

Introduction to *Beyond the Self*

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This is an introduction to Paul Standish's book, Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger and the Limits of Language (1992) (hereafter abbreviated as 'BTS'.) Naoko Saito, in collaboration with five graduate students from Kyoto University, is in the final stage of translating the book (to be published from Hosei University Press). The value of the book has been rediscovered centring on the theme of self, other and language, and how their inseparable relation presented in the book can serve today in envisioning an alternative route to education: 'education for otherwise' (Standish 2002) and 'ethics before equality' (Standish 2001). The purpose of our dialogical presentation is to explore the possibilities and limits of BTS; and to show how the preliminary declaration of the author's stance in going 'beyond the self' has been developed since then in venturing into the territory of 'beyond Beyond the Self, especially in his critique of Heidegger through Levinas and Cavell.

I. INTRODUCTION (Saito)

The purpose of this presentation is to provide a critical introduction to themes from Paul Standish's book *Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger and the Limits of Language* (Standish, 1992; hereafter abbreviated as 'BTS'), and this in turn will help to contextualise some of the presentations to be made later in the day. Naoko Saito, in collaboration with five graduate students from Kyoto University (Hanako Ikeda, Tatsuya Ishizaki, Nobuhiko Itani, Yasuko Miyazaki, and Mitsutoshi Takayanagi), is in the final stage of translating a revised and expanded version of the book (to be published by Hosei University Press). In the intensive work of translation and discussion, and through undergoing the difficulty of translating philosophical concepts in English into Japanese, various key concepts in *BTS* have re-emerged in a new light in the contemporary scene of education—one heavily dominated by an 'economy of exchange' (Standish, 2005). The book is concerned with the themes of the self, the other and language. In its demonstration of the relation between these, it seeks to provide a means of envisioning an alternative possibility of education today: of education otherwise, as it might be put (Standish,

2002), and of ethics before equality (Standish, 2001). The revised original text of the book is to be published with supplementary material (the new Part III), some of which has been developed in Japan, and under a modified title—*Beyond the Self: Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Levinas*. The purpose of our dialogical presentation is to explore the possibilities and limits of the book, and to see how far its primary intention of going ‘beyond the self’ has been developed. How far does it venture into a ‘clearing’ where a more positive vision is elucidated, especially in its critique of Heidegger through Levinas and Cavell?

Paul Standish will first summarise the main themes of the book as well the background to the writing of the original version. Naoko Saito will then highlight some key features of the book concerning the self, the other and language, and raise questions about them—including the question of the extent to which the author succeeds in going beyond foundationalism in ethics and the meaning of the ‘limits’ of language. In the final section, Standish and Saito will discuss a turn that has been made after *BTS*, a turn ‘beyond autonomy’ and ‘beyond authenticity’ towards the ‘dissolution’ of the self.

II. INTRODUCTION TO *BEYOND THE SELF* (Standish)

Let me explain something about the circumstances that led me to write the original text. Three factors had a bearing on the development during the 1980s of the central ideas I wanted to present:

- i . The political shift to the right, most especially in the US and the UK, involving: monetarist economic policies; hawkish foreign policies; reactionary domestic policies; the promotion of selfish individualism and greed.
- ii . Changes in educational policy and practice, involving: subordination of education to imagined economic need; the neglect of understanding, the emphasis on skills; the rise of managerialism in educational administration; the influence of ICT and the rise of performativity; a new competitiveness between institutions; ‘dumbing down’.
- iii . The hostility between analytical and continental philosophy at the time, and the almost exclusively analytical nature of Anglophone philosophy of education.

Given these background conditions, then, what is it I was trying to do? I believed that I had discovered in Wittgenstein ways of thinking about the self and its relations to others (other people and other things) that were of key importance in education, especially against the background of the conditions described above. Furthermore, I found that there were resonances between these thoughts and ideas of Martin Heidegger, ideas that I had encountered largely through my own reading but that I found to be at best ignored and at worst rejected wholesale in the philosophical scene I found myself in.

The book I constructed took the following form. An opening chapter tried not only to introduce the main themes but to provide, in what I called the Preliminary Sketch, a microcosm

of the argument as a whole. The Preliminary Sketch introduced the theme of humility, which I saw as crucial for the orientation to the world that I found in the philosophers I was drawing on. In the development of the book this becomes linked with the idea of receptiveness, and this is thematised through a contrast between rational-assertive and receptive-responsive modes of thinking, which I first found in Michael Bonnett's paper 'Education in a Destitute Time' (1983), and which he in turn drew from Harold Alderman. This contrast is nicely evoked through an analogy with the contrast between crossing a lake in a power-boat and crossing it in a sailing dinghy. The next two chapters sought to elaborate this contrast through the provision of an account of language based upon connections between Wittgenstein and Heidegger. On the strength of this a critique of the modern conception of the human subject was offered, followed by a critical discussion of the prominence of rational autonomy in contemporary philosophy of education. Finally, I attempted to provide a more positive account of an orientation beyond the self. Building on the conceptions of humility and receptiveness in the earlier chapters, this had implications of a more or less metaphysical kind, cutting across the categories of epistemology and ethics. The book was probably too ambitious, but this is what it was trying to do.

With regard to the contextual factors mentioned above, and especially in relation to the stand-off between analytical and continental philosophy, I faced (i) difficulties in maintaining a secure sense of the book's potential reader, and (ii) challenges in terms of the style of writing. With regard to the latter, especially, and in the belief that style is not simply separate from substance, it was important to me to experiment with combinations of different voices and different registers of language. This is evident in part in the varied range of reference—including, of course, the book's borrowings from literature—but also in the shifts in discursive style and in the juxtapositions of philosophical registers that in other circumstances would not even encounter each other. I knew I was taking risks in doing this, and that I might well fail, but my intention was in part to disturb the reader. The way in which some of the philosophy I care about most does this has become all the more apparent to me in my subsequent work. Some of Naoko Saito's remarks in what follows help to show why this is so.

III. THE SELF, THE OTHER AND LANGUAGE IN *BEYOND THE SELF* (Saito)

The process of translating *BTS* and discussion over its use of language have elucidated Standish's position on the self, the other and language, as well as indicating some limits, and this simultaneously makes explicit the role of Part III. The following observations go perhaps beyond the intention of the author, but the work of translation has shown the author's position on language: that there is no fixed core, no centre in the meaning of language, that language has its autonomous role beyond the hands of the writer, and that the dislocation of the authority of the text takes place between the reader, the writer and the original text.

Language

The author presents the view that the human being is thoroughly a linguistic being. This has

three further ramifications: (1) there is no such thing as an immediate connection between the human being and the world (without the mediation of language); (2) with the use of language, the human being is already part of a language community, and therefore, the human being as a language user is already and always public; and (3) still we should acknowledge what cannot be said and the limits of language.

The first point is presented most explicitly in the author's criticism of Bergson and Michael Bonnett's interpretation of Heidegger. Standish is thoroughly opposed to their positions to the extent that they presuppose some pre-linguistic state of human being.

In connection with the first question [how could such mental developments get underway?] Bonnett argues that there must be some primary confrontation with the world, beyond the 'undifferentiated awareness' of which Peters writes, such that there is *a definite presocial structure to consciousness . . .* Put another way, this means that there must *be some prior dwelling with things before public standards can be entertained* (Standish, 1992, p. 212, italics added).

It is sometimes argued that there must be some primary prelinguistic confrontation with the world. This is the view of Bergson for whom the distinction between analysis and intuition captures a fundamental difference in our awareness of the world . . . Intuition . . . involves the direct apprehension of an object's particularity. It is not mediated by language. *The idea of a primary encounter . . . is infected with anthropomorphism.* We cannot imagine this encounter other than against the background of ourselves as linguistic beings. *If we posit the existence of such encounter for beings who are not linguistic in this way, we are not thinking of people at all* (p. 232, italics added).

Second, the author highlights the public nature of language in his discussion of the converging points in Wittgenstein and Heidegger. This does not mean, however, a reactionary turn away from the private—towards a kind of mystification of the unknown. Neither does this position assimilate the private into the social realm and communal activity. This third position will be made more explicit in Part III in the author's shift away both from autonomy and solidarity.

The later work [of Wittgenstein] repeatedly draws attention to *the background of the social world and to the publicity of concepts.* This is especially evident in the account of language. A word has sense only in the context of a sentence and a sentence functions in a language-game. A language-game operates as a part of a human practice. It operates out there, so to speak. Understanding, dependent on the language-game, is not an inner process. The language-game in turn presupposes a form of life, a way of carrying on together in which various practices will be manifest, and which necessarily extends beyond the field of consciousness (p. 30, italics added).

For Wittgenstein this means that language is necessarily embedded in public behaviour and in shared practice. One reason for this has to do with the rules embedded in language and with what it is to follow a rule. A rule necessarily involves agreement between people in the way they behave together (p. 33).

Heidegger writes of discourse in a way which stresses its social context. It is the way we articulate the intelligibility of being in the world. Essential to the idea of Being-in-the-world is 'concernful Being-with-one-another' . . . The conversation is not just a manner in which language is put into effect but essential. We are a *single conversation in that there must always be 'that one and the same thing on which we agree, and on the basis of which we are united and so are essentially ourselves'* (ibid. [*Existence and Being*, p. 301]) (pp. 33–34).

The necessarily social nature of language and its relation to forms of life with shared practices based on agreement in judgements have been foundations of the present argument. Language is central to the idea of a person and that language is necessarily public. One dimension of this publicity has to do with rules. Wittgenstein's view concerning the Private Language Argument was endorsed [in earlier chapters] . . . to the effect that rules are essential to language and that the existence of rules presupposes the existence of a community. This point is not accepted by Bonnett on the ground that participation in a community would presuppose some (structured) presocial encounter with the world (p. 215).

To admit this is not to reduce the individual to a social construct. The richness of the idea of language elaborated in Chapters 2 and 3 . . . goes beyond this and acknowledges the limits of language not only in terms of human practices but also in the rough ground against which it must gain purchase (ibid.).

Third, despite the author's claims concerning the public nature of language, another distinctive feature of *BTS* is its emphasis on 'what cannot be said' and the 'limits' of language. This does not mean, however, a denial of the self's inseparable relation to language. Though 'silence' is also acknowledged in Chapter 6 especially, this does not mean any devaluation of the role of language in favour of a kind of pure meditation. To subject ourselves to the realm beyond what can be said does not mean to abrogate the role of language by confining ourselves to the inside of the limit of language, in a kind of totalisation of thought: rather it is to release ourselves to what is beyond through an acknowledgement of the partiality of our language and thought. Acceptance of the limits of language and of 'nonsense' does not involve a turn to mysticism.

There is some connection here with Wittgenstein's remarks *about the limits of explanation*. Some things cannot be explained or argued for: they can only be shown. The disclosure is not a primary confrontation between objects of experience and the naked intellect. Rather it is a *disclosure effected through the generative power of language* (p. 28, italics added).

The limits of language which Heidegger contemplates are primarily the limitations of a certain type of language—roughly, what has been characterized as the rational-assertive (p. 32).

Heidegger's account of the way the proposition both can and cannot say something about the thing has parallels in the way Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, distinguishes between what the proposition says and what it shows in its use (ibid.).

These language-games set limits on what can be said but these are not the strict limits of immutable boundaries. In [Wittgenstein's] earlier work it was the logical form of the world which set limits on the language from outside. In the later work there is no logical form outside the language. What confers sense is the practice of the language-game within the form of life. But the practice and the form of life are intrinsically linguistic. Hence there is nothing beyond language from which it gains its sense (ibid.).

The concluding silence [of Wittgenstein] on these matters is not a reflection of indifference. Rather it is an expression *of awe at what is beyond the limits of language* (p. 36, italics added).

Here, as elsewhere in Wittgenstein's work, there is a surrounding mystery: 'Perhaps what is inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able to express) is the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning (*Culture and Value*, p. 16e) (ibid.).

The word—no thing, nothing that is, no being; but we have an understanding of things when the word for them is available (*On the Way to Language*, p. 87) (p. 234).

Keeping silent is not a matter of being dumb or taciturn (as a matter of temperament): to be able to keep silent one must be capable of speech. The resulting silence makes something manifest. This may take the form of choosing to leave something unsaid and making clear that this is what one is doing (p. 34).

As a part of what cannot be said, the sense of nothing must, for Wittgenstein, be shown, if it is to be understood at all (p. 240).

The silence which Cordelia [in King Lear] shows is the silence of someone who can speak: she keeps silent. Following Heidegger, *silence is here to be construed as a dimension of speech* (p. 241, italics added).

The desire for complete explanation is a barrier to an understanding of the mystery of language and its relation to Being. Renunciation of the claim to mastery opens the way to mystery (p. 234).

Self and other: Beyond autonomy, towards authenticity

Throughout this book, the author uses diverse terms to capture the self's relation to the other. In the process of finding adequate Japanese expressions for them, we are from time to time stopped short, causing us to deliberate on the concrete mode of the relation the author intends to show. These terms are adopted [by the author] in an attempt to resist four mistaken views that constitute potential threats to education. 'These are positivism: scientism, the prevailing idea of the human subject, and the preoccupation with the ideal of autonomy' (p. 222).

The ideal of autonomy builds on this picture of the self to offer a framework within which the self as agent can be understood and fully appreciated. It promises a mastery over one's life and the realization of one's nature (*ibid.*).

Rational-assertive language claims mastery over the objects which it designates. The idea of mastery becomes a refuge against uncertainty. It is a return to the self in its reinforcement of the sense of control (p. 226).

In *BTS* the shift is first towards authenticity beyond autonomy. The author uses various related concepts of 'authenticity'. Among them are: commitment (beyond Sartre's idea of the self in action), acceptance, receptivity, availability, resoluteness and openness. But there is also a suggestion that even authenticity is not enough for what is 'beyond the self'.

With responsibility comes the question of commitment. Cooper takes his Existentialist beyond the rather self-consciously posed questions of Sartre's fictional heroes to entertain Marcel's idea of availability. The 'egocentric topography' of the unavailable person is then contrasted with that availability which can hear the call from the stranger [*ibid.*, p. 175]. In this way I do not choose my commitments: they take hold of me' . . . Availability to this sort of relation to the other is a sort of openness. But it is less than the openness which the final section of this chapter points towards (pp. 211-212).

The initial commitment is then to be seen not as a decisive settling of the issue (like joining the party) but as a radical acceptance of the question, of the inevitable surrounding mystery (p. 245).

Openness of this kind is closed off in an insistent and busy confrontation with ethical problems. It is no ordinary choice at all but more like an orientation or spirit which one allows to guide one's life. It is approached through a 'sober anxiety' which brings us face to face with our potentiality-for-Being, and an 'unshakable joy' in this possibility [*Being and Time*, p. 358]. Authenticity of this kind frees us from the limitations of a curiosity confined to an ontical understanding of the world. It is clear how far this distances it from the focus on action (p. 218).

Authenticity requires a resoluteness to keep silent and hear the call of conscience against the clamour of the They (p. 242).

Openness is neither an other-worldly detachment nor a stoical indifference. As composure it is not to be understood as a state of equilibrium in which one is not deeply touched. It is more like a silent affirmation expressed in the way the life is lived (p. 245).

In its reaching beyond the limitations of the emphasis on rationality and its acceptance of our projective concern, authenticity is more in harmony with the picture of the human subject which was developed in Chapter 4. To a great extent, however, it maintains the focus on the self. In Chapter 6 I shall discuss further the possibility and the point of looking beyond the self (p. 218,

italics added).

Humility and the ethics of the 'beyond the self'

One of the central themes in *BTS* is the virtue of humility. The notion of humility is distinguished from its related concepts of humbleness and modesty. The virtue of humility does not require the complete denial of the self, and concomitantly a reactionary kind of altruism, but relocates the self in a richer and more comprehensive vision of the world. The ethical position in *BTS* is not foundationalist or essentialist. There is no stable ground to our ethical lives, and the virtue of humility is not a moral trait ascribed to a person. Various related virtues that appear in *BTS* (humility, receptivity, etc.) support the anti-foundationalist position of the book. The point of ethics is not to secure the ground of our lives, but to enable us better to undergo the uncertainties of life.

Humility is a virtue peculiarly concerned with what is beyond the self. It is a virtue which generates receptiveness (p. 4).

More strongly it might be held that in humility the self ceases to be a focus of attention at all (p. 7).

[T]his complacency is a lack of humility. It is a failure to recognize our own limitations and thus to have a true understanding of our place in the world. Lacking humility, we have confidence in our modes of understanding to the extent that we either fail to acknowledge or fail to take seriously questions which do not fall within the purview of either ourselves or our surrogates, the technologists (p. 14).

The focus on humility has been used to show what is missing from that picture of the world in which the self is the primary point of reference both as a centre of value and as a vantage point on the world. The good which may come from those selfish virtues is not denied. What is asserted is that their flourishing—and the way they are conceived—stifles much that is most important in human life, and their growth sustains a mistaken conception of what the world is like. The characterization of humility is one way of showing the sort of *other-awareness* which can redress the balance (p. 23, italics added).

It is sometimes said that Heidegger has no ethics. Heidegger does not directly address standard ethical problems. While this is so, it is clearly the case that his description of human life implies much about what the spiritual health of a human being must be like (p. 34).

Something of the Kierkegaardian stance runs through Wittgenstein's comments on ethics to the effect that ethics cannot ultimately be a matter of the reasoned development of an argument. Rather it is a matter of action seen within a particular picture, seen perhaps in a certain light (p. 36).

In virtue there is a need for this sense of what is beyond ourselves . . . Far from underwriting timidity in the face of obstacles, humility encourages us to recognize this precariousness of our situation (p. 21).

[W]ith regard to the desire to ground ethical beliefs, Wittgenstein resists the idea that there could be one foundation (p. 223).

The notion of horizon helps to illustrate the limitations of the person's vision. This horizon is defined by the way in which the world is conceived. *The desire for a secure foundation for ethics* and the faith in rationality are limitations on this conception (p. 225, italics added).

Humility is to be associated with the relation to 'no-thing' and to a 'true seeing' (in connection with Weil in Chapter 6). This does not mean, however, an abrogation of the search for the good. The good and the true is pursued beyond the self, but without any fixed foundation. This position is more explicitly advanced in Part III. Acceptance of nothing is not nihilism, but the demonstration of a continuous search for the good.

True seeing is here not primarily a matter of the correct estimation of one's capabilities but a turning of one's attention beyond oneself with a receptiveness to truth as disclosure (p. 16, italics added).

There is something about the true, once grasped which is inviolable. In this respect it is inaccessible, and this has perhaps to do with the fact that any description we attempt will fall short. The true is not only the true proposition. It is partly the mystery of this inviolability and inaccessibility which holds us (p. 244).

Humility's relation to the self is to no-thing; positively described, its relation—in terms of the self—is closer to that which is realized in the boundaries of the picture of the world which the person develops (p. 249, italics added).

Remaining questions in Beyond the Self

To what extent can the author go beyond foundationalism in ethics in his use of the term? The philosophical stance of *BTS* is anti-foundationalist: the author refuses the idea that 'there are immutable values' and 'the obsession with certainty within philosophy' (p. 20). How would it be possible to sustain the vision or the ethical stance of the author, without falling into the foundationalist position or into agnosticism or into mysticism (of being absorbed in the pure state of the dissolution of the self)? On the one hand, the author says that the point of writing the book is to disturb the audience; on the other hand, the descriptions above still indicate the possibility that this text will be read as the story of a conversion of a man from a morally degraded state to a good person. The notions of 'humility' and 'receptiveness' then will slide into a foundationalist position of ethics, so will the concept of the 'true'. This can be seen especially

when the author's ethical vision and suggests its educational implications.

While [King Lear] was calculative and assertive in his thinking he caused appalling suffering to those he loved, the country, and himself; when he becomes receptive-responsive he acquires a clearer vision of the truth, which involves a proper regard for others and which is a foundation for moral strength (p. 19).

The King Lear example suggests that humility is attained as a result of the overcoming of arrogance. I have implied that something like this is widely needed today. Humility needs to be linked with a sense of the precariousness of the human situation. Beyond this humility is reciprocally related to a sense of mystery or wonder (p. 22).

Another turn that is made in *BTS* is from 'limitations' to 'limit'. But where are we taken beyond the self? In the process of translation, a criticism has been made that the realm beyond the limit is unclear in *BTS*. There seems to be a need for the presentation of more positive vision of the realm of the beyond. The limit in a positive sense presented in *BTS* is not rigidly fixed, as it were to divide its inside and outside.

There is a richness to the term 'limit' which is deeply interwoven with the significance of limits in language . . . 'limit' may carry some sense of the outward reaches of a situation. This seems to have *a more positive significance showing the limits towards which one can reach*. The negative sense of restriction or of shortcomings in the former will be conveyed by the more obviously negative 'limitation' while *'limit' will be used for the more rich concept* (p. 38, italics added).

The limits are necessary for definition. Limits of this kind are like the rules of a game which constitute boundaries within which the game has sense. They may be of the order of the outward reaches of a situation, towards which our vision, and our aspirations, can extend (p. 229).

The limitations of language combine with the forces of technology. Limitations such as these are avoided by attention to the proper limits of language (ibid.).

First, that a thing is named is a condition for its being entertained in thought at all. The name is the mark, the physical and public form which the sign must have. Second . . . To call something is to set limits on what is so called in terms of how it can be thought. Third, there is a limit in the extension of something to its full reach. The grammar of an expression determines this reach . . . We must submit to this trajectory of grammar in which change is essential. The limit it reaches is an extension of our world (p. 233).

IV. BEYOND AUTONOMY AND AUTHENTICITY: TOWARDS THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SELF (Standish and Saito)

How far has the book's primary intention of going 'beyond the self' been developed? How far does it venture into a 'clearing' where a more positive vision is elucidated, especially in its critique of Heidegger through Levinas and Cavell? In response, we shall foreground the following two points as the major theses of Part III: (1) that the author presents alternative concepts of truth and the good that do not yield to foundationalism—a position explicitly stated with reference to Emerson's idea of 'measure-making' (Standish 2002); (2) that, after *BTS*, Standish takes a more radical turn—from 'beyond autonomy' and 'beyond authenticity' towards a partial dissolution of the self.

In Part III, after *BTS*, the author makes more explicit and positive his stance against anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism. This can be seen in the shift from Heidegger to Levinas and Cavell. The fact that the original book ends with a brief reference to Cavell is symbolic.

This move is directed not only beyond autonomy, but also beyond solidarity, and it points towards the dissolution of the self. He is wary of Heidegger's aestheticisation of politics and its concomitant effects of the abrogation of ethics—responsibility to otherness, in the 'romanticisation of solitude', on the one hand, and in the oppression of 'communal sharing' and the 'eulogy of home', on the other hand (p. 163). Thus, Standish complains that within Heidegger's vision,

Those within the community are absorbed into a communal sharing (*Miteinandersein, miteinanderteilen*) that muffles the voice of the other; while other-regarding virtue is turned not to (other, different) people but to a piety toward being (*ibid.*).

It is perhaps possible to reread this shift also as a turn *beyond authenticity*. This shift is crucially related to the alternative, Emersonian and Cavellian concept of language, one which has more focus on the *transitory, dissolving, prophetic and intensive nature of language*. We shall briefly describe how this radical turn manifests itself in the related ideas of self, the other and language.

Language: Poetics of the unsaid

In Part III after *BTS*, there is a subtle but significant change in the author's stance towards 'what cannot be said', especially in his change of tone towards Heidegger. He is more cautious of the oppression of silence and mystification in its aestheticisation of politics; of a direction towards 'univocity of interpretation' and 'concentration or convergence' (Standish, 2002, p. 163); and the negligence of the destructive and the strange in the 'destinal words' (*ibid.*). As a result, the author claims, Heidegger 'is incapable of recognising the significance of certain kinds of silence' (*ibid.*). The criticism represents the author's stance against solidarity and towards the dissolution of the self. This is also related to the author's appreciation of poetic language, the 'disseminative power of our language and lives' (p. 165). This is to save 'what cannot be said' and 'silence' from its repressive outcome.

For example, in the work of Georg Trakl the 'generating point' is in fact typically indicated but never reached; it remains 'dislocated in the unsaid' (p. 162).

The figure of the stranger in Trakl's poetry is read by Heidegger as a motif for ascent through spiritual darkness towards the holy; yet far from being the romanticization of solitude that Heidegger tries to make it, the stranger is a disruptive element in Trakl's poetry, symbolizing affliction and exile (*ibid.*).

[Heidegger's] poetics becomes a politics of the unsaid (p. 163).

[Heidegger's] unsaid bears witness not to the immemorial but to repression. [His words] aestheticize ontology where things are of most pressing ethical concern (p. 165).

Furthermore in Part III there is a more positive presentation of poetic language (from Heidegger to Emerson and Cavell)—beyond Heidegger's 'fundamental ontology' (p. 167) towards Emersonian *poiesis*. In Chapter 6 of *BTS*, the author already indicates the significance of poetic language (*poiesis*), especially in its role of calling into being through naming (Standish, 1992, p. 232). In Part III after *BTS*, however, the nature of this poetic language is more explicitly and positively advanced through Emerson's idea, with more focus on the transitory nature of language. This is a turn away from the '(backward-looking) nostalgia for home' and towards the '(forward-looking) electric intensity found in Emerson and the Dionysian Nietzsche' (Standish, 2002, p. 163). This is a presentation of the poetic nature of language which guides us towards the anti-foundationalist position of ethics in Emerson and Cavell.

If the above account of the language-game is correct, parallels can be seen between its evolving and extending qualities and the poetic qualities of language which concern Heidegger increasingly in his late work. The poetic is conceived not as the purely literary but in terms of the power of language to disclose (Standish, 1992, p. 33).

The account of naming bears a strong resemblance to Heaney's characterization of the feminine mode where the language functions more as evocation than as address. Here also there is a sense of the calling forth of ideas/things where divination is an appropriate metaphor for the writer's craft (p. 233).

The quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze. The poet did not stop at the color, or the form, but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects exponents of his new thought (Emerson, in Standish, 2002, pp. 160–161).

The poetic must not arrest or freeze but must be a means of conveyance of thought (Standish, 2002, p. 167).

The notion of criteria is also reconstructed from the standpoint of Emerson's idea of 'measure-making'. It destabilises the rigid view on criteria. Such view demands us to choose either

absolute criteria or no criteria. The ‘limit’ of language is in itself in transition; the limit is not something to set a clear boundary between the existing condition and its beyond; the limit in itself embodies the process of ‘measure-making’.

The sustaining of standards cannot be simply a matter of reading off assessments from a pre-given scale . . . Our criteria stand in need of application, that is, judgment, and in our judgments we exercise our words. True rigour in such matters requires ‘authentic gauging’, the meter-making argument of the poetic, of *poiesis*. Without such a responsibility to language there can be no raising of standards (where a standard is to be remembered to be a flag that we might raise and march behind (pp. 165–166).

In our learning we must gradually come to be able to take the measure of things, extending that measuring in new and unforeseen ways . . . This measure-taking is to be understood less as the application of a preexisting measure to an already existing thing, than as an instituting of the very possibility of measuring (p. 157).

It is not meters but a metre-making argument that makes a poem. The poet’s role is to announce and to affirm. For what nature offers is to be understood not as something fixed or permanent—in terms of raw data or sensory impressions (p. 160).

Ethics before equality: Beyond the authenticity of the self towards the dissolution of the self

If we follow the author’s position ‘beyond the self’, perhaps even the idea of authenticity should be transcended. Authenticity needs to be decentralised. Truth is not timeless, fixed and abstract, but discovered in the concrete context. This is more clearly shown in the author’s recent writings in his presentation of the idea of the dissolution of the self (Standish, 2006), but here there is perhaps a tension between Emersonian and Deleuzian impulses. On the strength of the former, our selves are in translation: in our relation to language we are already involved in relation to the other. ‘[R]esponsibility is realised to what cannot be directly named or represented: this is a responsibility to what *may be*, to a way of being that is *always still to come*’ (p. 167). This represents the author’s more explicit alliance with Emersonian *moral* perfectionism. On the strength of the latter, Deleuzian impulses, Standish draws attention to ‘A Cogito for a dissolved Self: the Self of ‘I think’ includes in its essence a receptivity of intuition in relation to which *I* is already an other’ (Deleuze, 1994, p. 58). Neither the acknowledgment of silence (of the other) nor the dissolution of the self means the abrogation of ethics and the self’s responsibility for an ethical commitment, that is, the search for the good life (Standish, 2001).

V. CONCLUSION: EDUCATION OTHERWISE—BEYOND THE ECONOMY OF EXCHANGE (Standish and Saito)

In conclusion, we shall discuss some educational implications of *BTS*.

Beyond the economy of exchange

The author is critical of the accountable notion of ‘standard’ and ‘excellence’, on the one hand, and of the essentialised notion of ‘excellence’. He is headed towards an alternative notion of ‘standard’ in the anti-foundationalism of Emerson and Cavell, in their idea of ‘finding as founding’—against the contemporary tide of education, towards the alternative concept of raising ‘standards’ and ‘excellence’. This is the education of moral perfectionism, but it is not characterised by an ascent towards the good or the essentialised notion of the good. This is a vision of education that responds to the transitory nature of the self, the other and language. In line with Emerson and Cavell, Standish shows that there is a way to save the notion of excellence and quest for the good life in the dissolution of the self. This is also a Levinasian turn in that perfectionist education is not a matter of self-cultivation based on the ontology of the self but rather a limitless responsibility to the other.

Education otherwise

The idea that the human being is thoroughly a linguistic being implies that the dissolution of the self is not a return to some pure state of immediate immersion with the world or the emotivist rejection of human intelligence; it sustains the commitment to human reason. As long as we commit ourselves to language, as we must be, we are never exempted from being involved in the ethical life. The search for the good is never abrogated in Emersonian moral perfectionism. The virtue of humility embodies the search for the good. This is not some kind of pure spiritual education, or a return to the native condition, or the doctrine of self-cultivation. It encourages a thorough education for language and participation in the public through participation in the city of words.

This points to education otherwise—one that acknowledges the space for the stranger. ‘For Levinas . . . in contrast, reverence attaches essentially to the asymmetrical relation to the other human being (the Other)’ (Standish, 2002, p. 166). We are never exempted from responsibility to the call from the other. Ethical ‘commitment’ is crucial to Emersonian moral perfectionism. But this is not a univocal or one-sided notion of action. It is a fusion of receptivity and action.

The author’s alternative vision of the Emersonian teacher is of one who makes ‘the repeated return—finding new words, finding as founding, to return only to start again’ (p. 168). We might say that this is a kind of teacher who never satisfies his or her attained truth, but who dares to be destabilised by surrounding darkness and by the stranger, and learns to subject himself to the prophetic nature of language, to be engaged in the conjoint task of measure-making. In this sense, the teacher is a stranger, too. A teacher who, in returning to the darkness of the cave, cannot simply be ‘the bearer of tidings with the message of destiny’. ‘The teacher cannot come back to the darkness simply pre-armed with truth’ (p. 168).

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