

## **Rejoinder to Yuki Ohara and Hiraku Nakamaru**

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The opportunity to engage in response and counter-response with Yuki Ohara and Hiraku Nakamaru serves to illustrate the importance of attention to one's own use of language. Both responses have raised questions about the implications of what I have said and my choice of particular terms to do so. I will first discuss the reply offered by Ohara before addressing questions raised by Nakamaru.

The focus of Ohara's research offers a comparative context for the discussion of European citizenship I provide. The difference in approach between comparative education and philosophy of education is highlighted by this comparison, but in a way that illustrates the importance of the dialogue between disciplines with which this colloquium is engaged.

Ohara draws attention to my concern with the relationship between citizenship and education and how the understanding of the latter affects the understanding of the former. It is important to clarify, however, that the underlying concern in my paper is to address the understanding of citizenship and education that leads to our current understanding of the relationship between the two. So, I do wish to say that citizenship can be seen as universal, in the sense that is a part of our being human and the living with others this entails. I do not wish to say, however, that there is a universal model according to which we can understand it. It is this assumption—of a set of values and ideals that define 'good' citizenship—that leads to the problematic perfectible understanding of education and of the self.

To understand citizenship as being concerned with the individual, however, is not the alternative to the universal understanding. The focus on the individual relates to the former understanding of the universality of citizenship. I am concerned with understanding citizenship in terms of our individual subjectivities. The term subjectivity here does not refer to our being subjective, to our choices and opinions, but refers to the way in which we are singularised. This focus on the individual in relation to citizenship, then, is intended to draw attention to the individual as the site of acting according to the moral imperative that our common citizenship demands. This is to say that we are always already answerable to the other, and the sublimation of a particular understanding of this demand relies on the acknowledgement of one's individual responsibility.

Ohara raises a number of important questions about the actual implications for E.U. citizens of the form of subjectivation I describe. The idea that E.U. citizens are asked to be entrepreneurial is not necessarily felt explicitly—the entrepreneurial self is not an identity that someone would self-consciously take on. The effect of this mode of subjectivation operates across all aspects of our lives, in ways that relate to our education (or lifelong learning) but are

by no means restricted to the educational institution. I will use this context, however, as an example. The learner will often begin a course of study with a benchmark assessment; that is, being assessed against national averages for their age group. From this the learner is able to agree some measurable objectives with the teacher, to be reviewed at regular intervals. Perhaps the class will then undertake an exercise through which they can identify what kind of learner each of them is. The teacher can then adapt the materials and activities that she uses accordingly, and the learner can take ownership of their learning. That the teacher undertakes these exercises, of planning and profiling and differentiating, forms part of the assessment of her performance and teaching standard and, then, of the school's effectiveness. Both the teacher and the school constantly strive to improve, their success or failure in doing so illustrated in the national school league tables. Such tables have come to be seen as a vital source of information, not just for the formal education sector, but for parents keen to ensure their children are receiving the best education available to them. The role of the parent itself has become an intensified area of focus for discourses of work on the self. With poor parenting sought to be corrected through parenting classes and good parenting the subject of television and publishing industry focus, through programs such as 'Supernanny' and Gina Ford's 'The Contented Little Baby Book'. This does not always require access to academic literature or professional opinion directly. Any women's magazine will offer me the chance to answer some simple questions to find out what kind of wife/mother/friend/employee I am or how large my carbon footprint is. And indicate what I can do to improve where I might be lacking. As one IoE MA Philosophy of Education student, Chris Cheale, recently noted, the old adage 'Know thyself' has become 'Profile thyself'.

Globalisation and the accompanying spread of neo-liberalism means that much of this will probably be recognisable in most developed countries, not just in Europe but in Asia and America also, and so Ohara is right to point out that the entrepreneurial self is not necessarily solely a European form of subjectivation. Indeed, the very need to establish 'Europe' stems from the growth of a global knowledge economy and the need to compete with America, Japan, India and China. What I wish to draw attention to is the way in which a particular history is drawn upon in order to suggest that there is something distinctive about Europe that its citizens should wish to protect.

Ohara's focus on the *Bhagavad Gita* is interesting in the context of my reference to Emersonian moral perfectionism, as Emerson was greatly influenced by Hindu thought and particularly this text. This interrelationship warns of the risks of a comparative approach, of comparing and contrasting ways of life and countries. There is a risk of essentialising Europe or India, for example, in this way. Edward Said identified the latter in his *Orientalism* (1978). Buruma and Margalit discuss the inverse of this in their text *Occidentalism: the West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (2004). The history of philosophy illustrated by the mutual influencing of East and West shows that the comparative approach risks oversimplifying how nations, and their citizens, have come to understand their identity in particular ways.

Nakamaru's response attends to the philosophical aspects of the paper. In particular he raises important questions about the appropriateness of my use of the term 'willingness' to discuss morality and citizenship. I will respond by trying to clarify what I intended in using this term.

The term willingness is intended to suggest a particular relation of the self to the self, which, while acknowledged, is not necessarily something to which one constantly, knowingly refers, or

makes explicit. It suggests a relationship to myself in which I acknowledge the inherent instability of myself and the impossibility of fully knowing or mastering myself (as perhaps the understanding of the self in current forms of accountability might suggest). The willingness I refer to is not intended to advocate a passive acceptance that I will be changed by any encounter with the world, however imperceptibly, but that I must use my critical judgment (based on some understanding of the good, which may in the momentary act of judging be what is preferable there and then) to judge toward whom I should orient this willingness to listen.

This willingness is not an explicit decisive act that I take on as part of my identity as such. I do not say 'Today I am going to be willing to listen, and really acknowledge my passivity in the conversation with that person. This is ethically the best thing to do'. Such an act, apart from suggesting not really listening, would already deny the reality of the everyday encounter in which I cannot preempt what will be said or not said to me verbally or non-verbally but by which I will be affected, which forms part of my education of the world as a human being.

The example of Socratic *parrhesia* illustrates a central value to this kind of education, and draws attention to the way in which our citizenship is enacted in the everyday, in what we say and do. Citizenship is not only something to be considered at the macro-level, as the population's relationship to the state. The face-to-face interaction should not therefore necessarily be thought of in temporal terms, as my needing to be addressed in conversation before a response is required of me. Instead, as I hope the further exploration of willingness above has shown, this answerability is always already present in human life. Hence, as I state in the paper, the accounts that Cavell and Foucault offer indicate answerability, rather than obligation, to be a better way to express our moral relationship to the self and other.

## REFERENCES

- Morgan Buruma, I. and Margalit, A. (2004) *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (London, Penguin).  
 Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism* (London, Pantheon).