existentialists' pedagogy pursuing the education for *homo faber*.

3.2. Boredom as a disgust in the structural perfection

We have been discussed that *animal laborans* is the most common life mode in schooling so that boredom is in the region of discomfort. So how does school and curriculum support *Acedian* mode of being aesthetically? What is the aesthetic aspect of boredom in school that is perceived as a negative educational experience?

Aesthetic analysis of the development of school education suggests that educational experience mainly pursues 'structural perfection'. Structuralism is a movement within evaluation theories that has revolutionized modern aesthetics. In the art criticism, we can appreciate an artifact through the intrinsic and extrinsic approaches. Extrinsic approaches try to understand artworks based on author's intention, on the social-historical reflection, or on the appreciator's personal narrative. By contrast, intrinsic approaches pursue that the artwork as a separated object from the author, so try to understand it structurally. Structuralism is a way of appreciation, which treats an art piece as an entity distinct from the artist, and by the way of understanding its structural perfection. Although it was understood that schooling was formed by reflecting the purpose of the educational structural apparatus called 'nation', the process of constructing and practicing the curriculum was Structuralists' by pursuing completion.

The structure is the system inherent in object, which is the sum of each elements combined according to certain rules. Therefore, to create a perfect structure is to make the totality and each element perfectly cohere, and to understand the structure is to consider and grasp the totality. In Structuralism, however, structure is a component, and a component also has a certain structure. Therefore, in order to understand things, the structure of the whole must

be understood. Structuralism treats the gross and the part as a suitable thing only when there is a relationship between the parts. The structural beauty means that the perfection of skeleton as well as the part to part rationality.

The development of curriculum is an effort to construct an aesthetically perfect structure, therefore, the evaluation of the curriculum follows the same idealized perfection of this structure as well as the outcome of the *currere*. The tendency to pursue the complete structure occurs in various levels of curriculum. Basically, curriculum experience reveals some structural sameness. After Tyler created the golden ratio of curriculum development, which is 'purpose, content, method, and evaluation', it became the basic principle of the development of the all levels of curriculum from the planned curriculum, to the implemented and experienced curriculum; from the national and province level to school and classroom level. Teachers' lesson plans follow the golden sequence of 'introduction, background knowledge activation, main course, summary and feedback, and conclusion," and the 40 / 50-minute lesson time and 10-minute breaks are evidently structured.

The visual experience in school is also structured. The school is constructed in consideration of space efficiency. Teachers face from top to bottom, front to back, and students are predicated on a space configuration from bottom to top and back to front. Chalkboards, desks, and chairs are perceived as having a symmetrical arrangement, and the students' bodies are regulated as the beautiful, desirable, smart, and healthy direction based on the regulated clothing, gymnastics or exercise. The various things in the school are structurally balanced, symmetrical, unidirectional and regular. The aesthetic elements of the modern schooling are established in a manner pursuing structural perfection, which is a direction for eliminating

discomfort-displeasure rather than being organized in the direction for intrinsic enjoyment.

3.3. Creativity, aesthetic boredom, and the conducive boredom

A major link between aesthetics and curriculum clearly occurs during creative process and artistic experience. This was mentioned in the discussion of the *Conducive* boredom, and most of them refer to artistic creativity as a positive aspect of boredom. "When a work no longer holds anything new for us, aesthetic boredom inevitably sets in and for the time being at any rate we have" outgrown "that particular work or artist" (Osborne, 1971, p.471). In simple, the aesthetic experience of education and the *conducivity* of boredom share the same path, and are most closely related to initiation, which is the basic *natal* characteristic of *vita activa* in classroom.

Creativity has been discussed importantly by many pedagogical and curriculum scholars. What is important and common is that creativity is closely related to artistic experience. This may seem quite natural at first glance, because there are few educational areas that require creativity in the subject content, except the artistic subjects such as fine arts, literature or music. For example, language education focuses on the development of functions such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, and mathematics on basic comprehension skills, understanding of logics, and problem solving. Other many subjects aim to deliver the learning contents in the way of memorizing every subject. Practically, there are only a few subjects that have a room where individual creativity can be expressed. Although art subjects in school may seem high in creativity, the importance of basic skills and functions tends to be emphasized more and more even in arts. This is because assessments are narrowly simplified to mere evaluation of

knowledge and skills whereas ambiguity of creativity and the unnatural creativity tend to be excluded from the curriculum experience.

However, creativity is not only in art subjects but also across other subjects. The fact that creativity is closely related to the artistic experience does not means that it only occurs when regulated into art. Creativity is the basic human characteristic in daily life, rather than in the specific situation. Creating a new experience is a basic mode of human behavior. The fact that human being speak is the process of constantly creating concepts and thoughts through communication. Human relations are a constant manifestation of new behavior. To leave and to destroy old things, and to make new ones is *natal* every day. The process of life is therefore creative as it is a process of constantly creating new experiences. Creating a more creative experience than starting a new one means a growing by leaps in the agent. In other words, when creating destructive / birthing creativity in everyday life, it is artistic and *conducive*.

According to Arendt, starting newness presupposes destroying the existing things. Creativity starts with destroying the old or boring things then to move on to creating a new one. If this is plausible, creativity is never limited to artistic experience. In school, creativity is a process in which children overcome the existing knowledge or abilities that they have experienced in their lives and take it to the next level, "The emphasis therefore seems to lie on creating the experience" (Smith, Year, p. 74). In other words, children's creativity is the process of overcoming their own past experiences and creating new experience. Creativity as a spontaneous renewal of experience is thus a fundamental characteristic of wo/man. Howevre, in situations where social systems cannot accommodate such renewals, creativity as aneducational goal has only shown limitations and barriers in pupils. Today, the pervasiveness

of the *Acedian* boredom is a crucible of these social systems, where human ontological cravings for changing the world is tested with fire.

Children's creativity, in the context of newness, is not simply expressed through their own inquiry and enthusiasm but, rather, by building, expressed and acted upon interactions with *otherness*. Boredom in classroom has also pluralistic and collective facets, which does not end with individual disgust or creativity, but paving way to a new beginning as part of the process of sharing in common. The *conducive* boredom is a pluralistic and collective phenomenon in which the power of initiation also appears in the learning experiences.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study aims to understand the meaning and value of boredom in the modern schooling system based on Hannah Arendt's theory of Human activities and conditions and Phenomenological epistemology. As a study of philosophical theorizing, this thesis has attempted to follow the deductive process of educational theorizing; critical literature review; conceptualizing; educational application; and value theory. The research method was philosophical theorizing based on the document and literature interpretation and exemplifying. The details of each chapter follow.

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, the discourses of boredom which exist were categorized into three traditions. These are *Acedians*, *Mortalitists*, and *Conducivists*. In older times, the *Acedians* considered boredom as being a root of evil and, subsequently, in more modern times, as an enemy of personal or social development. For them, in order for the purposes that they set out to be realized, it was considered to be an obstacle needing to be eliminated. This impression can be considered to be significant as the modern schooling is grounded on this notion. Boredom can be thought about as a sign of laziness or being dishonest to development in the contexts of schools and classrooms.

The *Mortalitists* are of the assumption that boredom is an existential experience and that it is closely associated to death. Boredom fulfills a part as a way in which self-reflection or introspection can be achieved by enlightening the meaninglessness of life. It is of significance that schooling focuses on the instrumental purpose rather than morality or

critical purpose within the developmental centered stream. The *Mortalitists*' perception of boredom has validity where education is concerned but it also does not comprehensively clarify classrooms in modern times. The uniqueness of child existence is also unrecognized by them; this notion has been accepted widely since the 'birth of childhood'.

Compared to *Acedians* and *Mortalitists* who are of the opinion that boredom has dark and negative connotations, the *Conducivists* believe that boredom is a platform of possibilities. They agree that there is a positive aspect where boredom is concerned, but also do not exclude painfulness. The values and usages of boredom are attempted to be investigated by them; they also listen to its signals. I believe that *Conducivists* deeply view and interpret schooling system, in particular, to comprehend activities in classrooms. Boredom identifies a number of aspects of schooling which include crises, features, limitations, nature, and directions which are considered to be desirable. Within this phenomenon, boredom exists as an evil or as obstacles; in addition, boredom is also considered to be a driving force for reflection, critical thinking, and creativity to be achieved.

In my view of conceptualization of boredom as a faculty for *rebirthing*, Hannah Arendt can be considered to be a core thinker. Arendt does not directly deal with the theory of boredom. Boredom within her theory, however, engages a vast quantity and substantial location of contents which describe human conditions and events in the historical and social phenomenon. In her book, boredom similarly has a negative position as the *acedians'*. boredom is considered to be within the painful life of slavery, and the exploitation of humans in a materialistic consumer's society. With regard to providing an explanation for the Nazi's

brutality with the problem of boredom, she has a similar opinion to Nietzsche. The Eichmann in Jerusalem judgment demonstrates how boredom works when Jewish massacre and utilizing the analysis of 'the banality of evil' are considered. Arendt's existential theory of human being, however, encompasses a wider range of issues. She is not aware of the possibilities of her ontological comprehension of human beings which is an important condition for *Conducivist* theory.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, employing a *Conducivitists*'s prism, Arendt's existentialism of the human condition and activities has been critically understood as the foundation for a new concept and the typologies of boredom. Arendt is of the belief that human being is the *natal* existence and that a foundational human experience is rebirthing through *action*. As a plural existence, the core activity for initiation *is action* as social activity and interaction. I have engaged in this Arendtian idea and placed boredom in-between human activities as a condition of rebirth and, therefore, as a result, boredom can be thought of as being conducive as a nature of *natality*; specifically, as it is positioned in-between rebirth and another rebirth. When considering *labor*, *work* and *action* as three human activities, *action* is understanding more often than not to be connected with *natality*; therefore, humans are typically bored when participating in *labor* or *work*.

Plurality has been described in the literature as the condition of *action*/*natality*/rebirth. The breakdown of plurality, therefore, has become the basic condition to which boredom exists. The outcomes of breakdown are the individuality or collectivity of humans, and wo/men could encounter boredom in terms of being isolated, losing their

freedom, or being trapped into necessity. Arendt clarifies *labor* as being an activity of slavery in antiquity; in modern society, this is expanded and strengthened. Boredom, therefore, and in particular *acedian* boredom is considered to be relatively ordinary in modern society and, thus, in schooling. *Animal laborans* triumphed when they defeated *homo faber*; therefore, laboring and consuming have become the most basic activities of modern humans.

In Chapter 4, the three categorizations of boredom and re-conceptualization of boredom were applied to the pedagogy of education; particularly, when the foci were curriculum theories and educational philosophy. The traditionalists and conceptual curriculumists have put forward *acedian* viewpoints as the administrative or psychological approaches for curriculum development. Child-centered educationists, humanists, and existentialists are closely connected to the ideas of *Mortalitists,* which focus on meaningful experiences and building a world as identity. It is difficult to say which educationists group the *Conducivists* belong to. In curriculum studies, there have been a number of ideas, theories and possibilities including those expressed by phenomenologists or reconceptualitsts.

Research studies conducted by curriculum re-conceptualists have provided information on C*onducivist* perspectives to boredom and their potential. It is paramount for further discussion and expansion of the positions of C*onducivists*. When considering the perspective of *praxis*, the boredom curriculum can be considered separately as comprehending educational phenomena and the experiences of students. The aims of curriculum development are to consider students' rebirth in terms of their knowledge and practical reasons. As a result, these are inextricably connected to ethics.

With an education stance, Chapter 5 discussed the axiology of boredom. Axiology is essentially a discipline in which ethics and aesthetics are considered. It can be problematic to ascertain the substance when considering boredom; therefore, dealing with ethics and aesthetics can be difficult. However, when the context in which value in human perception is regulated, it is possible for the value and recognition of boredom through educational activities in modern East Asian contexts to be understood. Understanding of the axiology of boredom with regard to the association between boredom types and human activities was further discussed in this chapter.

Where ethics are concerned in East Asian contexts, boredom is predominately about *acedian* perception. This is often referred to as the victory of interesting over interest. Alternatively, all educational philosophies and discussions regarding curricula and interests result in the convergence of matters considered to be 'interesting' within the education field. This notion has been attributed to the *animal laborans* of modern education, comprehended within *acedian* discourse. In the East Asian context, however, these modern values and other factors have been apparent which have strengthened *acedian* perception. This has also been referred to as the 'rigorism of education'. From the perspective of Confucian and Enlightenment traditions, the rigorism of education explains the *action*s of educationalists in more disciplined and value-oriented ways towards 'developmentalism.' Also, in recent years, educational rigorism has been discussed in terms of school 'transparency'. When all procedures and outcomes are transparent, the regulation of human behavior is strengthened. Open supervision, teacher evaluation and evidence-based assessment have accelerated the regulation of human behavior more than previous methods which have incorporated objective

systems into education sectors and ensured visibility within all processes. The monitoring and controlling of human behavior, in other words, are legalized with regard to objectification and transparency. Therefore, as a result, the isolation and unfreedom of boredom are strengthened, excluding subjectivity by the regulation of educational behavior which is obscured. This can be described as diversity and flexibility.

When the aesthetics of boredom in education have been considered in this thesis, beauty as perfection has not been discussed due to overlapping with ethical considerations. In modern education, the aspect which could be considered most influential is the tendency of 'structural perfection' being pursued. The quest for structural completion in curricula and the outcomes of education, in other words, can hinder creative and inspirational educational experiences. School education can essentially be considered as structural. School space has been considered the most stable and efficient structure. When considering time, a formal module structure would be 40 ~ 50 minutes of class lessons and 10 minutes of rest. Learning content, repeatedly expressed as the spiral curriculum in primary to secondary school contexts, are when classes are considered most perfect and comprised of an introduction, background knowledge activation, main teaching, class summary, and conclusion. Evaluation observes the method as the same number of problems being solved in a given amount of time, and uniformly scored as numbers. The experiences of all educational stakeholders, including students and teachers, are formally structured and seek to have a perfect form.

For human beings, pursuing structurally perfect educational experiences are the clearest source of unfreedom, isolation and necessity. The structural perfection of educational

experiences, in other words, is the most significant source of *acedian* boredom. When human beings experience the world, they are necessarily focused on aesthetic perception. These are the basic premise of interest/boredom. Thus, derived from educational environments for *animal laborans, acedian* boredom can be considered neither beautiful nor creative. A different view is that boredom originates from constructing a world or interactions with others as boring but also considered to be natal and beautiful.

Following the three typologies of boredom in the thesis, this section will speculate on the possible directions in further research.

The first possible of further research under the [paradigm of *conducive* boredom in education is in empirical phenomenology, that is, to explore the lived experience of boredom in students or teachers. The present thesis is on the theories of boredom in education, therefore, an empirical study with experience of education stakeholders can be a most logical follow-up research. It is possible to gather and analyze data inductively to figure out how boredom is experienced by students and teachers; how boredom appears and which types; and, how *rebirth* operates. Further research on how education stakeholders experience boredom in the current schooling system is important because it would allow us to set the direction of educational change. In addition, such an empirical research could contribute to the materialization of theoretical discoveries and ideals curriculum studies.

The second possible of further research is to extend the educational research on boredom into aesthetics. In the present thesis, albeit briefly, the discussion on aesthetics was on the 'aesthetic attitude' of art appreciator, hence, about students' attitude and pedagogical experience and how boredom relates to aesthetics phenomenologically. Further discussion on

the link boredom- aesthetics could be approached through human condition of *rebirth* and the phenomenon of creativity. Aesthetics calls for an in-depth discussion on the 'creative boredom'. In contemporary education, both creativity and productivity are critical due to technological developments and changes in the labor market. In aesthetics, 'creative boredom' is often regarded as a trigger for geniality of special people rather than an experience of ordinary people, hence, with limited value for public education. Therefore, further inquiry on 'creative boredom' has great potential in curriculum development. In a time when creativity is part of mainstream curriculum, an in-depth discussion on 'creative boredom' can broaden the horizons of the creativity education.

A third area of further research about *conducive* boredom is to explore the individual and collective dimensions of education. Education for *animal laborans* takes the form of mass and group-centered education without attention to individuality. On the other hand, education for *homo faber* places more importance on individuality, thus, with limitation in the social and collective aspect of education. Historically, educationists have intersected personal interests with social needs when setting educational goals and objectives, and it lead to challenges and failures in the curriculum. In other words, the intrinsic (individual) and extrinsic (collective) purposes of education are based on two rather different foundations. Therefore, despite being strongly necessary, the modern schooling has clear limitations when pursuing the harmonious combination of intrinsic (individual) and extrinsic (collective) purposes of education. *Conducive* boredom proposed by this thesis is based on the concept of *natality* that can overcome limitations of a conflicting internal and external purposes of

education, therefore, a research based on the conducive boredom and *natality* can enable an in-depth discussion on the purpose and goals of schooling.

A discussion on the *conducivist* boredom also requires a theoretical elaboration on teachers. In school education today, teachers often experience fatigue and *acedian* boredom, and are burdened with the professional duty to deal with the students' boredom. Teachers face boredom as a daily challenge in classrooms and administrative quarters. In reality, people expect a lot of things from teachers since the quality of education cannot be beyond the teachers' quality. As long as the teachers' view of boredom remains *acedian*, they have limited ability to recognize students' *conducive* boredom, and this situation impairs teachers to carry out their professional duties. Instead, their *conducive* perception of boredom during teacher training could lead to teachers' *conducive* approach to curriculum development, organization, and implementation.

To conclude, this study explores the educational meaning of boredom in the modern schooling system through a philosophical inquiry of boredom and human nature. In the understanding of human condition and activities suggested by Hannah Arendt, boredom could be positioned as a condition in-between *action*s; that is, a veiled human condition that triggers *natality*. This outlook allows us to understand the spread of *acedian* boredom throughout school education as a situation of *animal laborans* which has been expanded in the process of modernization. The various forms of boredom are converged and strengthened by demonized boredom, just as interests are narrowed down to those which are interesting. The *labor*-oriented development stage of modern society is to internalize *acedian* boredom through the process of school education and to settle interesting as an absolute value in the

world inside and outside of school.

The understanding of the relationship among human activities, boredom and education are expected to be changed with the transformation of the modern economic and social system, which foreshadow major changes; so-called the fourth industrial revolution. We could understand how *acedian* boredom has become more and more common through the various revolutionary processes of human history. The agricultural revolution/settlement revolution marked the beginning of boredom by adapting human beings to repetitive artificial environments from various natural environments. The industrial revolution and modernization process made *acedian* boredom common by exposing humans to a more job-oriented living environment. Instrumentalizing of human beings with the development of technology have turned wo/men into machine parts and narrowed human life as a slave of machinery through the internalization of *acedian* boredom. The knowledge information revolution made the people staying in the overflow of invisible knowledge lead brain activity to *labor* activity. Staying inside and absorbing and adapting knowledge has become *labor* with monotonous repetition of *action*s rather than leisure time for enjoyable and noble boredom.

We are now said to be undergoing the process of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. If this is valid, the it will sooner or later require many changes in human life and activities, as the other revolutions did in the past. The Industrial Revolution has been focused on the extension of the *labor* power or accuracy of technologies. While machines were to expand the limits of human strength, speed, and technical precision, the Fourth Industrial Revolution would bring

about a hyper-development of machines, Artificial Intelligence, and robot technology that would release human itself from *labor* as well as expanding the limitation of ability. In addition, the development of medical technology proceeds to save human beings from disease and death. The development of medical science transforms human beings into *homo deus*, which puts birth and death in the realm of human control. In other words, the new age is fast approaching in which *laboring* for survival is gradually excluded from human activity, so the status of *labor* is decreased; in turn, *work* and *action* occupy a greater role in human activities; hence, the end of life as death is optional.

The important aspect to watch out for is the reaction of people against the reduction or loss of *labor*. The radical changes in the way of life have been kept for more than a century in the context of East Asia will come to be a great impact on the public. They are the slices of public reactions against the socio-economic transformation that in recent years has witnessed the rise of unemployment or suicide rates, the extremization of competition, the increasing public demonstration of authoritarian and development-oriented national policies, and the rapid population cliffs phenomenon in various East Asian countries. For workers who have been leading a life of *labor* and consumption for decades, the reduction of *labor* can be perceived as the loss of both identity and life. It would be a main cause of anxiety.

Due to socio-economic transformation, other types of activities are required to the school curriculum which has been invented and maintained to support modern societies as required. Different educational experiences have already begun in many places. Social flows, such as the discussion of death with dignity and the YOLO movement, are the positive human

responses that reflect social change. In this situation, how should curriculum and schooling prepare for the changes and organization of educational experiences? What is the direction of learning experiences in the less laboring society? I suggest the key point here is the recovery of interest and the various types of boredom. In other words, rather than the education of enduring demonic boredom and being thirsty for interesting elements, interest and boredom in the process of constructing the world and building a society through various interactions will give deep, existential and conducive learning experiences. It is necessary to establish a systemic environment which can realize the intrinsic purpose of education, which is a long-standing pursuit of educationists, and the dream can be realized on it.

In a world where *labor* is reduced and death is optional, wo/men can finally escape the tyranny of *acedian* boredom. Breaking away from anxiety about death, *Mortalitist* boredom can develop into boredom with various faces of natal meaning. The process of constructing the world is what constitutes me so that I can develop into a process of rebirth rather than opposing death. Building societies through relational activities promote births as the beginning to bring about changes of the world. Boredom will remain at the educational site as a meaningful experience, and with a rebirth in interest that will enrich educational experiences.

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