

Response to Yasuko Miyazaki's 'Children's Experience of "Beyond the Self" and "The Rustle of Language" in G. Bataille'

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Yasuko Miyazaki is concerned with how educators can approach experiences that are beyond the self, specifically play, when language presents limitations due to its nature of assuming it must be 'explained in terms of utility' (Miyazaki, 2008). For to talk about play with language is to assume [play] is utilizable. However, 'pure play', in Bataille's sense, is 'useless: a pure act' (ibid.). In describing and talking about play with language, it 'degrades' this pure act into a '*for something*' (ibid.).

It seems that either there needs to be a language that is itself sovereign that can describe a pure act, or major play needs to be approached in another way, maneuver around language to approach these ideas of beyond the self (specifically in this case major play), without 'tainting' them or losing what they are about (such as indirectly or even through images?).

Questions from this arise: is language as sovereignty possible and comprehensible? If so, what would this be, what would it look like? If this is comprehensible, could it even still be called language or would it be something else (and what then is that)? Or is this as far as language can go and there is no escape and we must make do?

Furthermore, if another approach needs to be made, what would this then entail? Can play be understood non-linguistically and can this be recreated and presented in a comprehensible way within education? I have heard from some who play music to claim there is no language in their understanding of music. What is 'within' their understanding they cannot explicate, but it is not 'language' as commonly thought (words, sentences, etc.). Paul Standish would claim (and has argued in class) that their understanding would not be possible without the already background foundation of being within a linguistic framework. Thus, is explaining something non-linguistically possible, especially in this post-modern world where much of the standpoint is where everything is language-based?

An additional question is whether this struggle to deal with play within the constraint of language partly gives it its status. In its difficulty to address it, does this add to its 'value', if you will. Is this struggle to present it using language important? So as an experience in life, does its inexplicableness partly give it its status as a concept?

These are many questions and concerns that Miyazaki may or may not look at and think about while pursuing her research. These issues of language's character, play and beyond-the-self also bring up interesting questions for something the paper touches on at the beginning: authenticity (that is, at this point in my research, authenticity being the taking ownership and being responsible for my own life). And while how experiences of beyond the self affect authenticity would be interesting to investigate,

how to present this in a way that does not diminish either concepts would also have to be thought out.

So, do the limitations of language that major play comes against manifest themselves when looking at authenticity? Does language's character of describing things in terms of utility cause problems when presenting authenticity? For authenticity is not a means, it is not 'for something'. However, authenticity is dissimilar from major play in that while it is not a means, neither is it an 'act', and to then compare it with major play would be unfair. Authenticity is not so much an 'end' (a goal, something to strive towards that can eventually be [obviously or not obviously] obtained), but a constant way of being, similar to Aristotle's *eudaimonia* in that it is something that spans over a lifetime. While language can tend to put things into terms of utility, Miyazaki points out another possibility of language, that is, for it to also show the boundaries and limits (not in the negative sense, but in the sense that Paul Standish writes as Miyazaki quotes him, that is, 'the sense of the outward reaches of a situation' (Standish, 1992, pp. 38-39) of my self that are possible. To be reminded of what does lie beyond and outside of my self would not be detrimental to my self, for understanding that which lies outside of my self is important for authenticity as I am not only concerned with my self within a vacuum, but rather my self already within a situation, a situation that I do not always have control of, and one that consists of mysteries and uncertainty.

Thus, what is then interesting is how and where authenticity is placed and thought about within these beyond the self experiences. If there are experiences that 'point' to 'outside' me, such as while I am in major play, would and could I be authentic within those experiences? Or is this a false problem set up because I want too much to hold onto the idea of always having, always being my whole self all the time, and that it is not that I am not my self within these experiences, but that these experiences evoke or give a glimpse of that which is beyond? On the other hand, is using these experiences of beyond the self, experiences that could be described as pure, taking away from itself in that it is 'utilized' by authenticity? For as just said above, this glimpse of beyond the self can be helpful in understanding my authentic-ness and what it means for me to be myself.

I do not think that these pure experiences of beyond the self is something that is meant to be there to 'assist' me to 'be authentic'. Furthermore, I do not think that incorporating the experiences of beyond the self with the understanding of who I am diminishes the experience. After all, after the experience I still must come back to myself (else I go crazy or die), and within that coming back, I can embrace that wondrous moment as something special and touching. For that is what authenticity is about: living and *embracing life*, experiencing experiences, and constantly becoming aware of who I am and who I want to be within the situation that I am placed in. These experiences that point to the beyond are still pure in that it is a moment that I am caught in and am absorbed in, a moment that can potentially make me forget about myself and allow me to see beyond, but upon return can also bring a fuller understanding of what it is to be me.

REFERENCES

- Miyazaki, Y. (2008) Children's Experience of 'Beyond the Self' and 'The Rustle of Language' in G. Bataille (unpublished paper).
 Standish, P. (1992) *Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger and the Limits of Language* (Aldershot, Avebury).