〈「大学院生主体の教育研究国際会議」基調講演論文〉

Beyond the Self: Introduction

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This book is in part the translation of *Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and the Limits of Language,* the main substance of which was written in the 1980s. The text published here constitutes a revision of parts of the earlier book, together with additional essays prepared with a Japanese audience in mind. In this Introduction I want to make clear what the motivation for the original book was, as well as indicating the somewhat different intellectual and political pressures that have come to bear on the present revision. If my thinking had not in some way or other moved on from the position I took nearly twenty years ago, this would be something to regret, though if I no longer held to the central line of argument, publication of the present revision would scarcely be justified. Let me explain what is at stake here by explaining the context and motivation for each of these phases of writing.

There are three main factors that had a bearing on the development during the 1980s of the central ideas I presented in the text. The first is socio-political. The kind of sea-change that occurred in global politics during this decade was manifested most dramatically by the collapse of the Soviet Union, but this reciprocated in a complex fashion with changes already underway in the West, most significantly in English-speaking countries but extending elsewhere in what was an increasingly globalised world. This was a change marked most clearly by the election in 1980 of Ronald Reagan to the White House and of Margaret Thatcher the year before as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. These premierships constituted decisive shifts to the political right. In both cases the change was inspired at the socio-economic level by the monetarist theories of Milton Friedman, with the broader political philosophy of Friedrich Hayek exerting an important background influence. The new policies captured the mood of a substantial portion of the populations of both countries, where faith in the post-War, roughly Keynsian

economic order had been weakened, and where the confidence of both countries on the international stage had been disturbed. Both leaders heralded a new politics that promoted the independent entrepreneurial self, to the disparagement of welfare schemes and allegedly woolly notions of society and community, and in tandem with the reassertion of national pride. Enterprise was stimulated through the cutting of direct taxation and the encouragement of acquisitiveness, if not of greed, as the engine of economic progress and prosperity. The reassertion of national pride was tied to a celebration of tradition, refracted through media images and debased in various ways by the "heritage industry"[1], a reactionary turn in domestic affairs, and a hawkish foreign policy. At its best this last might be credited with having had some influence in the ending of the Cold War and the dismantling of repressive communist regimes; certainly Thatcher and Reagan continue to be hailed as heroes by many from the former communist states, however naive or misplaced this enthusiasm may seem. Moreover, Francis Fukuyama's infamous and in many ways objectionable idea of "the end of history" had this much going for it: it correctly registered the extent to which the influence of these policies had spread through the world and the extent to which domination by the United States had become a key characteristic of the new world order.

Of course, these political developments did not come from nowhere. In some ways they were the logical extension of trends at work in society over a longer period of time, however much these trends had gone underground at certain periods. It would be convenient in some ways to label these trends "reactionary", but that would surely be too quick: this was not a return to traditional conservatism but rather the creation of something new. What is true is that both leaders, and perhaps Thatcher more precisely, succeeded in changing people's outlooks and patterns of life. She did this in part through her dismantling or drastic revision of key institutions in society, including the professions, the trades unions, and the education system. It is the changes in education that constitute the second main factor that had a bearing on the writing of this book.

The history of state-supported education in the UK is a complex one, in which the churches have played a major part. In general this is a history, over the last century and a a half, of the progressive extension of educational opportunity. The decades following the Second World War have been marked especially by an equalization of opportunity in secondary and higher education. To take just one statistic, in the 1960s there was an expansion of higher education —— defined

roughly as education to degree level and beyond —— that led to participation rates of approximately 10%. At the beginning of the Twenty-First Century that figure is nearer 50%. In some ways this must be seen as a democratization of education and an important means of dislodging the structures of privilege that still survive from an earlier class-dominated society, and to this extent it is to be welcomed. But the picture is more complex. Extension of opportunity has been achieved without commensurate increases in public expenditure, and in consequence the experience that students now have of education and the efforts they must make in order financially to support their studies are markedly different from the experience of that earlier generation. Perhaps, bearing in mind the fact that 50% of tax-payers today do *not* benefit themselves from the experience of higher education, this constitutes a fairer spread and allocation of public expenditure and hence is more democratic: the benefit that those attending university gain may not be what it was forty or fifty years ago (because more other people now have degrees and because the experience itself may no longer be so special), but it is still a benefit. But to weigh the overall benefits of the changes being described here it is necessary to look beyond these kinds of questions, and it is to this that I shall now turn.

What needs to be considered are changes in the curriculum and in the administration of education, and here the orientation towards the market is doubly apparent. With regard to the curriculum the general trend has been towards unabashed adherence to an economic agenda: the aim of education is to provide a workforce with the skills attributes needed to ensure the country's competitiveness. With regard to the administration of education a move has been underway from more or less standard forms of provision towards greater variety and competition between institutions. In contrast to the comprehensive school —— the neighbourhood school for all, which for many has itself seemed important both as an expression of democracy and as a means towards its achievement —— the trend has been towards variety and indirect forms of selection. This has been done in recognition that the "one-size-fits-all" school fails to differentiate appropriately between students and offers no scope for parental choice. At the level of the school, the college and the university, there has been a handing down of managerial and financial responsibility with the effect that state schools compete with one another in a local market for students, and universities compete on a national and global scale. The results of schools in examinations are published nationally, and league-tables of performance shape the public (and often the self-) perception of how good they are. Measures of

output (in the form of examination results) become all-important, and these are the engine of, on the one hand, aggressive marketing and, on the other, a punitive inspection regime. The result is a culture of accountability, where what is to count is narrowly defined, fuelling systems of performativity, in Jean-Francois Lyotard's phrase. One casualty of this is the heightened stress that so many teachers now endure; another is an unprecedented anxiety for satisfactory results on the part of children themselves, involving what some have seen as a kind of loss of childhood. Of course, there is a host of other reasons why one might, at the beginning of the 21ˢᵗ Century, be more inclined to speak in terms of the loss of childhood, but the crucial thing here is the way that quite young children understand their education as dedicated to performance in tests across a quite narrow range of activity (most notably literacy and numeracy).

In part the change that is described here was a reaction to the imagined effects of the child-centred education that had in a fairly dramatic way swept through the UK during the prosperity of the 1960s. Coming out of the post-War austerity of the 1940s and 50s, the 1960s were, as is well-known, a decade of new opportunity and new ways of thinking. The improved economy that supported so much of this change led Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister at the start of the 60s, famously to tell the people: "You've never had it so good." New developments in the arts —— from pop music and film to highbrow culture —— reflected ways in which established authority was called into question, and what had passed as the standards of morality were challenged as nothing more than conventional propriety, standards supported by neither reason nor conscience and propping up a society that had its eyes on the past. While the forms of social change that were engendered provoked horror in some parts of society —— with horror in equal measure, it seemed, at loss of respect for "authority" and greater freedom in sexual behaviour —— the political aspect to these was relatively low-key. In the United States and in France, by contrast, this was not the case. The regular student demonstrations against the Vietnam War on university campuses in the US led to increasingly severe reactions on the part of the police, and at Kent State University students were shot. This was the decade not just of Vietnam, it should be remembered but of Civil Rights marches and eventually legislation, and of the assassination of leaders —— John and Robert Kennedy, as well as Martin Luther King. In France the political unrest was more serious still. In 1968, protests on the part of students, supported by many of their professors, at proposed reforms in higher education somehow found common cause

with workers aggrieved at the continuing inequalities in French society, and for a time it seemed that France was again on the brink of a revolution. In UK universities there were sit-ins and protests to be sure, but nothing with quite this political impact. No doubt some of this unrest was little more than the narcissistic and self-indulgent petty rebellions of middle-class young people not coping well with their new-found freedom, but it would also be true to say that the universities of that time were more genuinely politically alive, and that some of this fed into students' engagement with their studies.

If the university student in the late 1960s had her mind on the injustices of the world, or perhaps on the possibilities of socialism, her counterpart in the present decade is likely to see herself more as an "independent learner", accumulating credits from different courses. This endeavour may be geared towards her vocational aim, or it may simply reflect her sober recognition that she will soon need to pay back the loan she has taken out to pay for her course and support her studies; and this will require that she has the kinds of qualifications employers will want. If her counterpart in that earlier generation chose sociology or political science, she is more likely to opt for accountancy, law, or marketing. A casualty of this is the way that the idea of a university education as what Michael Oakeshott called "the space of an interval" — an interval between the early demands of schooling and the later demands to gain paid employment — has been progressively eroded. Oakeshott understood this interval as characterized by the chance to study for one's own sake — to discover or develop oneself in relation to the best that the culture had to offer, at least within one's chosen subject of study but also, it was hoped, in a broader way. It is by no means the case that Oakeshott, who was generally conservative in outlook, approved of all the experiments in the university curriculum that the 1960s saw, but he would nevertheless be opposed to the general vocationalisation that has replaced them in recent decades.

Yet in my view it is not exactly vocationalisation that is to be lamented. To suppose that the connection between education and work is the problem is to hold on to a dichotomization of the vocational and academic that is not only unconvincing but that runs the risk of disfiguring both. Plainly there are forms of training that are of purely instrumental value. Learning to type might be an example, and the skill we all have at our keyboards now will probably be obsolete in twenty years' time (with improvements in voice recognition, etc.). But there are some forms of study that can be both instrumentally useful and intrinsically rich. The

medical student and the human biology student may both study exactly the same things. For the former there is an instrumental reason for this, but for both the study may be similarly interesting and worthwhile. Moreover, it is probably the case that in some educational systems this false dichotomization has in the past worked to the detriment of the vocational. Certainly in the UK, for example, the curriculum of the grammar schools, which emulated that of the elite private schools, tended to be strongly non-vocational in character, and to some extent the study of a vocational subject at university was perceived to be somehow inferior. The origins of this in the British class system are fairly plain to see. Such a dichotomization then can scarcely be justified, and it can be harmful both to the university as an institution and to the society as a whole.

Educational change has, of course, been marked by other factors. Let me highlight two specifically. First, there was managerialism. In 1982, in his book *After Virtue,* Alasdair MacIntyre identified the Manager as one of three archetypes of the modern age. A wave of managerialism spread through educational institutions, in effect deflecting attention from their properly educational concerns. On the model of industry so-called "performance" and "quality" measures were introduced. These factors in effect lay the way for much of the broader change described above. Second, there was the rapid growth of interest in computers in education. Initially the emphasis was introducing computer programming as a subject into the curriculum, though later this shifted towards something more like information technology across the curriculum, and it was realized that much of the earlier curriculum change had been ill-conceived. By far the more significant aspect of the growth in the use of information technology was in the management of institutions. I was struck by the ways in which this new technology was increasingly determining the practices of managers and teachers. It was as if a new way of thinking had been inaugurated, with certain educational practices becoming subservient to the technology.

In both these respects I sensed that something was going on that essentially distorted education. But when I turned to the philosophy of education to see what kind of critique it could offer I was frustrated. Philosophy of education in the UK at that time, and to some extent in other parts of the English-speaking world, was very much dominated by an orthodoxy. This arose from the fairly spectacular success of the work of R.S. Peters, Paul Hirst, and Robert Dearden in the UK, and of Israel Scheffler in the United States, who had adopted the methods of conceptual

analysis (the dominant form of philosophy in mainstream Philosophy departments) in order, so it was claimed, to bring a new rigour to philosophical enquiry into education. This provided exacting analyses of central concepts to do with knowledge, learning, and the curriculum, but it seemed relatively powerless when it came to the practical problems I found myself confronted with. The search for more incisive and insightful forms of criticism reinforced philosophical interests that I had been developing in the years leading up to these changes.

These philosophical interests can be identified with reference to the two philosophers who dominate the original version of this book. Wittgenstein was widely read amongst Anglophone philosophers at the time, but Heidegger was shunned. It is probably true to say that most British philosophers would not have read Heidegger ── or Hegel or Nietzsche or even Kierkegaard, let alone Derrida or Foucault or Lyotard or Levinas. Heidegger especially was singled out as being especially incoherent, and his work was clearly thought to be not philosophy in the proper sense at all. This of course is a reflection of the still strong, though perhaps weakening divide between so-called Analytical and Continental philosophy, which has detracted from work in the subject in many ways. The British philosopher Bernard Williams once said that to differentiate philosophy in this way was like dividing cars into (a) front-wheel drive and (b) Japanese. Apart from being disappointed by this divide, as I found work of interest on both of its sides, I was struck by something quite specific: it seemed to me that the insights of the later Wittgenstein, on which such emphasis was placed by my teachers, in fact were surprising like thoughts in Heidegger's *Being and Time,* published some twenty years before. Why was this not acknowledged? Hence it became part of my purpose to address this.

It was obvious that to do so required addressing massive problems of style. There was the prevailing discourse of philosophy of education, in which Wittgenstein was frequently referenced, but perhaps read in a somewhat limited way, and in which Heidegger was more or less unknown. There was the extensive secondary literature on Wittgenstein, which took me into complexities of interpretation that the philosophy of education audience would be unlikely to tolerate. And then again, there was, across a wider gap, the extensive literature on Heidegger, that spoke in an idiom largely at odds with the academic forms of discourse of both the Wittgensteinians and the philosophers of education. To make things even more complicated, there was also the sense that, if I was to address the

educational problems referred to above I must somehow keep in mind the practical educator. This was not to be a purely scholarly enquiry.

The upshot of this was that there were immense difficulties in maintaining a secure sense of the book's imagined reader. I have identified readers of different kinds above, and I can imagine each being disappointed in some way by my approach. An easy solution would have been to write for one audience alone. But it was part of my purpose not to do that. I wanted to bridge the gaps I have identified, or —— to put this more assertively —— to disturb the reader by bringing together disparate forms of discourse. Indeed I believed that differences in language, and insensitivies to them, were close to the heart of the problems I was concerned with. In the book I try to show why some of the perhaps jarring shifts in style are very much connected with the book's purpose.

The present revision and expansion of the text has allowed me the opportunity to improve it in a number of ways. It has not allowed me to corrected all of the weaknesses in the original text —— some of which I was all too conscious of at the time, some of which have come home to me over the years. But it has made it possible for me to show in part the development of my ideas in the intervening years, especially through the inclusion in Part III of chapters on Emmanuel Levinas. The links between Levinas and Wittgenstein are limited and they are not well explored, but Levinas studied for a time with Heidegger, and he retained a sense that Heidegger was one of the great philosophers of the 20th Century. This did not stop him becoming one of the most profound critics of Heidegger's work. My turn to Levinas has also, I believe, helped me to address more directly some of the ethical relationships that are adumbrated in the original version of the book and to develop these more fruitfully. Levinas is a philosopher whose influence on poststructuralism has, like that of Heidegger, been profound, and it was in part through my reading of Derrida that I became interested in his work. But he is also someone whose work fits with a particular pertinence the theme of humility with which I introduce my larger project and whose importance, I hope, is felt throughout.

I take some comfort from the fact that in the years since I wrote the first version the world of (Anglophone) philosophy of education has come to be less dominated by an orthodoxy, more international, better fertilized by cross-cultural exchange, and perhaps the publication of this revision of the book in Japanese is an indication of this. I am also please by the broader spread of interest in Continental philosophy in the English-speaking world and by the erosion of barriers between traditions. I do

not claim to have contributed to that change in any very significant way, but it is good to have entered the water in the higher reaches of this particular stream, a trickle though they seemed at the time, and to see it now issuing in a confluence of currents, and into wider pools of thought.

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1) A indication of this is provided by the ways in which forms of nostalgia were promoted by the media. The BBC, for example, dropped what had once been its commitment to and reputation for experimental drama and innovation in the arts in favour of adaptations of literary classics, high on production values, but low on critical edge.

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