

# E-Journal of Philosophy of Education

*International Yearbook of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan*

## Symposium

*Thinking about Education through Examining Human beings*

## Thematic Research

*How to Envision “Education”*

*Based on the Publication of Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education*

# Philosophy of Education Society of Japan

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@gmail.com

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# The “Weight” of the Existence of Me:

## “Shame” in Levinas

Rina KATO

*Kyoto University*

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the ethical interplay between the “I” and the Other, particularly within Levinas’s philosophical framework, focusing on the concept of “shame” as a lens to critique the theory of the Other within the philosophy of education. Levinas challenged the legitimacy of power itself by examining situations beyond its control through the lens of shame, highlighting that in the phenomenon of shame, we can find a situation in which the “I” is riveted to its own existence. This paper explores how the sense of shame shifts with the Other’s “election,” reversing the burden from the absurd weight of “the I can only be me” to the ethical imperative weight of “the I must be me.” This discussion navigates the aporia inherent in the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education, where conflicting views emerge—the impossibility of fully understanding the Other versus the necessity of the educational “project.” It introduces the notion of education’s potential for generating “shame,” illustrating the tension wherein attempting to disengage from the aporia proves futile as it is constitutive of education itself. It argues that this aporia, rather than a hindrance, defines the essence of education. Ultimately, the paper concludes that the ethical bond between the educator and the educand thrives in embracing the tension of this aporia, as educators persist in understanding educands through educational intention while grappling with the weight of their own existence.

**Key words:** Emmanuel Levinas, shame, ethics, the Other, the weight of the existence

## **Introduction**

“The methodological ‘project’ of formulating principles, establishing grounds and systematizing is emblematic of modern spirit” noted Hitoshi Imamura (Imamura 1994, 55). However, Imamura also highlights an aspect often overlooked: “people do not notice

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### **Correspondence:**

Rina KATO, Kyoto University. Email: kato.rina.105@gmail.com

that there is a characteristic of exclusion the foreign body in the inside (of the modern spirit)" (55). The spirit of the "project" has permeated pedagogical discourse extensively. With the advancement of educational technology, modern pedagogy often views human nature itself as an object that can be understood and controlled<sup>1</sup>. Reflecting on this aspect of modern pedagogy, efforts have emerged to unveil the coercive nature of educational "projects" and to challenge their legitimacy. One such endeavor is found in the theory of the Other within the philosophy of education, influenced by post-colonialism. In the theory of the Other, a tension arises from conflicting notions; firstly, despite attempts to comprehend the Other through "projects," complete understanding remains elusive due to the inherent Otherness of the Other. Secondly, within educational contexts, it is challenging to evade the pursuit of objectives and accountability, thus making the abandonment of "projects" in education impractical. Consequently, the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education grapples with the dual challenge of acknowledging the impossibility of fully understanding the Other while recognizing the necessity of engaging in "projects" concerning the Other.

In this paper, we explore the tension inherent in the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education, which we characterize as an aporia. We argue that the ethical relationship between the educator and the educand is truly established only within the tension of this aporia. To illustrate this, our paper focuses on the insights of Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), who pointed that human existence cannot be fully encapsulated by the paradigm of the "project" emblematic of the modern spirit.

Levinas used the term "power (pouvoir)" to denote the capacity to autonomously engage with and pursue goals through "projects." According to Levinas, Western philosophy has historically privileged the understanding of human beings in terms of their "power" (E2: 109). This philosophical tradition has labeled as "failures" events that defy control through "power" and disrupt the spontaneous exercise of freedom (TI: 81-82=83). However, beneath the labeling of such events as "failures," there persists an implicit affirmation of the legitimacy of "power" (TI: 81-82=83). Levinas challenges this assumption by reframing events beyond the scope of "power" not as "failure" but as occasions of "shame," thereby casting doubt on the very legitimacy of "power" itself (TI: 82-83=83-84).

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<sup>1</sup> Tetsuo Okamoto (2012) highlights that in modern education, characterized by the dominance of "Human-Centered" worldview and the notion of autonomous individuals, a "mechanistic view of humans" based on "demonstrative scientism" has a prevalent perception of education as mere "conditioning" (22). Fumio Ono (2019) endeavors to reassess the modern educational paradigm, governed by technological rationality, through the lens of "knowledge of pathos."

Levinas pursued this inquiry within two primary contexts. Firstly, he engaged with Heidegger’s concept of “facticity (Faktizität),” offering a critical reinterpretation. Here, Levinas introduced the concept of “shame” to describe the existence of the “I” bearing “facticity.” Moreover, Levinas extended the application of the concept of “shame” to the ethical dimension of relating to the Other. Thus, Levinas proposed that grappling with the existence of the “I” in light of its facticity and navigating the ethical relationship with the Other are intertwined endeavors, both aimed at questioning the legitimacy of “power”<sup>2</sup>.

However, most preceding studies overlook this aspect when addressing Levinas’s question of “power” within the philosophy of education. This oversight is largely due to the predominant focus of these studies on Levinas’s conception of the relationship with the Other, originally developed within his philosophical framework<sup>3</sup>. While Levinas indeed underscores the significance of questioning “power” within the context of the Other, this paper argues that a deeper understanding emerges when we center our attention on the concept of “shame,” revealing Levinas’s examination of the ethical relationship with the Other through the lens of human existence bearing “facticity”<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine how the I engages in an ethical relationship with the Other while bearing its own “facticity,” using Levinas’s concept of “shame” as a guiding principle, and to describe this way of being of the I in terms of the “weight (poids)” of existence of me<sup>5</sup>. We seek to elucidate the essence of this existential “weight” of the I and demonstrate that the ethical connection with the Other is not established through the exertion of the I’s “power,” but rather is continuously shaped by the I’s existence within the interconnected and reversing two “weight”<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “the I,” frequently utilized in this paper, pertains to the concept of “the I” (le moi, je) as articulated by Levinas. For further insights into Levinas’s exploration of “ipseity” as developed throughout the early and middle phases of his career readers may refer to Hiroshi Hiraoka’s work (2019) on this subject.

<sup>3</sup> Whether the term “power” is explicitly invoked or not, a significant portion of contemporary scholarship has addressed scenarios wherein my “power” is challenged by the Other. For instance, there is research examining the tension between the “power to interpret the Other” in education and Levinas’s critique of “power” (Ono 2002). Additionally, studies explore the potential for a mode of thinking akin to “hearing” through an analysis of the dynamics of relationships with the Other informed by Levinas’s critique of “power” (Williams and Standish 2018). Moreover, investigations delve into the substance of Levinas’s critique of “power” by scrutinizing his objections to the “maieutic method” (Hiraishi 2011). Finally, there are studies demonstrating, through an examination of hyperbole—Levinas’s method of argumentation—that Levinas’s manner of discourse itself serves a performative function, prompting readers to critically reflect on their own “power” (Anjiki 2020).

<sup>4</sup> In recent years, there have been critical examinations (Bernasconi 2012; Kotegawa 2015) of certain studies that interpret Levinas’s philosophy through the lens of the theory of the Other (Morgan 2009; Sato 2000).

<sup>5</sup> The discussion has largely focused on how Levinas incorporates and expands upon Heidegger’s notion of “facticity” (Calin 2011; Moati 2012; Rolland 2011). However, there has been insufficient examination of the connection between the concept of “shame” introduced within his discourse on “facticity” and its role in his ethical discussions. Additionally, the significance of the concept of “shame” has often been overlooked (Tonaki 2021, 373-374).

<sup>6</sup> Kazuya Wakabayashi (2021) also explores the dual significance of the “weight” of existence, with a particular

In this paper, we first summarize the theory of the Other, a subject actively debated in the field of the philosophy of education, as a discourse on “power,” and elucidate the tensions within the aporia inherent in the theory of the Other in educational philosophy (Section 1). Subsequently, drawing on Levinas’s interpretation of Heidegger, we critique Heidegger’s interpretation of “facticity,” which implicitly privileges “power” (Section 2). Then, we delve into the nature of human existence burdened by “facticity,” conceptualizing it as the “weight” of one’s being, through an analysis of Levinas’s original interpretation of “facticity,” with a particular focus on the concept of “shame” (Section 3). Additionally, we elucidate how the implication of this existential “weight” undergoes a reversal when the I, laden with “facticity,” is “elected” by the Other (Section 4). Building upon these discussions, this paper examines the implication of the tension inherent in the aporia of the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education and describes the reality of the ethical relationship between the educator and the educand (Section 5). Finally, we illuminate the pedagogical significance of our finding (Conclusion).

## **1. The Discourse on “Power” in the Theory of the Other in the Philosophy of Education**

In this section, we delve into the theory of the Other within the philosophy of education through the lens of the critique of “power.” This theory is discussed within two key contexts: the theory of educational relationships, and the theory of human (trans)formation (Bildung) (Sakurai and Ozeki 2019). The theory of human (trans)formation emerged in a post-modern milieu characterized by skepticism towards the simplistic valorization of educational aims. It represents an endeavor to relativize education through the framework of “becoming” as an inherent aspect of human nature (Miyadera 2009). Against this backdrop, we emphasize that prior to delineating the distinctions between the theory of educational relationships and the theory of human (trans)formation, a more fundamental issue arises from the different stances towards the “project” within the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education.

The theory of educational relationships addresses the dynamic between the educator and the educand as the Other, while the theory of human (trans)formation explores the

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focus on the concept of “shame.” However, his analysis lacks an explanation of the existential reality of the “weight” that humans bear within ethical relationships while confronting “facticity.”



educand’s relationship with the world and other individuals as the Other. When examining the relationship with the Other in this broad sense, whether within the theory of educational relationships or the theory of human (trans)formation, the stance of the theory of the Other diverges based on its approach to educational intention. Essentially, two positions emerge: one advocates for integrating educational intention into the discourse to foster an ethical relationship with the Other, while the other critically scrutinizes intentionality in “project” due to its potentially coercive nature, recognizing it paradoxically as a hindrance to establishing an ethical relationship with the Other.

We would like to present two notable studies that align with the former position regarding the “project.” The first study, conducted by Yasushi Maruyama (2002) delves into the ethical relationship between the educator and the educand. In the wake of the increasing awareness prompted by post-colonialism, there is a growing recognition that educational intentions directed towards the educand can often be entangled with colonialistic tendencies of control. In response to this awareness, Maruyama seeks to strike a balance between educational intention and respect for the Otherness of the educand. He posits that when confronted with the incomprehensible, what is necessary is “the cultivation of the ability to imagine beyond one’s own framework for understanding” (10). The second study, conducted by Mai Takahashi (2003), proposes a perspective wherein “one immerses oneself in the intersecting horizons” of two contrasting “consciousnesses”: the consciousness that “feels the need to understand” the Other, and the consciousness that acknowledges that the Other “must not be understood in their own framework” (60). Takahashi argues that embracing these dual consciousnesses simultaneously serves as a valuable “tool for ‘understanding,’” a notion that pedagogy should advocate (60).

In these studies, we observe an inclination towards transcending inherent limitations through the “project,” rooted in the self-discipline and concerted effort, even when one’s capacity to comprehend the Other remains constrained. However, it is crucial not to regard their positions merely reverting to the modern spirit’s paradigm of the “project.” Maruyama and Takahashi recognize the inherent difficulty for education to eschew aims and responsibilities in understanding the educand and fostering the educand’s development. Hence, they persist in maintaining an orientation towards the educational “project.” Consequently, the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education unavoidably grapples with conflicting ideas. On the one hand, despite engaging in a “project” to comprehend the Other, full understanding remains elusive due to the Otherness of the Other. On the other hand, abandoning the educational “project” proves challenging. Thus, it becomes imperative to reconcile both the impossibility of fully

understanding the Other and the necessity of the educational “project.” Considering the tension inherent in this aporia, Maruyama and Takahashi endeavor to confront it by continuing to pursue a “project” for an ethical relationship while acknowledging the impossibility of fully understanding the Other. However, we can still scrutinize their position critically.

Maruyama locates ethical responsibility in the ongoing effort to comprehend the Other, despite the Other’s inherent alienness. However, notably, he never questions the “project” itself from an ethical standpoint. In his discourse, regardless of the outcome of one’s “project,” “the act is justified by the fact that one has done one’s best” in the process of one’s effort (Maruyama 2002, 9). Similarly, Takahashi assigns a simplistic value to the “consciousness” (Takahashi 2003, 60) and the “intention” (61) to “feel the need to understand” the Other or acknowledge that the Other “must not be understood in their own framework.” Yet, she fails to address the potential pitfalls of this naïve perspective, particularly the inflated self-consciousness it engenders.

On the other hand, Naoko Saito (2002) sharply highlights the inherent violence embedded within the notion of the “project.” Saito identifies “a closed state in the self in which one clings to make an effort to speak to the Other what one cannot speak, and therefore, conversely, one cannot expose oneself to the voiceless voice from the Other” (32) within discussions aiming to realize ethical relationships through “projects.” According to Saito, no matter how much individuals expand their “power” of self-consciousness and effort, they cannot attain ethical relationships with the Other. Such relationships transcend mere “project” endeavors.

The debate over whether ethical relationships are established through “projects” or not has frequently surfaced in studies on Levinas within educational philosophy. Sharon Todd (2001) argues that “the specifically *ethical* possibility of education, this possibility for non-violent relation to the Other, can only ever emerge when knowledge is not our aim” (73) within educational relationships<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, Todd suggests that when teachers “teach with ignorance” (73), they “create a path toward an ethical horizon of possibility” (73). However, Todd’s argument appears to leave open the possibility that emphasizing teaching with “ignorance” might paradoxically be distorted into advocating for achieving ethical relationships through “projects” by educators. Paul Standish (2001) proposes that Todd’s argument could easily be manipulated into a discourse promoting “better interpersonal or communication skills” and “carefully calculated behaviors” (76).

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<sup>7</sup> The italicized text in quotations is the author’s own, unless otherwise specified.

As we have observed in this section, the participants in the debate approach the aporia within the theory of the Other in educational philosophy in distinct manners. Maruyama and Takahashi suggest that establishing an ethical relationship with the Other is achievable by persisting in “projects” aimed at understanding the Other, despite recognizing the inherent limitations. Todd posits that the potential for ethical relationships with the Other emerges through engaging in “projects” that involve relating to the Other with ignorance. These arguments, while acknowledging the limitations of projects, still affirmatively accept the paradox and endeavor to establish ethical relationships through them. Consequently, the legitimacy of the “project” itself remains unquestioned, and the tension inherent in the aporia is somewhat disregarded. On the contrary, Saito’s and Standish’s arguments necessitate questioning the legitimacy of the educational “project,” thereby addressing the aporia in a manner that maintains its tension. Hence, this paper aims to describe how ethical relationships with the educand can be achieved by skillfully navigating within this tension. Thus, starting from the next section, we will delve into the context of Levinas’s critique of “power” and engage in deeper discussions to confront this aporia and scrutinize the educational “project.”

## **2. The Failure of Power: Levinas’s Interpretation of Heidegger’s “Facticity”**

Levinas challenges the legitimacy of human “spontaneity” in his seminal work *Totality and Infinity* (1961). In Levinas’s framework, “spontaneity” refers to “the naïve right of my powers” (TI: 83=83), thus his discussion on critiquing “spontaneity” can be interpreted as a critique of “power.” According to Levinas, traditional Western philosophy encounters the critique of “spontaneity” when the certainty of “power,” the belief in our unrestricted freedom, falters, leading to “failure” (TI: 81=83). It was believed that this “failure” would expose the “weakness” inherent in “power” (TI: 81=83), previously perceived as absolute, thus prompting a reevaluation of “power.” However, labelling the inability to exercise one’s “power” as “failure” still implies an acknowledgement of “the undiscussed value” of “power” (TI: 81=83). Therefore, Levinas argues that the critique of “spontaneity” and “power” in Western philosophy has not been sufficiently radical.

Levinas’s objection to the critique of “power” through “failure” is underpinned by his skepticism towards Heidegger’s discourse on “facticity.” Levinas interprets “fact” as “being made, accomplished and past and hence irrevocable, which as such obstructs our

spontaneity” (TI: 80=82), terming this characteristic of “fact” “facticity (*facticité*)”<sup>8</sup>. He contends that “a *consideration* of the fact” has been discussed in Western philosophy as the critique of “spontaneity” or “power” through “failure” (TI: 80-81=82). While not explicitly mentioned, it is evident that Levinas is referring to Heidegger’s exploration of “Faktizität” as the Western philosophical discourse addressing “facticity.” In Heidegger’s examination of the concept of “thrownness,” he considers the “facticity” of an individual’s existence, acknowledging the inevitability of being thrown into the world without choice (Heidegger 1957, 135=174). Levinas disagrees with Heidegger’s characterization of “facticity” as the “failure” of “power,” a point that is elaborated on when Levinas examines “facticity” by drawing on Heidegger’s concept of “thrownness”<sup>9</sup>.

Heidegger articulates that “the expression ‘thrownness’ is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*” (Heidegger 1957, 135=174). Furthermore, he defines “facticity” as “*a characteristic of Dasein’s Being—one which has been taken up into existence, even if proximally it has been thrust aside*” (Heidegger 1957, 135=174). From this, it is evident that Heidegger suggests that human beings being already made to exist in this world is not merely an experience; rather, “facticity” itself constitutes a characteristic of Being that comprises human existence. While the I is free to exercise my “power” since “proximally” facticity “has been thrust aside” for me, this fact remains an inherent aspect of human existence that cannot be separated from oneself. Levinas acknowledges this understanding of “facticity,” as he describes the characteristic of “fact” as “irrevocable, which as such obstructs our spontaneity” (TI: 80=82).

However, Levinas takes issue with Heidegger’s discussion of “projection (*Entwurf*)” because he describes “facticity” which is “*taken up into existence*” (Heidegger 1957, 135=174) as something that can “be undertaken”. In his lecture “Power and Origin” (1949), Levinas thematically addresses this matter, stating that Heidegger emphasizes that the “projection” “does not overcome the finite characteristic of thrownness, but merely undertakes this characteristic by power to die” (CE2: 131). However, within this act of “undertaking” lurks “a power that can end” the self “in the finite itself” (CE2: 129). From Levinas’s perspective, whether it is the “overcoming” or “undertaking” of the “thrownness,” Heidegger’s thought still revolves around “power” while discussing “facticity.” Initially, according to Heidegger’s description, “facticity” is an intrinsic of Being that consists human existence, and thus one should not be able to distance oneself

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<sup>8</sup> His explanation of “fact (*fait*)” largely stems from linguistic considerations in French, where the word “fait” originates from the past participle of the verb “faire,” meaning “make” or “do.”

<sup>9</sup> This paper solely examines Heidegger’s thought within the framework of critiquing “power,” drawing heavily from Levinas’s interpretations of Heidegger.

from it. However, beneath Heidegger’s notion that “facticity is undertaken,” there is an assumption that we can maintain a distance from “facticity” and manage it in some way. It is this contradiction in Heidegger’s framework that Levinas interrogates.

Heidegger appeared to question the legitimacy of “power” by exploring “facticity” and revealing the condition of human beings who inevitably bear their own existence. However, Levinas’s critique suggests that Heidegger ultimately did not transcend the framework of implicitly valuing “power” because he sought to maintain the possibility of undertaking “facticity.”

The preceding discussion has illuminated Levinas’s critique regarding Heidegger’s interpretation of “facticity.” Levinas’s critical perspective has already surfaced in his own interpretation of “facticity” in the 1930s, predating his lecture “Power and Origin” (1949), where he extensively examined how human existence bears “facticity” in a manner distinct from the “failure” of “power.” In the subsequent section, we focus on this alternative approach to “facticity.”

### 3. The Absurd “Weight” of the Existence of Me

Levinas discussed how human existence bears “facticity” in his early article “On Escape” (1935). This article is often interpreted in light of Heidegger’s “philosophy of being” (Ev: 94=51)<sup>10</sup>. While Heidegger’s philosophy maintains the possibility that individuals can undertake “facticity,” Levinas, in this article, emphasizes that “the fact the I is oneself” has the “most radical and unalterably binding of chains” (Ev: 98=55). In essence, Levinas does not confine himself within the realm of “power” by contemplating the prospect of human beings undertaking “facticity,” as Heidegger does. Instead, he thoroughly exposes the destiny of human beings who persistently bear “facticity,” namely, their own existence, and endeavors to portray the human condition as something that transcends mere the framework of “power.” At this juncture, Levinas introduces the concept of “shame.” Thus, this section examines human existence grappling with “facticity” in a manner distinct from “failure” of “power” by focusing on the concept of “shame” in the article “On Escape.”

Incidentally, in his main work *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas also discusses “shame” as “the consciousness of moral unworthiness” (TI: 82=83) and “a consciousness of guilt”

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<sup>10</sup> Jacques Rolland asserts that the article “On Escape” should be interpreted as “an attempt of hermeneutics of facticity” (Rolland 2011, 27=13).

(TI: 81=83). Thus, the concept of “shame” can be understood to encompass “phenomena of a moral order” (Ev: 111=63) according to Levinas. However, Levinas contends in the early article “On Escape” that presenting “shame” merely as a specific morally reprehensible act (Ev: 112=63) or as a form of social interaction with others (Ev: 112-113=64) is an inadequate analysis of shame (Ev: 111-112=63). He endeavors to surpass these limitations inherent in the analysis of “shame” and focuses on the notion that, fundamentally, “if shame is present, it means that we cannot hide what we should like to hide” (Ev: 113=64). By emphasizing this aspect, Levinas suggests that “shame” arises most fundamentally from “the fact of being riveted to oneself” (Ev: 113=64). In essence, Levinas suggests that the “I” can only be itself, and since the “I” is itself, it cannot escape or conceal itself from itself; thus, the facticity of existence is fundamental for the “I.”

The human condition of “shame,” so deeply intertwined with one’s existence that the “I” cannot escape, manifests as “malaise” (Ev: 114=66), resulting from being enclosed on all sides with no way to flee. Levinas examines the phenomenon of “nausea” as “a case in which the nature of malaise appears in all its purity” (Ev: 115=66) and seeks to elucidate the human condition of “shame” concretely. According to Levinas, when experiencing “nausea,” the “I” is unable to distance itself from the feeling due to the impossibility of escaping from one’s own body (Ev: 115=66). In this state, the “I” is riveted to its existence in a manner where it wishes to flee from itself but is incapable of doing so. Levinas underscores that “malaise” induced by “nausea” differs from “an obstacle” (Ev: 115=66). While “an obstacle” is external to one’s endeavors, allowing the “I” to exist while turning away from it even if insurmountable, “nausea” is inherent to the “I,” and the existence of the “I” experiencing “nausea” is intertwined with it. Essentially, in “nausea,” the “I” seeks to escape its own existence, yet simultaneously affirms its connection to existence through the very experience of “nausea” itself. Levinas characterizes this connection as a “relationship” (Ev: 118=68), wherein the very act of attempting to flee one’s being becomes “the affirmation itself of being” (Ev: 118=68).

Thus, through the analysis of the phenomenon of “nausea,” Levinas offers a concrete description of the human condition of “shame,” wherein the “I” is inexorably riveted to its own existence. Levinas’s discussion elucidates that despite human endeavors to surpass the limitations defining its existence, it remains entangled in the very constraints that delineate it. In essence, there is no escape from the fate that “the I can only be me.” Levinas encapsulates this notion by stating that “being is, at bottom, a weight for itself” (Ev: 114=65). For the individual, their existence becomes a “weight” that must be borne indefinitely, an absurd “weight” that cannot be shed throughout life. Amidst the unbearable absurdity, the *I should like to hide* one’s existence, acknowledging

that the I has no choice but to endure and *cannot hide* its own being. Thus, the individual experiences “shame.” In this manner, Levinas depicts human existence as radically bearing its own existence, offering an interpretation of “facticity” that diverges from Heidegger’s perspective.

#### 4. The Ethical “Weight” of the Existence of Me

As we have explored in the preceding section, the concept of “shame” in Levinas’s early article “On Escape” (1935) suggests bearing the absurd “weight” that “I can only be me.” Subsequently, in *Totality and Infinity* (1961), Levinas discusses that the genesis of moral consciousness, found in the welcoming of the Other and measuring oneself against infinity, is embodied as “shame” (TI: 82–84). Here, “shame” not only signifies engagement with facticity but also holds moral significance. Moreover, Levinas explicitly integrates his concept of “the Other” into the context where “shame” is utilized, implying a close connection between the I being riveted to its existence and the ethical relationship with the Other within the concept of “shame.” This brings to question the manner in which they are linked. To address this inquiry, this section delves into how Levinas elaborated on the “I” bearing “facticity” after the publication of “On Escape.” Firstly, we examine the draft for his lecture “Teachings” (1950), crafted during the transition from “On Escape” (1935) to *Totality and Infinity* (1961). In this lecture, Levinas revisits the notion of the I being riveted to its existence from a perspective distinct from the “absurdity” discussed in “On Escape.” This discussion offers a crucial viewpoint revealing the interconnectedness of the I being riveted to its existence and its ethical relationship with the Other in moral consciousness.

Levinas raises a poignant question in his lecture “Teachings,” asking “Doesn’t the drama of not having chosen one’s existence unravel when the I learns that the I has been chosen?” (CE2: 184). Here, he suggests the possibility that one “learns” that the I that is riveted to its existence “is the I” that is “being created and elected” (CE2: 184). By examining existence through the lens of “creation,” Levinas underscores the inherent connection with the origin, already inscribed in the fact of being riveted to one’s existence. Within this framework, the notion of “my ipseity” finds residence in the “election,” signifying the creaturely nature of the I, fashioned by the Creator (CE2: 186; CE2: 184–185). Through this reevaluation of existence, Levinas endeavors to reassess the absurdity

of the I being riveted to its existence in light of its election by the Creator<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, the absurdity of the I being riveted to its existence is reevaluated through the lens of “being elected.” However, the notion of “being elected” is not apprehended by revisiting the origin and “the vision of God” to understand what the Creator is (CE2: 186). Following the lecture “Teachings,” Levinas delves into the concept of “election” further in *Totality and Infinity*. Here, Levinas posits that the I is “an election” (TI: 274=245) and proceeds to elucidate the sense of being elected in *Totality and Infinity*. Specifically, concerning the responsibility that the I bears towards the Other, Levinas asserts that “no one can replace me” in it and “no one can release me” from it; “to be unable to shirk: this is the I” (TI: 275=245). While the concept of “election” portrays the I as “a creature” in the lecture “Teachings,” it signifies the I as the one bearing responsibility to the Other in these statements in *Totality and Infinity*. This shift in emphasis is rooted in Levinas’s interpretation of the relationship between the Creator (God) and the Other. Levinas contends that “the Other . . . is indispensable for my relationship with God” (TI: 77=78) and “it is our relationships with men . . . that give to theological concepts the sole signification they admit of” (TI: 77=79). In essence, Levinas does not forsake the perspective of “election by the Creator” in his exploration of “election by the Other.” Instead, he posits that it is precisely in being elected by the Other that one’s existence as “a creature” is imbued with sense<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the sense of the I’s existence is not derived from getting out of absurdity by apprehending the Creator, but rather, it is conferred by the Other when the I is needed and elected, bearing its existence as irreplaceable.

The implication of the absurd (non-sense) existence of me being given a sense by the Other transforms the understanding of the fact that the I exist. This transformation can be described by integrating discussions over the “weight” of existence found in both the early article “On Escape” and *Totality and Infinity*.

As Levinas stated in the early article “On Escape,” the I is riveted to its existence, regardless of one’s hopes, burdened by bearing the absurd “weight” that “I can only be me.” The I *should like to hide* and get out of its existence due to this absurdity, yet it

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<sup>11</sup> Yotetsu Tonaki (2021) suggests that Levinas “needs the concept of creation” for the purpose of “thinking beyond the limit of thrownness and facticity” within Heidegger (260). Behind Levinas’s discussion of “creation,” there is considerable influence from the thought of Franz Rosenzweig. Levinas himself acknowledges his familiarity with Rosenzweig’s philosophy as early as 1935 (Poirié 1987, 121), suggesting that this encounter played a role in shaping Levinas’s departure from Heidegger (Cohen 1994, 236). Given these contexts, it is essential to explore how Levinas accepts and develops the concept of “creatureliness (Kreatürlichkeit)” from Rosenzweig in his depiction of human beings as “creatures.” This area warrants further analysis.

<sup>12</sup> If we interpret it in this manner, there arises a need for further discussion. Specifically, we must explore how the significance of “election by the Creator” is reinterpreted through Levinas’s discussion of “election by the Other.” This aspect presents an avenue for future analysis.



*cannot hide* it and must endure it, leading to a profound sense of “shame.” However, as discussions of “election” inherited from the lecture “Teachings” to *Totality and Infinity* reveal, the Other imparts a sense to the absurdity of the I’s existence; the sense is ethical in nature. According to Levinas, when the I is needed and elected by the Other, it is “unable to shirk” the responsibility it bears towards the Other (TI: 275=245). In essence, the very existence of the I is a response to the “election” by the Other, as the I is already chosen by the Other before it even decides whether to accept this “election.” Therefore, the I must embrace its existence. The I that bear its existence as an elected one experiences “shame” in the sense of “the consciousness of moral unworthiness” (TI: 82=83) for existing as the mere absurd “weight” of “I can only be me.” The I *should like to hide* itself due to “shame,” yet it *cannot hide* it because its very existence is a response to the Other. The I must exist as a response to others because it is morally “ashamed” of itself. At this juncture, the I can be interpreted as bearing the “weight” of “the I must be me” while experiencing “shame” as an irreplaceable being who has always borne the responsibility of being elected by the Other.

Thus, the “weight” of the existence of me is reversed from the absurd “weight” that “the I can only be me” to the “weight” in the ethical sense that “the I must be me”; therefore the manner in which the I exists is transformed<sup>13</sup>. As stated above, per Levinas, being riveted to the existence of me is closely linked to having a relationship with the Other in moral consciousness because of the possibility that the sense of the “weight” that the I exists is reversed.

## 5. Addressing the Aporia in the Theory of the Other in the Philosophy of Education

As established in Section 1, the theory of the Other encounters an aporia. This theory acknowledges that, on one hand, despite efforts to undertake a “project” to comprehend the Other, understanding remains elusive due to the inherent Otherness of the Other. On the other hand, the educational “project” cannot be forsaken. Various arguments have emerged concerning the tension inherent in this aporia within the philosophy of education. In this section, drawing the preceding discussion of Levinas, we will confront the tension

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<sup>13</sup> Rodolphe Calin highlights Levinas’s identification of a distinct “weight” of existence in the relationship with the Other, separate from the notion of “facticity,” through Levinas’s term “glory” (Calin 2011, 30-32). Nevertheless, Calin does not explicitly delineate the ways in which the “weights” of existence in these two contexts differ and resemble each other.

stemming from this aporia once more and profoundly question the educational “project.” Consequently, we will elucidate the ethical relationship between the educator and the educand.

The conventional exploration of the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education, as discussed in Section 1, continues to advance discussions around undertaking a “project” for fostering ethical relationships, while acknowledging inherent difficulty in understanding the Other. They certainly consider conflicting dynamics. However, when viewed through Levinas’s perspective, these discussions implicitly frame the inability to comprehend the Other as a “failure” of education, while affirming the educational significance of the “project” within the context of educational objectives and responsibilities. Conversely, if we interpret the impossibility of understanding the Other not as the “failure” of education but as education’s potential “shame,” the tension inherent in the aporia of the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education takes on a different dimension. Even if one wished to get rid of the tension from the education, such detachment is impossible; instead, the tension constitutes the essence of education itself. Consequently, the aporia is reframed as the absurdity that defines the very essence of education.

The educator bears the inherent absurdity that defines the essence of education. However, this acknowledgment does not preclude the possibility of the educator and the educand establishing an ethical relationship. Considering what the educator should be in the light of Levinas’s argument, the educator intends to establish the ethical relationship by educational “project” with aims and responsibility but cannot understand the Other because he or she is riveted to his or her own existence. The educator is a being accepting one’s fate with resignation because they are forced to bear such absurd “weight.” At the same time, however, the educator always already exists as an elected being by the educand if we consider based on Levinas’s discussion of “election.” Therefore, even if the aims that the educator set cannot be achieved through “project,” the words that he or she speaks and the way that he or she is present are always already his or her very response to the educand. That makes the educator, who regards the fact that one exists as the absurd “weight” and has been bearing the “weight,” feel shame, and then gives the “weight” an ethical sense. Since no one else can replace the position that is elected by the educand, the educator is called for readiness to bear its own “weight” by the educand. In this way, when the resignation to the fact that “the I can only be me” is transformed to the readiness to the fact that “I must be me,” the educator is neither naively affirming educational “project” nor simply eliminating the orientation of educational “project” and leave it to chance. In this balance, a path to the ethical relationship between the educator

and the educand is opening.

According to Levinas’s discussion, the ethical relationship between the educator and the educand is not necessarily accomplished through the “project” undertaken by the educator. Our examination of the concept of “shame” reveals that the aporia in the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education—where conflicting views on the impossibility of understanding the Other and the necessity of educational “project” coexist—is not something to be overcome initially. Instead, it is what the educator must bear, without resolving its conflicting nature, as the intrinsic “weight” of their existence. In essence, the educator is tasked by the educand to shoulder the responsibility of existing within this aporia. By embracing the dual “weight” of remaining within the tension of the aporia while striving to understand the educand through the educational “project,” rather than attempting to resolve the tension outright, the educator’s very mode of existence fosters an ethical relationship.

## Conclusion

This paper explored the ethical relationship between the I and the Other, focusing on the concept of “shame” in the context of the “weight” of existence of one’s own existence. It elucidated that the aporia within the theory of the Other in the philosophy of education should not be immediately overcome through educational “project.” Rather, Levinas suggests that educators should embrace the aporia and carry the dual “weight” of their existence, which diverges from simply relinquishing attempts to understand the educand through the educational “project.” Only by doing so can an ethical relationship between the educator and the educand truly flourish.

This perspective implies that the inherent paradox of education itself—where educators continually strive towards an unattainable utopia—is not inherently ethical behavior. Our daily endeavors to understand the Other, whether in formal education settings or in various interpersonal interactions—the relationship between adult and child and interactions among people who live in various cultures and speak different languages—, are haunted by the impossibility of fully comprehending the Other. However, when viewed through the lens of Levinasian philosophy, the act of engaging in the educational “project” inherently expresses one’s response to the Other. Thus, anyone involved in educational endeavors can cultivate an ethical relationship with the Other by shouldering the existential “weight” inherent in the pursuit of ideals and by existing as one elected by the Other.

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# The Learning Experience in Merleau-Ponty's Theory: The Connection with German Idealism

Shimpei TSUNEFUKA  
*Keio University*

## Abstract

This paper aims to show that Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment has a wide range of potentialities to explain learning experiences that require the abstract operation of symbols, such as mathematics, by focusing on his acceptance of Kant and German idealism. Many studies in the realm of the philosophy of education seem to assume that Merleau-Ponty criticized objective thought into which science tends to fall and regarded German idealism as its origin. Contrary to what many commentators suppose, this paper examines Merleau-Ponty's texts (mainly *Phenomenology of Perception* and *Nature*) to elucidate a different link to German idealism. Merleau-Ponty does not directly criticize Kant, but the intellectualistic interpretation by neo-Kantians in France (e.g., Lachièze-Rey). He follows the same path as the German idealism of Schelling and Hegel, who interpreted and extended Kant's theory. Merleau-Ponty appreciates Schelling and Hegel for expanding the concept of Nature by taking on "intellectual intuition" and "intuitive understanding," which Kant himself never developed. According to Merleau-Ponty, Nature is not just something filled with physical causality but also latent and perceivable with the meaning inherent in culture and history. It is worth noting, however, that Merleau-Ponty speaks of "intellectual intuition" or "intuitive understanding" as "bodily intentionality," based neither on transcendental consciousness nor the Nature with its primordial identity, but on the body. According to his theory, Nature is perceived by the body before the experience of judgment, and simultaneously this perception creates in Nature a space that motivates new perceptions. Through this learning model, he argues that the learning experience in mathematics is also body-based.

**Key words:** Merleau-Ponty · Kant · German idealism · Learning experience · Body intentionality · Nature

## Introduction

This paper clarifies the range of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment within the context of educational philosophy, focusing on his acceptance of Kant and German idealism.

What many Merleau-Ponty studies on educational philosophy have revealed is that concrete bodily movements play a certain role in learning. These studies include those that focus on teacher-student interactions in the classroom and learning experiences in master-apprentice relationships in traditional performing arts, such as *Buyo*.<sup>1</sup> However, his theory of embodiment has rarely been used to discuss learning experiences in higher-order disciplines, such as mathematics and natural sciences.<sup>2</sup> Various circumstances can be considered the background for this. For instance, Merleau-Ponty criticizes the “objective thought” that science tends to fall into. The perspective of objective thought treats the world as something fully constituted in homogeneous time and space; that is, something that can be exhausted in a determinate manner. Many Merleau-Ponty studies have argued that this perspective originated in Kant or transcendental German idealism.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Merleau-Ponty has been assumed to have rejected Kant and Hegel as subjectivists. Therefore, there have been few attempts to apply his theory of embodiment to the analysis of learning experiences in disciplines such as mathematics and the natural

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<sup>1</sup> Within the context of the philosophy of education, see Fujita (2003) for a reconsideration of Merleau-Ponty's developmental concepts from his pedagogy lectures. See Nishioka (2005) for an application of Merleau-Ponty's pedagogy lectures to the analysis of adult-child relationships in the classroom, and Okui (2015) for their application to the analysis of the transmission of knowledge in master-apprentice relationships in traditional performing arts, such as *Buyo*. In phenomenological theoretical studies, Howell (2015) compares Merleau-Ponty's theory of learning experiences with Husserl's in terms of the temporal structure of habits.

<sup>2</sup> Okui (2013) suggests a link between physical experience and abstract intellectual work in Merleau-Ponty's theory. However, in doing so, he does not draw from Merleau-Ponty's texts but from the American philosopher of language, Mark Johnson's. In addition, he does not detail how physical experience and abstract intellectual work are linked. In this paper, I present the link between the two and how they work together by intrinsically interpreting Merleau-Ponty's reception of German idealism.

<sup>3</sup> In Merleau-Ponty studies, some scholars trace the origins of such objective thought (as subjectivist) he criticizes to as Descartes or Kant (Carman 2008: 12, Morris 2012: 15), while others trace them to Kant and early Husserl, who conceived transcendental idealism (Romdenh-Romluc 2010: 20). This tendency can also be seen in German studies of the philosophy of education, where the achievements of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology are described as if they arose from a different context than Kant's philosophy (Ehrenspeck 1996: 219-220). Contrary to this, recent Merleau-Ponty studies have increasingly attempted to show that Merleau-Ponty has some affinity with Kantian philosophy and to clarify what aspects he has inherited/not inherited from Kant (cf. Antich 2019; Landes 2015; Matherne 2014, 2016). The background to this trend is that in recent years, after the publication of influential studies such as Allison (2004), the interpretation that Kant's text itself can be read in a non-conceptualist way is gaining significant acceptance (cf. Allais 2016). I will offer the interpretation that Merleau-Ponty incorporated Kant's “intellectual intuition” and “intuitive enlightenment” by recombining them with body intentionality.



sciences, which require the abstract operation of symbols. His account also seems to have been seen as alien to the tradition of the *Bildungstheorie* that has developed in the line with German idealism since Kant.

Contrary to what many commentators suppose, I show how Merleau-Ponty reads Kant as well as Schelling and Hegel to explain the learning experience. This analysis will reveal that his theory of embodiment has a wide range of applications and can explain the learning experience and its theoretical development in disciplines that require abstract symbolic operations, such as mathematics.

In this paper, I draw on *Phenomenology of Perception*<sup>4</sup> as the main source of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Kant, supplemented by his lectures on *Nature*<sup>5</sup> from 1956–1960, in which he adds many commentaries on Kant. In this paper, I proceed as follows: First, I provide an overview of how the subjectivist interpretation of Kant is criticized in *Phenomenology of Perception* (Section 1). Then, I confirm that Merleau-Ponty recognizes the significance of Schelling's and Hegel's interpretation of Kant and its extension (Section 2). In the final section, I argue that with his expanding interpretation of Kant's schematism—by making imagination (rather than the capacity of consciousness) based on the body as part of Nature—Merleau-Ponty offers a theory of embodiment that can also explain the learning experience in disciplines that require the abstract operation of symbols (Section 3).

## 1 A critique of the subjectivist interpretation of Kant

Merleau-Ponty did not dismiss all of Kant's arguments. For example, in the preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, he agrees with Kant's stance in the *Critique of Judgment*,<sup>6</sup> which posits that “there exists a unity of the imagination and the understanding and a unity of subjects before the object” (*PhP* xii). What, then, does Merleau-Ponty attribute to Kant's argument in his criticism? In the preface to the same book, he criticizes Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*<sup>7</sup> for having ended up analyzing the experience of consciousness in which a predicative unity is formed (cf. *PhP* xiii). In other words, Kant is only

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<sup>4</sup> Henceforth cited as *PhP* and the page number in the text.

<sup>5</sup> In this paper, “Nature” is capitalized with the following special connotation, as described by Merleau-Ponty and German idealists: Nature refers to something that includes not only physical causality but also the historical and cultural meanings of human beings; henceforth cited as *N* and the page number in the text.

<sup>6</sup> Henceforth cited as *KU* and the page number in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Henceforth cited as A (1781) and/or B (1787) edition and the page number in the text.

concerned with analyzing experiences with propositional content established after perceptual experience; i.e., experiences that appear in the form of judgments and inferences.<sup>8</sup> It should be noted here that Merleau-Ponty does not directly criticize Kant's analysis of experience in the form of judgments and inferences; rather, he criticizes Kant for considering this experience to constitute all of experience. In this section, I begin by describing the Kantian interpretation criticized by Merleau-Ponty. Next, I specify Merleau-Ponty's matter in question as the conditions on the part of the subject that make perceptual experience possible.

### 1.1 The *Critique of Pure Reason* according to Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* seems to premise the model of the formation of experience in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as follows: In "sensibility," "a given multiple [of stimuli]" is passively received as intuition; then, in "understanding," its highest principle, synthetic apperception, spontaneously "peruses it [i.e., the given multiple] and completely penetrates it" (cf. *PhP* 279). Next, I summarize the differences between the description of "transcendental deduction" in the A and B editions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and draw a picture of Kant, whom Merleau-Ponty criticized as a subjectivist.

According to Kant, when we consider the formation of human experience, there are two independent and incommensurable capacities of human cognition. On the one hand, there is sensibility, which is the act of intuition that receives an object; on the other hand, there is understanding, which is the act of inference and judgment about that object. Recognition is achieved through the union of these two completely different moments. Possibly following Heidegger's interpretation in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Merleau-Ponty seems to suppose that the A and B editions have very different accounts of how these moments come together.<sup>9</sup>

Edition A reads as follows: "The principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination prior to apperception is thus the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience" (A 118). Imagination was also considered "a common but to us unknown root"(A 15=B 29) that makes both sensibility and understanding possible—i.e., this fundamental and mediational capacity connects

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<sup>8</sup> Antich (2019) argues that there is no conflict between Kant and Merleau-Ponty, but rather a difference in phase; in Kant, the term "experience" refers to empirical judgment, while in Merleau-Ponty, this term refers to perceptual experience.

<sup>9</sup> In *PhP*, there are two passages where Section 33 of *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* is cited.

them. In other words, in edition A, Kant asserts that it is the “imagination” that plays the role of mediating between sensibility and understanding to bring them into union. This is why, as I mentioned in the Introduction, Merleau-Ponty favorably receives Kant’s description of the imagination in the *Critique of Judgment* and is expected to generally agree with the assertion of the edition A.<sup>10</sup>

However, edition B explains that experience, which is supposed to be the combination of sensibility and understanding, is established when transcendental apperception (i.e., the capacity of understanding) penetrates sensibility, thus upsetting the balance of the importance of sensibility and understanding. For example, according to edition B, “all combination [...] is an action of the understanding” (B 130). The supreme principle of this combination in understanding is transcendental apperception (cf. B 136). This transcendental apperception is the function of “I think...” that can accompany all our representations, namely, the content of our experience (cf. B 131). Then, imagination, which was said to be prior to the synthesis on the part of understanding, is positioned as “the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, which is an effect of the understanding on sensibility” (B 152). Even though it is said that “Synthesis in general is [...] the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul” (A 78=B 103), in edition B, imagination appears to be reduced to one of the acts of understanding. Thus, intuition, which has been considered on the side of sensibility, is ultimately subject to the conditions of transcendental apperception—the highest principle of understanding.

To summarize, in edition B, there is no need to assume the imagination that mediates sensibility and understanding for experience to appear with objective content. Instead, for experience to be made up, all that is required is the work of apperception on the part of understanding,<sup>11</sup> which means that the spontaneity of understanding must completely pervade sensibility. In fact, Merleau-Ponty, in the introduction to *Phenomenology of Perception*, says the following about Kantian interpretation in a subjectivist manner.

The general function of connection, which Kantianism finally attributes to it [understanding], is now common to the whole of intentional life [...]. (*PhP* 65)

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<sup>10</sup> Contrary to my interpretation, Landes, who is also the English translator of *PhP*, believes that Merleau-Ponty was harsh in his assessment of both the A and B editions (cf. Landes 2015).

<sup>11</sup> These days, however, there appear to be only a few scholars who interpret apperception as the unlimited spontaneity of consciousness. Instead, one of the most popular contemporary interpretations of apperception today is that of Henrich, who sees a two-step proof structure in edition B *Transcendental Deduction* (cf. Henrich 1973: 93–94).

The Kantian and subjectivist position Merleau-Ponty criticizes here is the following: the capacity of the spontaneity of understanding, which permeates all over sensibility, and the possession of propositional content of experience, are the conditions for all experience to be possible.

## 1.2 The subjectivist interpretation of Kant and the “paradox of inquiry”

According to Merleau-Ponty, while in *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant confines himself to the analysis of experience as it appears in the form of judgments and inferences, neo-Kantians in France apply Kant’s framework to all forms of human experience.

In order to clarify what is at stake here, I feature the description in *Phenomenology of Perception*, where Merleau-Ponty criticizes the interpretation of Kant by the French neo-Kantian Pierre Lachière-Rey.<sup>12</sup> Merleau-Ponty focuses on the passage that Lachière-Rey cites and considers what is called the “paradox of inquiry” or “paradox of learning” in Plato’s *Meno* (cf. *PhP* 425). On the one hand, this “paradox of inquiry” means that if one does not know the object of inquiry at all, one does not know how to inquire about it, and even if one encounters the object, one cannot know whether it is the object one is inquiring about. On the other hand, if one knows the object of one’s inquiry, there is no need to inquire about it.

In Lachière-Rey’s (1932/1950) interpretation of Kant, this paradox can be resolved by presuming that humans are beings with the following two characteristics: On the one hand, humans have a sensible way of being that is constrained by the side of the object they experience; in other words, they are dependent on time and space. In this respect, humans have a finite way of being. We can have an “aspiration” or “Amour” for God or others—i.e., a receptive and passive experience of consciousness (cf. Lachière-Rey 1932/1950: 58). In this sense, there is room for humans to inquire about things that are unknown. On the other hand, humans have an understanding that allows them to actively construct meaning for an experienced object, and this is partially independent of specific time and space. It is precisely because of this that humans can access matters that are true beyond time and space (e.g., the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is  $180^\circ$ ) and create new knowledge (cf. Lachière-Rey 1932/1950: 34–39). Here, we can recognize the

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<sup>12</sup> Merleau-Ponty, for example, describes the subjectivist’s view of experience as “the classical idea of experience about the world as the pure action of constitutive consciousness” (*PhP* 281). To this is added a note: “Here I mean the Kantian concept [of intentionality], such as that of Pierre Lachière-Rey or that of Husserl in the second period (of the *Ideen* period)” (ibid.). See also Jitsukawa (2000) in terms of Merleau-Ponty’s reading of Lachière-Rey.

possibility of knowing the object of one's inquiry, that is, the ability to expand one's own understanding (intellect).

Merleau-Ponty calls these thoughts the “eternal interpretation of the Cogito” and rejects them. According to Merleau-Ponty, if we interpret Kant and analyze experience, as Lachière-Rey does, we end up reaching the following conclusion: For human experience to be possible, humans must first possess a capacity of understanding that can act beyond time, as well as act accordingly. However, in this case, it is possible to assume that the human subjects are constructors of meaning that exert their intellectual action without limit—that is, without the constraints of the object or others (cf. *PhP* 428). According to Merleau-Ponty, this position fails to assume the other<sup>13</sup> or ensure constraints and solicitations on the content of experience from the part of the object (the ways the world solicits to learn). In other words, in the subjectivist position, the love for the other and the adoration of God that Lachière-Rey tried to secure ultimately become only constructs of the consciousness of the human subject.

In light of this, Merleau-Ponty criticizes the neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant in France, such as that of Lachière-Rey. He sees the problem with this interpretation in its failure to describe the conditions on the part of the object that make it possible to know the object of inquiry.

## 2 “Nature” making the learning experience possible

As seen in Section 1, Merleau-Ponty takes issue with the neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant in France, which considers judgment and inference to be essential for all of experience. If we adopt this interpretation, we cannot adequately explain the learning experience. Against this interpretation, he tries to explain that even before judgment, the human subject can already receive the limitation or solicitation of cultural meanings on the part of the object. There are two strategies in his philosophical project. The first is the reformulation of the concept of object, Nature, and the second is the reformulation of the concept of human subject, their understanding or body. In this section, I discuss the former. The next section focuses on the latter.

In this section, I take as an additional source Merleau-Ponty's lecture notes (published under the title *Nature*), in which he examines German idealism in detail. According to him, Kant's idea of Nature, which we can experience, is only “the sum total

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<sup>13</sup> See Sakai (2020) for the concept of the “other” in Merleau-Ponty.

of all objects of sense” (*KU XVII*). In Merleau-Ponty’s view, however, Schelling and Hegel reformulate the concept of Nature. In other words, while Merleau-Ponty dismisses the neo-Kantian interpretation of Kant in France, he tries to follow the same path of deepening and developing Kant that Schelling and Hegel had followed. In this section, I show how Merleau-Ponty posits the way of being the object that makes the learning experience possible as he retraces the tradition of German idealism.

Merleau-Ponty positively assesses Schelling’s attitude, which is mainly found in *System of Transcendental Idealism*. In Schelling’s view, Nature, the object of experience, is not only what Kant calls “the sum total of all objects of sense” (*KU XVII*), governed by mere physical causality. It is also what provides a human with the possibility to perceive cultural meaning, even though it was external to experience.<sup>14</sup> Merleau-Ponty argues that this view of Nature was also valid for Hegel<sup>15</sup> and both Schelling and Hegel merged in the following view of art.<sup>16</sup>

There is a terrain where the two philosophies encounter: the terrain of poetry. [...] A poetic consciousness recognizes that it does not fully possess its object, that it can only understand it through genuine creation, and that it creates clarity through an operation that is not deductive but creative. The poetic consciousness overcome by its object must be recaptured but never separable from its own history. There is an act of faith in the encounter of passivity and spontaneity, of which the effort of art is the best “document.” This is the search for a Reason that is not prose, for a poetry that is not irrational. (*N 76–77*)

According to Merleau-Ponty, Schelling and Hegel believe that in poetry the union of spontaneity and passivity is realized. On the one hand, the created work represents human

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<sup>14</sup> Ehrenspeck (2008) believes that Schiller found a “mixed Nature” between nature filled with physical causality and nature with human cultural meaning. According to her, Schelling and Merleau-Ponty would merge to this Schillerian conception of “Nature.” Merleau-Ponty, however, would not say that a human finds beauty from nature by some power of consciousness. Instead, he would say that the consciousness capable of finding beauty arises from the body, which is part of Nature.

<sup>15</sup> Here, Merleau-Ponty’s support for Hegel is limited to the period of *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

<sup>16</sup> Kakuni explains that Merleau-Ponty rejected Hegel’s ideas and adopted Schelling’s ideas (cf. Kakuni 2002: 128-129). Based on this, Ikeda argues that Merleau-Ponty’s theory “turns back the idea of subject-object identity found in the previous modern philosophy (e.g., Schelling’s conception of the identity philosophy) on a theoretical level” (Ikeda 2015: 186). However, it should be worth noting that Merleau-Ponty does not merely agree with Schelling, but also gives a positive assessment of Hegel. So, I consider the following. Merleau-Ponty does not just adopt Schelling’s view of “Nature,” which can include physical causality and human cultural-historical meanings, but also adopts Hegel’s view of “Nature,” which includes differences and contradictions at the root and gives rise to dialectical processes. For Merleau-Ponty, it is the role of the body to manifest these differences.

spontaneity in the sense that the artist's consciousness actively creates it. On the other hand, the created work is guided by the object in the outside world or the history of the art expression—it is constrained by Nature—and represents the passivity of human beings. In other words, an artwork, such as a poem, is an example of an objective form in which the opposing moments of sensibility and understanding merge with an equal status. Insofar as this, the Nature that solicited the creation of artworks must be considered as more than just “the sum total of all objects of sense” (*KU XVII*) since it also includes human culture, which is “never separable from its own history.”

Merleau-Ponty views the process through which Schelling reaches these ideas as a deepening development of Kant (cf. *N 71*). In other words, Schelling deepened the possibility of “intellectual intuition” (cf. *N 62, 362, 363*) or “intuitive understanding” (cf. *N 46*), which Kant had already discovered in the *Critique of Judgment* Section 76<sup>17</sup> but never developed. Merleau-Ponty summarizes Schelling's ideas as follows.

What Schelling wants to say is that we rediscover Nature in our perceptual experience before reflection. [...] Also, in order to refind the meaning of external nature, we must make an effort to rediscover our own nature in the indivisible state where we are exercising our perceptions. (*N 63*)

He also quotes a passage from Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*, after which he explains the following:

In order to refind oneself in this reflection of intellectual intuition, the Ego must have already recognized itself in this primordial identity, the result of the organization of a primordial and unconscious Ego. There has to be in things a preparation for what will eventually be explicit meaning [for a human], for the liberation of meaning captive in the natural thing. (*N 67*)

As we see in these passages, Merleau-Ponty, relying on Schelling, believes that following; we already grasp not only the causality of external Nature but also the historical and cultural (intellectual) meanings latent in Nature before we become aware of them, that is, in our perceptual experience.

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<sup>17</sup> In his resume for this lecture, Merleau-Ponty states that if we are to analyze our experience, although Kant only indicated this possibility, we must consider “non-discursive understanding (entendement non discursif)” (*N 361*). In fact, this “non-discursive understanding” seems to be considered as equal to Schelling's “intellectual intuition” or Hegel's “intuitive understanding.”

Merleau-Ponty attributes the fundamental reason for the subjectivist consideration that judgment and inference are all objective experiences to a narrow understanding of Nature, which we can experience. Based on this consideration, subjectivists fail to grasp Nature as something that makes the learning experience possible. Merleau-Ponty supports Schelling and Hegel against them and takes over the idea of “intellectual intuition” or “intuitive understanding,” which Kant never developed. In inheriting this idea, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the object of our experience (Nature) is not merely something filled with physical causality but that it has a latent and perceivable meaning inherent in culture and history.

### 3 The body making the learning experience possible

As I have shown in the previous Section, Merleau-Ponty supposes Nature, the perceptual object, as something that has latent meaning in human culture and history in addition to physical causality. Here, the following question arises: How is it possible for humans to perceive such Nature and continue to explore it? In this section, I present Merleau-Ponty’s reformulation of the concept of the subject (the concepts of understanding and body). Then, I hope to demonstrate the process of learning experience through this reformulation. By doing so, I will answer the previous question.

#### 3.1 The body schema as a transcendental schema

As mentioned in the Introduction, Merleau-Ponty favorably received Kant’s description of imagination in *Critique of Judgment*. In the first section of this paper, I highlighted that Merleau-Ponty supports Kant’s view of imagination as the fundamental capacity that makes sensibility and understanding mediate, as seen in the edition A. In other words, Merleau-Ponty is interested in the function of the primordial capacity that gives rise to sensibility and understanding, or the mechanism of a mixture of the two, which Kant did not fully develop. What, then, is this remarkable idea that, according to Merleau-Ponty that Kant was on the verge of developing? I suggest that this is the schematic function.<sup>18</sup>

Kant introduces the schema as the third term for sensibility and understanding. He states that this schema is, on the one hand, like understanding and, on the other, like

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<sup>18</sup> Matherne (2016) argues that Merleau-Ponty transforms Kant’s schematism into a body schema through Lachièze-Rey’s interpretation. I also rely on her interpretation and will adopt the framework in which Merleau-Ponty considers schematizing the activity of imagination as a bodily activity.



sensibility (cf. A 138=B 177). Then, he defines the conscious capacity that drives this schema's function as imagination (cf. A 140=B 179). At least in edition A, imagination thus is a function of consciousness that is independent of sensibility and understanding, although it mediates between them, exhibiting features of both.

In contrast, Merleau-Ponty did not think of imagination as a function of consciousness independent of sensibility and understanding. Rather, he seems to consider imagination an undifferentiated state of sensibility and understanding. In addition, he is supposed to attempt to postulate the primordial field from which this imagination arises. In doing so, however, we should not admit the subjectivist interpretation that the highest principle of understanding (apperception) is the "common root." This is because understanding must also be subject to constraints from the side of the object, including spatio-temporal constraints. Here, Merleau-Ponty focuses on the body as the condition or field from which imagination arises, where sensibility and understanding are undifferentiated.

Behind this world, there is a more original mode, prior to all activity, a "world before any thesis": this is the perceived world. Whereas the former [universe of theory] is given as a world constituted [by consciousness], the latter [perceived world] is given in flesh and bone, in *Leibhaft*. (N 105)

In brief, the field that guarantees the primordial identity of sensibility and understanding is the body, which belongs to the world. If we understand the world to be Nature in the sense I explained in the previous section, then the body is both a component of the Nature we perceive and an internal part of this Nature. In fact, Merleau-Ponty states:

[T]he anger or pain I read [...] on a face, the religion whose essence I grasp [...] in hesitation or reticence, the city whose structure I recognize [...] in the attitude of a city policeman or the style of a monument. (*PhP* 32)

Namely, before having human experience through judgment and inference, we have perceptual experiences through our bodies, which have latent human historical and cultural constraints (meanings) in addition to spatio-temporal constraints.

Thus, the famous "body schema" Merleau-Ponty offers can be understood as based on Kant's argument. What is noteworthy about Merleau-Ponty is that the body, as a part of Nature, with its spatiotemporal location and historical and cultural content, is the primordial field from which sensibility and understanding arise, rather than imagination

as the power of consciousness, as was proposed by Kant and the subjectivists.

### 3.2 Body-based learning experiences

How, then, does the body, as indicated in the previous section, resolve the “paradox of inquiry” to make the learning experience possible? In other words, how does the body both know the object of inquiry and create what is to be explored? To conclude, the following two things are doubly occurring in the body. First, a specific body posture (i.e., body intentionality) is established, prompted by “Nature,” which has both physical causality and historical/cultural meaning. Second, something is created and communicated that is neither a representation nor a concept of the perceptual object but something that promotes a further bodily posture toward the perceptual object.

According to Merleau-Ponty, “To say that I imagine Peter is to say that I procure a pseudo-presence of Peter by provoking ‘the behavior about Peter’” (*PhP* 210); when one perceives an individual concrete object, a body intentionality corresponding to that object is generated. In addition, “A movement is learned when the body has understood it [...and] To move one’s body is to aim toward things through it [body], [or] to let it respond to their solicitations, which are exerted on it without any representation” (*PhP* 161); the perceptions from the body naturally become articulated and then contribute to context-appropriate behaviors and thoughts.

Regarding such body-based learning, let us first consider the case in which one perceives a particular dog, Fido, in front of her. She takes Fido-specific intentionality, i.e., a specific body posture toward Fido. From this Fido-specific intentionality, we can recognize that the dog is Fido without thought or inference. The Fido-specific intentionality here is prompted not only by the optical stimulus on the retina, but also by the experiential meaning of the dog Fido that we know and the cultural meaning of loving the dog. Moreover, only when this intentionality is generated, is it possible to judge that “it is Fido there,” or approach the dog to check “is it Fido there?” and then to make body movements appropriate to this context, such as “I will pat him on the head.”

Henceforth, we move from our own Fido-specific body posture (intentionality) to an articulation of the content of that posture, that is, to thoughts and judgments. For example, it becomes clear that this body posture includes the dog’s appearance, such as bushy fur, coloring, and four legs, or the notion of a particular dog (Fido), which one has seen in the past. Furthermore, after one perceives the operability toward the symbol of Fido, one can compare it with the dog “Bingo,” which provokes a similar body posture, and think, “Which breed does Fido belong to?” In other words, Fido-specific

intentionality motivates further perception, inquiry, and thought (the operability of symbols), starting with the perceptual object Fido.<sup>19</sup>

Given this trajectory, one can go from perceiving individual objects to thinking about more detailed meanings. However, this is not limited to the perception of mere physical objects. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty considers mathematics (geometry) to be one of various human symbolic operations and uses examples of learning about geometric objects. According to Merleau-Ponty, when one perceives a triangle in front of her, she can enact operations such as adding parallel lines by adopting a particular body posture to it, leading to a theorem such as the sum of the interior angles of a triangle being  $180^\circ$  (cf. *PhP* 440–443). After describing the perceptual processes involved in constructing the triangle, he adds the following.

Just as the localization of objects in space, according to Kant himself, [it] is not just a spiritual operation but one that utilizes the motricity of the body [...]. (*PhP* 443)

It is precisely here that Merleau-Ponty continues Kant's schematism by placing the role of the body at the center. Even when dealing with what are thought of as universal properties, such as those found in geometry, he argues that one does not approach such properties with a mental capacity that has no location in time and space, but rather one captures the characteristics of a particular triangle by means of the body intentionality.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, after the body posture for a given triangle generates the implication that the sum of the internal angles is  $180^\circ$ , one can take a similar body posture for any triangle without inference (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1969/1992: 141). In other words, one is able to perceive the property that the sum of triangles' interior angles of a triangle is  $180^\circ$ . From there, one can perceive operability that reveals further properties of triangles, such as the inscribed angle theorem, and can go on to new thoughts. For example, the establishment of the body intentionality for triangles in Euclidean geometry allows one to perceive the possibility of extending such a definition by motivating one to ask, "Why not take up triangles on the surface of the ellipsoid?". Thus, one can learn to discover the properties of triangles in non-Euclidean geometry (e.g., elliptic geometry), where the sum of the interior angles of a triangle on a sphere is greater than  $180^\circ$ .

At this point, Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of "intellectual intuition" and

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<sup>19</sup> See also Tamura (2018) for an analysis of the concept of "motivation" in Merleau-Ponty's theory of perception.

<sup>20</sup> Merleau-Ponty, to be sure, does not consider geometric objects as being mere constructs of mental action. Instead, he assumes the existence of some object that gives rise to a certain intentionality, if such an intentionality provokes (cf. *PhP* 429).

“intuitive understanding,” as featured by Schelling and Hegel, becomes clear. First, understanding, as a function of thought, arises in the body, which is subject to spatio-temporal and cultural-historical limitations each time. Also, according to him, body intentionality does not arise merely from physical causality. To say body-based learning experiences are not merely bodily perceptual experiences. According to Merleau-Ponty, when a certain body posture is generated in a person, the possibility of a new body posture arises in her consciousness, as a background. Then, through the fulfillment of this possibility, she can recognize the unknown object of inquiry, as the figure. In other words, if body intentionality is extended through some new expression, whether academic or artistic, that extended body intentionality is enacted in a condensed repetition of the body intentionality manifested by an existing theory or expression. In sum, what Merleau-Ponty refers to as body posture, or body intentionality itself, is a historical and cultural one, namely, an intuition with intellectual content (intellectual intuition) or an intuitively generated intellect (intuitive understanding).

Based on these considerations, what is to be explored and what is to be communicated to others, even though it is non-conceptual, is how one is motivated by a perceptual object. For example, as in the case of the development of geometry mentioned above, academic inquiries can be developed by several scholars because of the incidental transmission of pre-propositional, non-conceptual things through body intentionality as well as the conceptual content manifested in the form of propositions. The reason a matter that cannot be conceptualized well can be conveyed to the receiver or can be conceptualized later is that the body posture toward the matter (which remained non-conceptual prior to the proposition) can be captured first. In other words, the body intentionality incidentally conveys the motivation to “take a closer look at” or “take in hands” a distant object, or to “operate the symbol” or “rewrite the rules of use of the symbol” in response to an academic problem, as in mathematics. In this way, “intellectual intuition” or “intuitive understanding” is communicated through the body, accompanied by rationality.

Above all, Merleau-Ponty attempts to solve the “paradox of inquiry” by reformulating the concepts of object and subject, respectively, and presenting the following process. The body, which has already received some constraints and solicitations from the object before judgment or inference, experiences a change in the way the world appears (a new object of inquiry appears). Through this change, then, the body is motivated in the way it relates to the world (i.e., how it comes to know the object of inquiry) in response to these solicitations. According to Merleau-Ponty, such dynamism occurs in the learning experience. Thus, the body can bear meanings that are

not yet propositional, but that will eventually become clear in perceptual experiences prior to judgment. This is because the body generates chained manifestations of the world that motivate new perceptions. For example, a mathematician may somehow (intuitively) see a formula for a solution, or her hands may move naturally toward such an operation. A painter may also intuitively find a suitable motif, concept, or technique (e.g., a brushstroke). Such “intuitive” acts may lead to the discovery or invention of new theories and expressions. According to Merleau-Ponty, the intuition of a mathematician or artist, or what appears to be a mere gesture, is a latent expression of the cumulative knowledge of that expression. In other words, what is described above is the same process in which those who are familiar with “Fido” would naturally adopt a behavior that fits the context of Fido based on their previous experience, starting from their body, without inference or thought. Thus, according to Merleau-Ponty, both the discovery or invention of mathematics and pictorial expressions result from the perceptual experience of the body, the same as the learning process that the perception of Fido motivates further thought.

## Conclusion

I have explored how Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodiment explains the learning experience, including abstract intellectual activity, by focusing on his reception of German idealism.

Merleau-Ponty does not criticize Kant directly but rather the subjectivist interpretation of Kant by neo-Kantians in France. According to him, this interpretation fails to describe the conditions on the part of the object because they assume that the spontaneity of understanding, which pervades all over the sensibility and has the content of experience like a propositional statement, is the condition for all experience to be possible. In other words, they overlook the terms of the object, which make it possible to know the object of inquiry.

Instead, Merleau-Ponty appreciates Schelling and Hegel, who extended the concept of Nature by taking on “intellectual intuition” and “intuitive understanding,” which Kant never developed. In other words, in Merleau-Ponty's view, they paved the way to consider Nature, the object of our experience, not only as something filled with physical causality but also as something that has latent and perceivable with meanings inherent in culture and history.

According to Merleau-Ponty, such Nature is perceived by the body before the experience of judgment. Simultaneously this perception creates in Nature a space that

motivates new perceptions. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty's theory deepens and develops German idealism. Under this interpretation, the following significance of Merleau-Ponty's account becomes clearer. He speaks of "intellectual intuition" or "intuitive understanding" as "bodily intentionality," based neither on transcendental consciousness nor the Nature with its primordial identity, but on the body. Here, I should highlight two points: First, by means of Merleau-Ponty's concept of Nature, it is possible to show the existence of a mixture of intuition and intellect (understanding) with historical and cultural meaning, which Schelling and Hegel were trying to show. Second, by means of his concept of "body intentionality," it is also possible to understand how the body allows the learning experience and the creative process of learning and expression.

Thus, the theory of body-based learning experience derived from Merleau-Ponty can be described as an experience that consists of a back-and-forth process between the body and Nature, a mixture of physical causality and human historical and cultural meaning. It is also clear that the pedagogical significance of his theory of embodiment is not limited to the clarification of the effects of reading aloud or using the body to express oneself in some way. In other words, his theory of embodiment has a broader scope that explains the learning experience in mathematics, which at first glance appears to require the abstract operation of symbols. This can legitimately be merged into the context of *Bildungstheorie*, both theoretically and in the history of philosophy, and it also seems to highlight the uniqueness of his theory of the learning experience.

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# Possibilities of “Education” based on (through/aimed at) the Concept of “Relationship” : Inquiry in terms of “Language”, “Care” and “Excellence”

Hiromi OZAKI  
*Toyo Eiwa University*

## Abstract

This study aims to explore the ramifications of ongoing debates concerning the essence of education and the shift towards a learner-centric approach, using the concept of “relationship” as a guiding framework. It acknowledges the transformative discussions within philosophy of education since the 1990s, challenging conventional notions of education and advocating for a reevaluation rather than outright dismissal. In this paper, I delve into the idea of education as a process of human transformation, questioning traditional views on the educated person as the ultimate goal. It critically examines “language”, “care”, and “excellence” as key dimensions through which education can be reimagined. “Language” is seen not only as a tool for communication but also as a vehicle for shaping educational dynamics and discourse. “Care” is highlighted as a crucial aspect, urging a reconsideration of dichotomies such as reason-emotion and universal-individual within educational evaluation. Similarly, the concept of “excellence” is reconceptualized to emphasize empathy, understanding, and collaborative knowledge-building rather than solely measurable achievements. This paper concludes by advocating for productive discourse within educational philosophy to foster a more holistic and inclusive understanding of education as a means of human growth and societal advancement.

**Key words:** Educational aims, Relationship, Theory of “Care”, “Excellence” in education

## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the implications of the debate on the meanings of education and teaching-learning for human beings, using “relationship” as

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### Correspondence:

Hiromi OZAKI, Toyo Eiwa University. Email: ozaki.h@toyoeiwa.ac.jp

a perspective to restructure education. It is widely acknowledged that since the 1990s, discussions on the philosophy of education have challenged the prevailing framework of modern education. These discussions have generated discourses that question the very essence of education and the shift from teaching to learning. However, these debates do not advocate the elimination of education or teaching; instead, they propose a rethinking of our understanding of these concepts. Consequently, this paper aims to raise questions from the perspectives of language, care, and excellence, rooted in relationships, to re-envision education (teaching-learning) within the realm of educational philosophy.

## **2. The concept of education as a process and means of transformation from human to human**

### **(1) What does “being educated” signify for a human?**

As underscored in the primary objective of this symposium, Immanuel Kant famously stated, “Man is the only creature who must be educated.” This assertion initially suggests a distinct difference between teaching-learning for humans and that for non-humans. For instance, it is commonly known that parents of certain animal species teach their offspring how to hunt. Moreover, it has been observed that an individual within a group of animals may begin to wash their food in seawater, a behavior that is then adopted by other members of the group. We could draw from Kant's discourse above the assumption (or wish or hope) that *there is some essential difference between the actions and phenomena in these non-human cases that seem to be similar to “teaching” and “learning” and the “teaching-learning” in human “education.”*

Here, let us revisit the critiques, predominantly by British educational philosopher R.S. Peters in the 1960s, concerning the concept of the “educated person” and the portrayal of the human being as an ultimate goal inherent in education. Peters asserted, “Education, then, can have no ends beyond itself. Its value derives from principles and standards implicit in it”<sup>1</sup>. One notable critique of Peters’ view, which posits the purpose of education as intrinsic to education itself, comes from Japanese educational philosopher, Akio Miyadera. He argued that responding to the demand for “justification of the purpose of education” and explaining “why this purpose of education is correct for society as a

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, R. S., 1965, “Education as Initiation”, in: R. D. Archambault (ed.) *Philosophical Analysis and Education*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.87-111. In the original work, Peters uses the term “educated man,” but this paper uses the term “educated person” to refer to the concept.

whole” is challenging in a context of value pluralism (Miyadera, 2017, pp.189-190). In recent years, it has also been pointed out that “the justification theory of educational purpose distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic purposes of education, but the author's personal view may have influenced this distinction” and “the ideological neutrality of the research method was called into question” (Yamaguchi, 2023, p. 403). These points critique not only Peters and the concept of the “educated person” but also challenge the broader theories of educational purpose and analytical philosophy of education that attempt to define an ideal human image as the goal of education or to view such a goal as inherent in education<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, Miyadera highlights that Peters defined educational purpose as intrinsic to education partly due to the societal context of the 1960s in the United Kingdom, marked by an educational explosion (Miyadera, 1997). This period saw demands from political, economic, national defense, and other areas increasingly directed towards education, as Miyadera notes. This reflected a critical concern that education might become merely an instrument of the state, tasked with training or selecting human resources needed by sectors such as politics, economy, and national defense. In this regard, Peters' notion of the educated person, or educational purpose, effectively illustrated the role of education and its purposes within society, stemming from calls for educational autonomy.

Considering this background, we must acknowledge a certain importance of examining this discussion in light of the issues inherent in the concept of an “educated person.” Because not questioning the concept of the “educated person” rather implicitly internalizes it and runs the risk of fixing a particular view and increasing its influence. For instance, American educational philosopher Jane Roland Martin's critique of Peters' concept is significant because it demonstrates how education has reclassified human qualities into those that are valued and those that are unvalued through the lens of the “educated person” concept (Martin, 1981, 1992, 2002). Her criticism highlights the impact of defining a specific human image—including abilities, qualities, character, and behavior—as the goal of education, which is the condition for being considered educated. Moreover, the necessary discussion should not revolve around merely replacing or adding to the content that serves as the goal but should focus on the method of setting

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<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in the same paper, it is pointed out that “the research philosophy and explicit argumentation style of analytical philosophy of education” have been inherited by later philosophy of education, which accepted Wittgenstein and others (Yamaguchi, 2023, p. 403). In recent years, arguments that reconsider the analytical philosophy of education based on developments in linguistic and epistemological theory can also be found (Cf. Misawa & Watanabe, 2023).

these goals and redefining the roles and positioning of objectives within educational discourse.

Why do we strive to reconstruct education and educational objectives instead of abandoning them? It is because, in the current circumstances, failing to question preserves the detrimental effects, and we recognize that the activity of education itself holds the potential to significantly impact contemporary society and human beings, whether we ask these questions or not.

## **(2) Education as a process and method—a philosophical inquiry**

Kant's discourse above suggests “education” as the enterprise by which “human beings,” as mere organisms in biological classification, are transformed into “human beings.” If we posit that individuals who have not received education are not fully “human being” or cannot become “human being,” we must then address the fundamental question of what is “human being”? However, from the perspective of the philosophy of education as a pedagogical field, this inquiry primarily explores how to become “human being,” what is essential, and what occurs during this transformation. This suggests that the question “what is education?” and the question “how to educate?” are inseparable in the discourse on education.

Minoru Murai, a Japanese educationalist, characterized education both as a result-image model and a process-image model, illustrating the transformation through education in two distinct manners.

One is to think of the “goodness” of that “good person” in terms of the way in which the *process* of human development takes place, and the other, by contrast, is to think of the way in which the *result* of development takes place. .... The one belonging to the former is named process-oriented and the one belonging to the latter is named result-oriented, and all educational ideas can be divided into those belonging to the former and those belonging to the latter as types. (Murai, 1976, p.172)

Based on Murai, the result-image model posits a particular human image, skill, or state as the outcome of education, and describes education as a process advancing toward that image. The process model portrays education as a series of activities where education itself is the goal, with each objective being progressively achieved through the completion of preceding objectives. According to Murai, educational models inspired by Plato and Rousseau align with the former, while those influenced by the progressive education approaches of Dewey and others align with the latter. It is crucial to reiterate

here that portraying education shapes both the objectives and methods of education.

It is entirely possible that the frameworks of education depicted by Peters and Murai, as discussed in this section, could become subjects of critique or remain unaddressed, representing rigid structures within modern education. Regardless of whether one endorses, however, critiques, or distances oneself from education, it is vital to recognize that these debates are built upon a foundation of discourse that articulates “education”. Because this discussion is an examination of the language of education that discusses “education,” it also seeks an effort to create a new “education.” In light of the previously mentioned concept of the “educated person” as an objective of education, our aim is not solely to question the validity of this concept as an educational goal. Instead, we explore how the assumption of the “educated person” concept as an implicit educational objective shape and influences the practice of education, seeking methods to address these influences.

### **3. Language, care, and excellence as perspectives for examining education**

#### **(1) Multi-layered views of language in the context of education**

How can the concept of “education”, defined both as the separation of the human from the non-human and as an activity that transforms one into a "human being," be reconstructed following critiques of modern education? The primary question concerns language within the context of education. It is well understood that human activities are shaped by the language used, and these activities can also be examined and refined. The diversity of linguistic activities, recognized as a characteristic of human beings, has been explored in fields such as analytical philosophy, linguistic theory, epistemology, and symbolism, focusing particularly on the language of education. This exploration has presented possibilities for a language that embraces situational contexts and physicality as well as figurative and expressive language, in contrast to universal descriptive language. Such a reassessment of language in education not only highlights that the act of teaching extends beyond merely transmitting propositions like “A is B” or giving uniform instructions such as “make A to B.” Rather, it also prompts further consideration of the teaching-learning image based on this linguistic perspective.

What is noteworthy here is the accumulation of debates on how language itself should be viewed within the context of education. For instance, Izrael Schaeffler, an American philosopher of education, categorized definitions of certain statements into

scientific definitions, which are somewhat detached from context, and general definitions, which vary depending on the context<sup>3</sup>. He posited that educational statements typically fall into the latter category. Schaeffler further distinguished among definitions in educational discourse: (1) “stipulative definitions”, which aim to “exhibits some term to be defined and gives notice that it is to be taken as equivalent to some other exhibited term, or description, within a particular context,” (2) “Descriptive definitions”, which “explain terms by giving an account of their prior usage,” and (3) “Programmatic definitions,” which “is acting as an expression of a practical program” (Sheffler, 1960, pp.13-19). This classification is not merely about how language is expressed but about its contextual role. While Schaeffler’s categories, if considered universally applicable, clearly have limitations, they are useful as an example of a method to describe the concept of “education.” This approach is important because it emphasizes the search for a vocabulary that can be shared at a certain level in order to increase the consistency of discussion when examining the concept of “education” from the perspective of the philosophy of education.

Additionally, Kumiko Ikuta, Japanese educational philosopher, drawing on studies of analytical philosophy of education, has analyzed “knowing” and “knowledge” in “education,” classifying the language of traditional arts and craftsmanship into three types based on the process of work transmission as a case study for verification:

- i. Language that serves as an “action-directed language” through metaphorical expression of sense.
- ii. Language that serves to “lead” the learner to have a certain physical sensation.
- iii. Language in which the teacher “confronts” the learner with the state (achievement) that he/she has reached, and “invites” the learner to explore the sense of this achievement that he/she has attained. (Ikuta, 2011, pp.28-29)

In this context, language in education serves a role beyond merely transmitting information. Consequently, it is expected that learners will progress from simply acquiring a skill as a “task” to mastering a skill as an “achievement.”

Considering the characteristics of language as outlined by Schaeffler and Ikuta, it represents a unique form of communication for human beings, closely tied to or even

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<sup>3</sup> Schaeffler also noted that “definitions in science are all, in an important sense, technical in purport and call for special knowledge and the use of special theoretical criteria in their evaluation. In scientific communication, definitions are presented and interpreted accordingly by professional members of the scientific community” (Sheffler, *Ibid.*, pp.12-13), and he points out a certain context-dependence.

inseparable from the context of teaching-learning. This distinct language, acquired through engagement in the teaching-learning process, differs from the mother tongue learned through biological parent-child interactions, or from language learned systematically through grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, analyzing the nature of language in educational contexts—such as parent-child interactions at home, teacher-student interactions at school, and supervisor-subordinate guidance at work—is crucial. This analysis helps define the unique role of language in shaping and being shaped by the teaching-learning dynamics that occur in these settings<sup>4</sup>.

## (2) Care and excellence as questions

The second question is posed from the perspective of “care.” Central to this question is a biased evaluation system embedded in the dichotomies of reason-emotion, public-private, and universal-individual, which prompts a reconsideration of these dichotomies themselves. Specifically, it attempts to redefine the concepts of reason, public, and universal from the perspective of care, urging the recognition of the value of emotional, private, and individual aspects of care. The essential inquiry here is not *whether* care *should be* taught in public education, but rather *how* public education *can be* enhanced from the perspective of care.

The third question pertains to excellence. Modern education has traditionally visualized the excellence of human beings as quantifiable and assessable through measurable objectives. While this evaluative criterion shares common biases with the question of “care,” it does not lead to a rejection of evaluating excellence in “education.” Instead, it suggests an attempt to reconceptualize excellence as a goal and method within “education,” emphasizing shared empathy and understanding within specific relationships and contexts. This approach envisions excellence as both a target for and a means by which education of human beings can be pursued.

For example, in her analysis of ethics of care, Carol Gilligan emphasized an understanding of “the dynamics of relationships” as central to moral development in humans (Gilligan, 1986). This suggests that “care” is not simply an attribute to be contrasted with “reason” or “autonomy,” but one of the perspectives from which the concepts of “reason” and “autonomy” can be reconstructed<sup>5</sup>. In essence, it challenges the

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the accumulation of research on teachers' language activities is not simply a collection of cases of “Just say ‘A’ in that situation” but also includes the educational perspective, educational relationships, and the nature of educational methods in those situations (Cf. Himeno.K & Ikuta.T, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> In recent years, following a discussion that has pitted “justice” against “care” an attempt has been made to integrate the two. If based on the said discussion, from the discussion of “care” as opposed to (as a complement or counter-

traditional view of excellence sought through education, prompting a reassessment of what constitutes the state of excellence.

One illustration of this is in the concept of “collaborative knowledge.” Traditionally, knowledge within the framework of educational purpose theory has been conceptualized as stemming from “the individual as a person.” However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards viewing knowledge from the perspective of collaboration, togetherness, and joint effort. For instance, Japanese educationalist Kayo Matsushita emphasizes the importance of acquiring the ability to engage in “dialogical argumentation” in the “learning” envisioned by the curriculum (Matsushita, 2021, p.3). Furthermore, Japanese educationalist Masahiro Nasu, in his discussion on “Japanese-style education in the Reiwa Era” (Central Council for Education, 2021), highlights that “personalized optimal learning,” which refers to independent learning, and “collaborative learning,” which entails mutual learning among peers, are in a “complementary and mutually facilitating relationship” (Nasu, 2021, pp. 168-169). Given the insights from Matsushita and Nasu, it becomes evident that dialogue and collaboration are integral to education, serving both as skills to be acquired and methods to be implemented. Nasu also notes that “every child is a competent learner” (*Ibid.*, p. 109), but the progression of the argument here shifts from a child-centered perspective to one where learning collaboratively shapes the view of children as “competent learners.” This underscores that the perception of a child as a “competent learner” emerges from engaging in “collaborative learning.” This approach suggests that the concept of “education” discussed at the outset of this paper not only directs the purpose and methods of education but also influences our understanding of “children” themselves. From a different perspective, the concept of “children” also has aspects that are influenced by the characteristics of the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged.

The preceding questions on language, care, and excellence initially focused on the relationships between human beings (teachers) and human beings (learners and the taught) within the teaching-learning process. Additionally, they prompt us to consider the relationship between “human beings” and the subjects of teaching-learning (the content being taught). In the framework of modern education, universal and neutral “language” seeks to the transparent transmission of “the content being taught.” However, transparency here implies that the teacher's intentions do not influence the content, but

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concept to) the concepts of “justice” and “fairness” in Western philosophy, we have experienced a fluctuation in the boundary line between “justice” and “fairness” and “care” and “we,” and the possibility (necessity) of fusion is being considered (Cf. Shinagawa, 2007, Tokunaga, 2020).



can this truly be more than merely transferring and recording information? It is crucial to recognize that the teacher's intentionality is not merely directive with a defined intent or system. Lave & Wenger, in their “Legitimate Peripheral Participation” (1991), argue that the learning of beginning learners is not automatic, but is led by the practices of experienced learners in the community in which they are participating. In addition to this, and in light of Ikuta's discussion of “inviting” language, the concept of the teacher's “intentionality to teach” itself is also being examined in a multilayered way.

In light of the above, the role of the teacher, when viewing a child as a “competent learner” or a participant in collaboration, invites renewed scrutiny. It becomes necessary to reassess the role of the teacher not only as a specialist in teaching but also as an agent in various aspects of human social life. This includes roles in forming home or parental relationships that extend beyond biological kinship. Such a reevaluation prompts a reconsideration of the learner-teacher dynamic and the teachable objects<sup>6</sup>. Here, we could find the potential to discuss education from the perspective of relationships—viewing education as an activity that both builds and is built through relationships. This approach can provide new ways of expressing and narrating “those who teach,” “those who are taught (those who learn),” and “things that are taught,” thereby presenting “education” and, by extension, “human beings” as more attractive entities.

#### **4. Conclusion: questions leading to productive discourse through critical discourse**

In light of the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the reevaluation of the concept of “human beings” and “education,” based on the objectivity of being educated, which is the primary aim of this research, is progressing within the discourse of philosophy of education (pedagogy). Moreover, this reevaluation suggests that the discourse stating “it is *not education, it is .....*,” emanating not only from pedagogy but also from disciplines beyond it does not merely highlight the limitations of “education” but provides valuable insights for further enhancing the concept of education. Japanese Education scholar Akira Geshi, referring to the term education as “second-rate fake academia” (Geshi, 2019), addresses the critique of modern education within the trends of educational philosophy

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<sup>6</sup> For example, in more recent research on the philosophy of education, we can find such possibilities in the questioning of the “autonomy” aimed for in “education” and the examination of the role of the “community” in the discussion of the professionalism of teachers (Cf. Miyagawa, 2022, Suzuki, 2018).

and educational thought, posing the question, “What comes after the criticism?” In response to this, this paper would like to reply that through the exploration of “education” in the philosophy of education, a productive discourse can emerge that proposes a more attractive concept of “education” and the way it should be practiced. This approach aims to depict “human being” as a more appealing entity, which is expressed through “education” from “human beings”, and also seeks to reassess “humanness” itself. How can education based on relationship foster “human beings” capable of innovation while embracing heterogeneous others, and how can knowledge be expanded in this context? These are questions that we aim to explore further in future research and dialogue.

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## Rethinking the “We”: Tomasello and Winnicott

Ryo SHIBUYA

*Ryukoku University*

### **Abstract**

Since the late 19th century, evolutionary theory has transformed our approach to the questions about human origins by providing a scientific basis for understanding the relationship between animals and humans. Pedagogy has also been influenced by evolutionary theory through concepts such as “natural” development and “heredity and environment.” As a result, pedagogy has shaped its own role in promoting “humanization” while assuming the undecidability of human nature. Nevertheless, it is important to examine human diversity and explore intermediate areas in which human diversity is intertwined. To this end, this report examines Michael Tomasello’s and Donald W. Winnicott’s arguments and rethinks the nature of relationality and community in humans.

Examining the differences between humans and other great apes, Tomasello argues that a collective identity of “we” is formed in collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. He situates human thinking and education in the context of this unique relationship. Winnicott, however, finds an intermediate area by focusing on the infant’s illusion and playing prior to joint intentionality. Winnicott’s argument will offer a new “we” that complements Tomasello’s “we” with slight relationships.

**Key words:** Evolutionary Theory, Anthropological Machine, Tomasello, Joint Intentionality, Winnicott, Illusion and Playing

## **Introduction**

What is human nature? What were primordial humans and society like? Questions about human origins have been asked repeatedly. Whether one views the primordial man as a struggling being, as Thomas Hobbes did, or as an exchanging being, as Adam Smith did, is not merely a theoretical problem but a practical one that enables the formation of

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### **Correspondence:**

Ryo SHIBUYA, Ryukoku University. Email: r-shibuya@hotmail.co.jp

new images of humans and society. In the second half of the 19th century, the theory of evolution provided a basis for scientific thinking about the relationship between humans and animals, transforming our approach to the questions about origins. Even in recent years, new knowledge about humans informed by evolutionary theory has continued to accumulate.

The purpose of this report is to rethink the nature of relationality and community in human beings by focusing on Michael Tomasello's attempt. He relates evolution and child development and explores primordial human society. His discussion provides a starting point for considering the meaning of education for human beings. I will first outline the purpose of this report by examining Giorgio Agamben's argument about the "anthropological machine." Next, I will delve into Tomasello's discussion of primordial human society, with a focus on joint intentionality and the form of cooperation unique to humans, namely "we." Finally, I explore the relationality preceding joint intentionality and complement Tomasello's discussion of "we" by examining psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott's theory of child development.

## **1. Evolutionary Theory, Anthropological Machine, and Pedagogy**

As is well known, Sigmund Freud (1986 [1917]) argued that his own psychoanalysis, along with Copernicus' heliocentrism and Darwin's theory of evolution, did damage to human narcissism. According to him, heliocentrism broke the illusion that man was the center of the universe, evolutionary theory challenged the hubris that man differed from animals and was superior, and psychoanalysis sought to dismantle the authority of the ego (SS. 7–12). However, heliocentrism demonstrated divine providence without denying the existence of God (Canguilhem 1988, pp. 103–105), and Freud's psychoanalysis preserved the human authority to use language. Considering this, it can be said that Darwin's theory dealt the most profound blow.

Takashi Sakagami (2003) summarizes Darwin's innovations in three ways: first, placing the notion of transformation at the foundation of his theory and rejecting "species essentialism;" second, eliminating teleology by introducing the ideas of environment-dependent natural selection and the aimlessness of individual variation; and third, considering "the statistical and probabilistic law" (pp. 15–17). In other words, Darwin placed animals and humans in a process of randomness and diversity, revealing the undecidability of human nature. As Georges Canguilhem (1991) noted, this enabled a new understanding that humans and animals were mutually independent and

transforming without a hierarchy (pp. 126–144). However, Darwin’s theory activated non-Darwinian concepts of progressive evolution in the second half of the 19th century. Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, and others developed teleological theories of evolution based on ideas such as the inheritance of acquired characteristics or the theory of recapitulation. The concept of evolution, lacking purpose and direction, was replaced by the concept of linear progress, implying human superiority (Bowler 1992). Sakagami interprets these trends as alleviating the blow to human narcissism (Sakagami 2003, p. 16).

Given the circumstances of the time, it seems inevitable that Darwin’s theory of evolution, while highlighting the undecidability of human nature, also spurred a movement to obscure this complexity. If Darwin’s theory and progressive evolutionary theories are understood as discursive devices that form a single unity, they can be considered to have played a central role in what Agamben calls the “anthropological machine.” The “anthropological machine” is an accumulation of knowledge and techniques that define human beings through complex operations of exclusion and inclusion. According to Agamben, in antiquity, modes of thought that defined humanity in relation to animals attempted to humanize animals, resulting in the creation of hybrid entities such as *Homo ferus*. Contrastingly, the modern “anthropological machine,” while attempting to demarcate humans and animals, is confronted with a lack of human specificity and attempts to draw a line of demarcation within human beings. Consequently, the nonhuman (e.g., animal life or organic life) is found inside human beings and is excluded. A residue that is neither man nor animal, or a “bare life” stripped of all humanity, is thus produced (Agamben 2004, pp. 29–38). From this perspective, the evolutionary discourse of the late 19th century has drawn a dividing line within humanity and created exceptional beings. The evolutionary discourse not only revealed the lack of human specificity, as demonstrated by Darwin, but also prompted psychiatry’s theory of degeneration as well as anthropological investigations of “savagery” and “uncivilization” as early stages of humanity.

Pedagogy is also not unrelated to the “anthropological machine” associated with evolutionary theory. According to Hisato Morita, Darwin’s theory of evolution framed developmental psychology by introducing the concept of adaptation and providing a binary scheme of “heredity and environment.” There, on the one hand, scholars such as Stanley Hall explored “natural” development on the basis of teleological evolutionary theories, and on the other hand, William James and others emphasized “random selection” without direction and focused on the interaction between organism and environment (Morita 1992, 1994, 2000). Here we find an attempt to explore human nature and

establish education in the face of the lack of human specificity. In this context, pedagogy has focused on “natural” development and defined unruly children as exceptional beings, while concurrently being aware of the lack of human specificity and boldly tackling the difficult task of “humanization.” In this sense, it can be said that since the end of the 19th century, pedagogy has established its own foundations by promoting “humanization” within the framework of developmental theory, while acknowledging the undecidability of human nature<sup>1</sup>.

Of course, pedagogy has not simply involved setting up an “anthropological machine” in motion. Recent themes in the philosophy of education such as the *Infans*, the Other, and the Becoming are attempts to redefine the residue produced by the “anthropological machine.” Specifically, Satoji Yano (2019) proposed a different approach to education than “humanization,” by examining the origins of education in relation to external factors beyond the community and emphasizing the continuity between animals and humans<sup>2</sup>. This would be one way of suspending the “anthropological machine” that operates within pedagogy. What is emphasized here is that there is no simple escape from the “anthropological machine.” As Yano states, the abandonment of demarcation can lead to the spread of disorder and violence. Therefore, it is inevitable to establish the boundary between human and nonhuman in a more appropriate way and to promote “humanization” in each situation (p. 138)<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Yasuo Imai’s (2022) discussion on the relationship between evolutionary theory and education. Imai analyzes the controversy in the German-speaking world at the end of the 19th century. The issue there was whether the theory of evolution, considered as a “hypothesis,” should be taught in schools. According to Imai, this controversy shows that with the development of natural science, absolute knowledge was shaken, and difficulties arose in teaching correct knowledge about the “world.” Imai’s assumption is that the concepts of “nature” and “development” of children were needed to overcome these difficulties, and that thus the evolutionary theories of Spencer, Haeckel, and others were drawn upon. Such a teleological theory of evolution reinforced the notion of progressive development and facilitated the naturalistic reduction of education. Imai further discusses that Friedrich Nietzsche and John Dewey attempted to open up a realm of education distinct from the realm of nature, through a non-teleological understanding of evolutionary theory (pp. 55–113). Imai’s discussion is an attempt to delineate the appropriate boundaries between culture and nature, human and nonhuman. Contrastingly, the purpose of this report is to identify the area of intertwining between the two, before delineating the boundary between them.

<sup>2</sup> Yano (2019) examines how the boundary between humans and animals has been questioned in pedagogy. Considering Agamben’s argument, he notes that an important task of education is not only to establish the boundary between human and nonhuman but also to understand how to cross this boundary (pp. 101–106, pp. 119–141).

<sup>3</sup> In recent anthropology, as seen in Bruno Latour, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Tim Ingold and others, attempts have been made to break down the dichotomy between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, and to describe the two in terms of symmetry (Kasuga 2011). However, even in such attempts, the boundary between human and nonhuman is not unconditionally discarded. For example, Latour



even in such cases, it is necessary to change the mechanisms of anthropological machines. One approach is to examine human diversity and identify an *intermediate space* between humans and nonhumans, where diversity is intertwined and residue is rested.

Since the emergence of sociobiology in the 1970s, attempts have been made to explain altruism and sociality in terms of genes and natural selection. In this context, the conventional views of human nature and society have been challenged. These studies provide an essential basis for delineating certain boundaries. Tomasello’s work is one such case study. He explores the fundamental nature of human society through comparative experiments with infants and chimpanzees. The primordial humans described by Tomasello are not in conflict with each other. Rather, they came together to share intentions and goals, forming a collective identity, namely “we.” Thus, Tomasello places human thought, morality, and education in the context of relationality and community unique to humans. However, he does not pay much attention to intermediate areas. In the following discussion, I examine his argument, focusing on the concept of “we.” I then raise some questions and clarify the direction in which “we” should be reconsidered.

## 2. Joint Intentionality and “We”: Tomasello’s Theory of Evolution and Development

Tomasello describes the remarkable behaviors of nonhuman apes. They reason, judge, group, and help each other. The differences between humans and other great apes are not always clear. Beginning with a discussion on joint attention, Tomasello regards the collaborative nature of humans as distinguishing between the two. In *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (1999), human cultural evolution and language acquisition are explained in terms of a nine-month revolution and joint attention.

According to Tomasello (2000 [1999]), the infant engages early in emotionally charged interactions with others (“proto-conversations”) through touching and vocalizing. At around nine months of age, the infant’s world is reorganized, and the infant begins to understand that others are also agents with intentions. During this stage, the binary

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(1993) criticizes that modern society is creating the appearance of a boundary between human and nonhuman on the one hand, while producing a hybrid of the two on the other. His aim would not be so much to abolish the demarcation of human and nonhuman, but to seek a new “humanization” by examining how the two are mixed together. This report also examines the “in-between” of human and nonhuman in a different way than Latour and explores new humanization.

relationship between the self and others evolves into the ternary relationship involving the self, objects, and others. The infant becomes aware of others' reactions and shares attention with them (pp. 58–65).

Since the work of Jerome Bruner and others, joint attention has been argued as the basis for sharing semantic worlds with others and acquiring language (see Bruner 1995). For example, Sumio Hamada (1992) suggested that through joint attention, infants exchange viewpoints with others and learn how familiar people see and behave toward the third term (pp. 79–85). Tomasello (2000) also examined the function of joint attention and viewed it as an essential scene in developmental process. According to him, first, joint attentional scenes provide opportunities to share intentions and contexts. This prepares infants to read others' intentions and develop imitative learning through an understanding of intentions. Second, joint attentional scenes allow infants to distance themselves from their own perspectives. There, infants become aware that others are paying attention to them, and they begin to see themselves from the perspective of others (pp. 96–100). These processes of sharing intentions and pluralizing one's own perspectives form the basis for symbol formation and language acquisition.

Further, Tomasello focuses on collaborative activities, which entail joint attention and understanding of others' intentions. He situates them within an evolutionary scenario as what constituted the primordial human community. In *The Natural History of Human Thinking* (2014), he discusses how collaborative activities involving joint intentionality and shared goals form a “we” relationship and constitutes a feature of human thinking. Tomasello suggests that hundreds of thousands of years ago, early humans became more inclined toward collaborative foraging. This led to the formation of a “we” that shared a “common-ground” for communication and engaged in self-monitoring from the perspective of others (Tomasello 2014). *The Natural History of Human Morality* (2016) also traces a similar scenario regarding the emergence of moral values such as fairness and equality. Let us now turn to this book, which elaborates on the normative nature of “we.”

According to Tomasello (2016), most primates care for kin and “friends” and live interdependently, on the basis of “sympathetic concern.” They “form emotional bonds with those who help them (...), and then they naturally help those with whom they are socially bonded — kin and ‘friends’ as it were” (p. 14). But such “emotional reciprocity” is often embedded in competition and dominance. Cooperation in nonhuman apes therefore occurs only in the context of conflicts with neighboring groups and competition within a group. Tomasello's question concerns the transformation of this situation. In his view, the forced collaboration and interdependence in the hunting of large prey led to the

expansion and transformation of “sympathetic concern,” which established the “we” involving the emergence of social norms (*ibid.*, pp. 43–50).

What, then, is the “we” that Tomasello refers to? It is a “joint agent” formed through collaborative activities in which participants share intentionality and goals—a “second-personal agency” that encompasses “I” and “you” but does not belong to either. Tomasello explains this concept from the following perspectives. First, a “common-ground” is formed, comprising shared knowledge and understanding. This provokes a sense of “openness” and a feeling of “ought” (normative trust and responsibility). Second, when participants in a collaborative activity adopt each other’s point of view, an exchange of roles becomes possible. Thus, a “bird’s-eye view” is generated, which enables participants to conceptualize their cooperative efforts as a whole (*ibid.*, pp. 51–53). Third, with role exchange comes “self-other equivalence,” which leads individuals to regard themselves and others as equals (*ibid.*, pp. 55–56). In this way, interaction within a collaborative activity produces mechanisms such as a common-ground, bird’s-eye view, and self-other equivalence. These mechanisms represent the ideal form of collaborative activity and govern the relationship between “I” and “you.”

Tomasello suggests that partner choice plays a crucial role in the broader functioning of such mechanisms. According to him, obligate collaborative foraging requires individuals to choose good partners. In such situations, early humans recognized that others were evaluating themselves, and they attempted to manipulate others' impressions based on the ideals of cooperative activities<sup>4</sup>. Further, those who acted as free riders or could not participate were excluded. As a result, distribution became a reward for active participation (*ibid.*, pp. 57–62). As the “partner choice market” was established, the second-personal “we” as a “supraindividual entity” began to wield normative power<sup>5</sup>. When partners failed to fulfill their role, they were sanctioned on the basis of “we.”

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<sup>4</sup> However, Tomasello notes that these markets were only partial at first, as early humans did not accumulate enough information and included free riders.

<sup>5</sup> Here, we can assume that economic calculations entered into human relationships and community, leading to the principle of efficiency. Tomasello, however, seems to understand the process from collaborative activity to the principle of efficiency in an overly linear manner. Contrastingly, David Graeber (2014) criticizes discussions that understand social relations only in terms of the exchange principle; that is, in terms of accounts and calculations. He notes that there are moral principles not based on these calculations: hierarchy and communism. He further identifies communism as a “baseline communism,” which is not a social system but operates in everyday relationships. It is “any human relationship that operates on the principle of ‘from each according to their ability, to each according to his needs’” (p. 131). Such baseline communism is at work even in situations in which the principle of exchange dominates. Graeber’s argument seems to indicate a different type of relationship and community than the “we” described by Tomasello.

Concurrently, protests against unfair treatment, termed “second-personal protest,” became possible. Rather than merely demanding food, protests began to arise from feelings of “resentment against disrespect, resentment against being treated as something less than equal” (ibid., p. 70).

Thus, a new set of social principles emerged, distinct from the sympathetic concerns and great apes’ ranking system. Within this framework, each person’s behavior is regulated by a collective identity of “we.” For a long time, however, this “we” had remained temporary. Tomasello explains that it achieved stability only in the era of modern humans. As modern humans formed cultural groups, a temporary “we” was extended into a customary “we,” and an unstable “common-ground” became a “cultural common ground” that was assumed to be known by all members of the group. Consequently, the authority and “objective” perspective of “we,” independent of individuals, was established, and social norms related to fairness and equality were formed. However, “we” do not only establish a basis for fairness and equality. When certain individuals gain the power to represent the authority of “we,” it could also mean the emergence of a hierarchy based on authority, which is different from the ranking system of animal society (ibid., pp. 67–68). Therein lies the ambivalence between equality and hierarchy.

Here, we can consider the nature of human education. For Tomasello, primordial education is that which is based on the authority of “we” and creates an equilibrium of knowledge, forming a “common-ground.” Tomasello suggests that the formation of cultural groups and the difference between “us” and “them” brought about the need for education (ibid., pp. 96–97). Interestingly, even the youngest children try to teach, which involves a duality of equality and hierarchy. Tomasello notes that children use “normative language” to their peers, such as “one must put it here” and objectification, such as “it goes here” (ibid., pp. 97). This is already education that refers to the customary “we,” but concurrently it is an act of assuming the position of representing authority. Education promotes an equal “we” and concurrently empowers a teaching person to embody the authority of “we.”

As described above, Tomasello takes the interaction in joint attention as a starting point and then reveals the relationality and community unique to human beings. He argues that during interactions, humans constantly form a second-personal “we,” out of which they create fixed institutions and objectivities. This also demonstrates that institutions and cultures are never static but are shaped by interaction and influenced by “second-personal protest.” As Tomasello himself suggests, the resistance against disrespect argued by Axel Honneth in *The Struggle for Recognition* is also a struggle over

“we” (Tomasello 2016, p. 72; see also Honneth 1992). While assuming a “we,” people reform the way “we” are (who is included in “we,” what constitutes a fair evaluation, what equality means, etc.) as equal members of society or as individuals demanding a fair evaluation of their own role<sup>6</sup>. This is where the diversity of human society comes from. However, some questions remain unanswered, such as how the scope of “we” is decided and how relationships between “us” and “them” are established. To begin with, can “we” function independently?

Here I would like to go beyond Tomasello’s argument and consider that there is a transitional state between the shared intentionality and the earlier stage, and that the two are often intertwined. In discussing forms of learning, Tomasello (2000) distinguishes between “ontogenetic ritualization,” which is also found in chimpanzees, and “imitative learning,” which is unique to humans. Ritualization is a form of learning in which two organisms shape “each other’s behavior through repeated instances of social interaction” without sharing intentions (p. 31). Certain rituals are established through the repetition of interactions such as the infant performing an action and the mother responding to it. This is learning through emotional coordination, which is characteristic of the binary relationship prior to joint attention. Imitative learning, on the other hand, is a form of learning to reproduce the actions of others based on an understanding of their intentions.

However, as Tomasello himself argues, an infant’s pointing, for example, can be either imitative learning or ritualization in response to an adult’s action (ibid., pp. 87–89). Indeed, even when we think we have a shared intention, this is often not the case. In many cases, ritualization and imitative learning are intertwined. This is also true of collaborative activities. Tomasello (2016) emphasized that even when chimpanzees cooperate to forage for food, they do not share the same goal. It is not a “we,” he says, but a “group behavior in I-mode” (p. 27), which is simply coordination between individuals. However, since many collaborations are supported by emotional coordination, “we” and “I-mode” seem to be intertwined.

This will lead to a rethinking of “we.” There may be myriad holes in Tomasello’s

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<sup>6</sup> Tomasello’s argument overlaps considerably with that of Honneth. Tomasello (2016) regards the resistance to disrespect in Honneth’s discussion as presupposing a “we” (p. 72). Honneth (2012) also refers to Tomasello in *Reification*, in which he argues for the priority of “emotional attachment or identification” over cognition of objects (pp. 42–45). However, Honneth (1992) refers to Winnicott and discusses the process by which the infant moves from a state of fusion, through the destruction of objects, to the recognition of others (SS. 153–172). He thus focuses on a transitional state between sympathetic concern and joint attention. This perspective is not so evident in Tomasello. However, Honneth does not emphasize the peculiar forms of relationality and recognition in illusion as much. In exploring this point, this report takes Winnicott’s argument in a different direction than Honneth’s.

“we,” and “we” may be intertwined with and filled by different levels of relationality. However, I do not have the expertise to examine this point through empirical research. Here, I explore the developmental theory of psychoanalysis, specifically Winnicott’s arguments, to discuss how infants come to share intentionality with others. This is because Winnicott discusses this process in terms of illusion and playing, demonstrating a different level of relationality than “we.” Indeed, Tomasello’s argument and psychoanalysis have different origins and levels, and it may be inappropriate to link them. However, attempts to integrate the psychoanalytic debate with infant research since the 1980s are ongoing<sup>7</sup>. In particular, Jessica Benjamin (1995) links the work of Daniel N. Stern and others to Winnicott’s argument (pp. 81–115). With these attempts in mind, let us examine the relationality in Winnicott’s developmental theory.

### **3. Illusion and Playing: Winnicott’s Theory of Development**

Freud also addressed the question of how a community with morals and norms came into being. In *Totem and Taboo* (1912), he constructed the myth of prehistoric patricide as the origin of morality and community. According to Freud (2000 [1912–1913]), prehistoric men formed small groups in which the strongest male occupied all women as the father. The sons collaborated to kill and eat their father. Consequently, they were torn between the two extremes of emotion: hostility and love for their father. They began to feel guilty to resolve this division. After that, they formed a “male coalition” comprising “members with equal rights” and established taboos. Guilt over the absent father made it possible for them to recognize other people and maintain a normative community of equals (SS. 424–430).

Freud’s narrative is peculiar, but it demonstrates a general scheme in which the conflict between primordial love and hostility is transformed into guilt, resulting in the recognition of others. This scheme was further developed by Melanie Klein as an infant’s phantasy. According to Klein, through conflict over a good object (good breast) and a bad object (bad breast), an infant develops a sense of guilt for aggression and begins to recognize the mother as a holistic object (Likierman 2001, pp. 100–135; see also Klein 1984). Klein viewed the process of recognizing the other and sharing reality with others

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Anne Alvarez (1992) draws on the work of Colwyn Trevarthen, Daniel N. Stern, and others to present a new theory and technique of psychoanalytic intervention with autistic, abused, and other children.

as the development of a phantasy. Contrastingly, Winnicott discussed this process through the interaction between the infant and mother, similar to Tomasello’s approach. However, Winnicott focuses on the transitional area preceding the sharing of intentionality. The central issue is the conflict of recognizing the other as possessing an inner reality distinct from one’s own. Winnicott discussed this transitional area in terms of illusion and playing, both of which are riddled with contradictions<sup>8</sup>.

First, we provide an overview of Winnicott’s developmental theories. He discusses infant development from three perspectives: integration, personalization and object-relating (realization)<sup>9</sup>. According to Winnicott, an infant is initially an unintegrated being whose experiences are fragmented. What protects the infant is care such as holding, warm wrapping, and bathing, as well as the caregiver’s gaze, which brings together the infant’s experiences. Winnicott refers to these as “holding” or the “holding environment.” Supported by “holding,” the infant can remain unintegrated in a comfortable state and occasionally develop an integrative “I,” despite the threats posed by internal instincts and external invasions. This forms the basis for the “True Self” outside communication<sup>10</sup>. Next, in personalization, the coordination of body and mind is established, and the psyche becomes “indwelling in the soma” (Winnicott 2018, p. 45). This is facilitated by the “handling” as initial playing. As the infant and others (the mother) are brought together at the same wavelength and engage in various interactions, a distinction between the self and others is established. This fosters a sense of “I am.” Finally, when others (the mother) repeatedly present an object (breast), the infant foresees that others have an inner world, and steps into a reality that can be shared with others<sup>11</sup>.

It is important to note that this process occurs in the earliest stages and is not a linear

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<sup>8</sup> I have discussed Winnicott’s arguments regarding illusion and playing at length in another article (Shibuya 2021). The following discussion summarizes this and adds some new perspectives.

<sup>9</sup> In “Primitive Emotional Development,” Winnicott formulated the tasks that the infant faces (Winnicott 2014, pp. 145–156). In later years, he argues how the infant is encouraged by their environment (Winnicott 2018, pp. 56–63). Here, I integrate and reconfigure these two aspects.

<sup>10</sup> According to Winnicott (2018), infants form the “True Self” in the illusion of omnipotence when they are raised in “facilitating environments.” However, if they are required early to adapt to reality in inadequate environments, they develop the “False Self” through compliance. It is a patchwork self that lacks a sense of reality and wholeness (pp. 140–152). Contrastingly, the “True Self” is usually hidden and engaged with subjective objects (which are one with the subject in illusion) outside of communication. Winnicott believed that such a self is the source of the sense of reality (*ibid.*, pp. 179–192).

<sup>11</sup> Winnicott’s theory of development overlaps with that of Daniel Stern (2000). The “I” formed in unintegration can be said to correspond to “the sense of an emergent self” that perceives the world through “vitality affects” and “amodal perceptions.” Personalization and “I am” correspond to “the sense of a core self” that constitutes a coherent self. Object-relating may correspond to “the sense of a subjective self” and “affect attunement” in which the infant shares emotions with others.

sequence of steps. Rather, it is an overlapping, back-and-forth process that unfolds over a considerable period<sup>12</sup>. Further, the infant is “an immature being who is all the time *on the brink of unthinkable anxiety*” and is threatened by preverbal anxieties such as “going to pieces” or “falling forever” (Winnicott 2018, pp. 57–58). Despite facing these crises, the infant, supported by holding, handling, and presenting-objects, forms a “True Self” and also encounter the world of others. Winnicott views this first encounter as an “illusion” that is neither real nor delusional but a primordial form of relationality.

Compared with topics such as delusions, fantasies, and dreams, illusions have been set aside in the development of psychoanalysis. However, this does not imply that illusions have not yet been discussed. In his later work, *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud (2000 [1927]) interpreted religion and God the Father as illusions. According to him, illusion ignores reality and provides momentary comfort, whereas delusion is anti-reality. Freud argued that humans, feeling powerless in the face of nature’s reality, created the illusion of an order-giving God, or father, to find temporary solace. His conclusion was that humanity should break through the illusion of God and listen to the subtle voice of reason to advance intellectual inquiry (S. 186). This reflects Freud’s heroic gesture of breaking free from the false refuge of God.

However, Winnicott’s perspective contrasts with Freud’s. Winnicott focuses on the illusion of union with the mother, which precedes the illusion of God, or father, and examines how this illusion forms the basis of shared reality. What matters here are the gaps that inevitably intrude before an infant’s perspective is pluralized and shared with others. This involves the struggle to recognize that others have different intentions and worlds<sup>13</sup>. Benjamin argues that this approach subverts Freud’s patriarchal framework.

The illusion of union with the mother inevitably accompanies the process of separation insofar as the mother plays a central nurturing role. According to Benjamin (1995), when this illusion is successfully navigated, the mother can be recognized as the other. However, in cases of failure, the mother’s power is transferred to the father, resulting in the dehumanization of the mother and the creation of the illusion that God or

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<sup>12</sup> Winnicott believes that the processes of integration, personalization and object-relating occur before the age of five or six months. He also states that it is during this period that infants come to understand that others have inner lives.

<sup>13</sup> Illusions are usually recognized only after differences from reality have been noticed. In this sense, illusion always precedes reality and is only discerned afterward, once the shared reality with others is acknowledged. However, the illusion that Winnicott addresses exists in the intermediate area between fantasy and reality, that is, before the full development of reality-testing, or in a state where both singular and plural perspectives are present simultaneously. If we understand illusion in this way, we can argue that the establishment of shared reality inevitably involves this potential illusion.



father provides protection and order (pp. 96–97). The terror of nature and reality that gives rise to the illusion of God is itself the product of a failure to confront reality. Thus, Freud’s heroic gestures mask this failure by defeating the illusion. Contrastingly, Winnicott revisits the primal illusion, not to defeat it but to explore how to play with it and come to terms with it. Now, let us delve into Winnicott’s narrative of illusion.

In “Primitive Emotional Development” (1945), the primal relationship between infant and mother is described as a “moment of illusion.” According to Winnicott, although infants and their mothers interact, their inner worlds do not intersect<sup>14</sup>. However, if the mother repeatedly offers the breast to the infant when the infant desires it and tries to create it within his or her inner world, a “moment of illusion” occurs, in which the infant’s world and the mother’s world overlap. Winnicott writes:

I think of the process as if two lines came from opposite directions, liable to come near each other. If they overlap, there is a moment of illusion—a bit of experience which the infant can take as either as his hallucination or as a thing belonging to external reality. (Winnicott 2014, p. 152)

As Thomas H. Ogden (2018) notes regarding this passage, Winnicott suggests that the overlapping of the two lines is ultimately an illusion, but in this illusion a specific relationship emerges (pp. 225–229). In this illusion, the infant creates the breast, feels united with it, and simultaneously has slight contact with the world of the mother who brings the breast into being. This is not an undifferentiated fusion. As Benjamin (1995) argues, the infant is beginning to realize that the mother has a different intentionality and world. In attempting to reject this reality, the infant perceives the illusion of union and omnipotence. That is to say, the illusion of union is created afterwards in the tension between separation and rejection, and the infant anticipates the other person’s different world within this illusion. Moreover, when this tension is disrupted, the infant may become entangled in a relationship of domination and subjugation, faced with a choice between the fantasy of omnipotence and the powerlessness of the self (pp. 89–93)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Drawing on recent developmental studies, Benjamin (2018) argues that a rhythm emerges in the interaction between the infant and the mother, which does not belong to either side. She conceptualizes this rhythm as the “rhythmic Third,” which can be the locus of primordial recognition (p. 30). Furthermore, Benjamin suggests that this “rhythmic Third” develops into the “differentiating Third,” in which individuals engage with others while recognizing their differences (ibid., pp. 21–48).

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin suggests that Freud and other (male) psychoanalysts fell into this trap. Winnicott believed that the tension between the illusion of union and the reality of separation is maintained in playing. Perhaps he saw this tension as essential for fostering individual freedom, creativity, and the recognition of

In this sense, illusion is a form of a slight relationship in which the fusion and difference between the self and others are intertwined. Here, the worlds of the infant and the mother are related in a misaligned way. This illusory sense of togetherness forms the foundation for the infant's experience of "living together." In this way, Winnicott found an intermediate area between infants and mothers where the fusion and differentiation remain indeterminate. For Winnicott, this is not simply something to overcome but constitutes a space of its own. He later conceptualizes it as a "potential space" and understands it as a place for playing. What emerges there as a successor to the illusory breast is the "transitional object," such as scraps of blankets and tattered dolls to which children have a special attachment. Winnicott (2005) defines it as the first "'not-me' possession"—an ambiguous intermediate term between inside and outside (pp. 1–34). By playing with a transitional object, infants or young children develop an illusion in an unintegrated state and take a half-step into a world shared with others. At that time, it is important not to threaten the ambiguity of the transitional object. Winnicott says that we should refrain from asking the question, "Did you conceive this or was it presented to you from outside?" (ibid., p. 17). This is because if we make a clear distinction between the inside and outside and determine their origin and ownership, the potential space disappears and the transitional object is broken.

The play discussed here is not the type of game Tomasello discusses, which is based on shared rules or role exchange<sup>16</sup>. Instead, it involves children manipulating their toys in the presence of another person. Winnicott presents the images of this playing as the interaction of the surfaces of two curtains or two jugs, with reference to Marion Milner (Winnicott 2005, p. 132). On one hand, there is a movement that develops an isolated world without knowing the outside; on the other hand, there are moments when this movement slightly intersects with the other world.

Let us examine an example of such a play by Winnicott. For example, Edmund, aged two and a half years, at first asked "Where's toys?" but then never said a word. he

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differences with others.

<sup>16</sup> Tomasello occasionally refers to children's play. Play in his discussion is a game with shared intentions and norms, or early symbolic play in which intentions are first shared and then extracted (Tomasello 2000, pp. 84–85). Further, Tomasello (2014) finds the evolutionary origins of pretend play in "pantomiming as a serious communicative activity." He suggests that pretend play originally evolved from gesture language for conveying information (pp. 63–64). It was through these "young children's joint pretense" that rule games were established (ibid., pp. 91). Tomasello considers the transmission of information and the sharing of intentions as essential aspects that precede play. For him, play is only secondary. Contrastingly, Winnicott links playing to illusion as a precursor to the sharing of intentions and discusses it as the basis for a shared reality.

sat on his mother’s lap or played silently with toys while Winnicott talked to his mother. Initially, he played cautiously; then he began blowing bubbles into his mouth and became preoccupied with the string he had brought from another room. He then moved back and forth toward his mother. Winnicott did not directly engage with Edmund. He was just there. But not without a relationship. He writes, “As it happened I was there mirroring what was taking place and thus giving it a quality of communication” (ibid., p. 59).

What we have here is a different picture from that of collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. This child does not share the same intentionality or goals as the adults around him. They are “together” in the same place from different perspectives. In this circumstance, the toddler is in a relaxed and unintegrated state, and develops illusions using the transitional object of the string as the medium. The adults who watch over him become the environment for the toddler, feeling that the toddler is anticipating the world of others. Indeed, there was communication. Nevertheless, it is a communication involving irrelevance, in which the toddler forms a “True Self” outside of communication. In this process, the toddler acquires the “capacity to be alone.”

Of course, young children will eventually emerge from the illusion, acknowledge that their world differs from that of others, and enter reality, sharing intentionality with others. The transitional object also survives, albeit under intense attack. It then serves its purpose and is no longer being examined. However, it does not simply disappear:

It is not forgotten, and it is not mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomenon have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole of the intermediate territory between ‘inner psychic reality’ and ‘the external world as perceived by two persons in common.’ That is to say, over the whole cultural field. (ibid., p. 7)

The transitional object is not simply lost but becomes diffusely spread throughout the cultural field. This implies that the themes of illusion and playing are not confined to infancy. What Winnicott stated is that behind a culture that is based on shared reality and “common-ground,” there exists a vast realm of illusion that remains slightly relational (illusory culture). Illusions give rise to countless gaps in images and connections outside cultural norms. In fact, even within the “we,” individuals are constantly alone and developing illusions. Only when a small part of such illusions takes shape and is shared can the culture of “we” be constructed. If this is true, then illusion becomes the foundation of the “we” and the source of cultural creation and human freedom.

## Conclusion

Through examining the differences between humans and other great apes, Tomasello argues that the relationality and community of “we” are formed in collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. As a “supraindividual entity,” “we” governs the relationship between “I” and “you,” forming the basis for a sense of equality and the foundation of culture. Contrastingly, Winnicott found a peculiar intermediate area between joint attention and emotional coordination. In this area, the infant experiences the illusion in which the fusion and difference between the self and others are intertwined. Through this illusion, the infant comes into slight contact with the world of others. Eventually, this area becomes a space of playing, intertwined with “we” and spreading into the background of culture. This aspect of Winnicott’s argument serves as a starting point for thinking about creativity and freedom among humans.

Certainly, Winnicott’s arguments are more concerned with care than education. Nevertheless, it can be argued that education not only establishes a “common-ground,” but is also closely intertwined with care, and that illusion and playing continually haunt the workings of education. In addition to social norms, equality, and authority, human nature includes caring, playing, and engaging in illusions. These elements are constantly intertwined and contribute to human diversity.

In *The Dawn of Everything* (2022), David Graeber and David Wengrow attempt to demonstrate that human beings have exercised their social freedom in playful ways from their earliest beginnings. The authors suggest that prehistoric hunter-gatherers experimented with a variety of social relationships. According to the authors, there is no single form of human nature. Humans have moved, cared for, supported each other, made promises, fought, teased others, and connected with diverse others while inventing various social relationships<sup>17</sup>. Could we not consider the realm of illusion and playing, as

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<sup>17</sup> Graeber and Wengrow’s aim is to explore why human intrinsic freedoms (the freedom to relocate, the freedom to disobey, the freedom to shape new social realities) have been diminished and linked to the domination of others. They suggest that this question involves “the profound ambivalence (...) of (...) caring relationships” (Graeber & Wengrow 2022, p. 191). Presumably, the caring relationships are transformed when responsibility for care, once confined to a particular relationship, is transferred to those who have no connection with the cared-for individual. Slaves exemplify this transformation. According to Graeber and Wengrow, slaves can be seen as those who are forcibly separated from social ties through violence with the aim of producing caregivers (ibid., pp. 502–514). In this context, the caregiver is perceived as “them” within “us,” with whom the cared-for individual does not have to share a common perspective. Consequently, a domination-subjugation relationship is established, and freedom becomes

Winnicott showed, as giving rise to such human diversity and freedom, from which a new “we” always emerges?

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synonymous with domination. This link between caring and domination can be understood as involving a failure to maintain the delicate balance between fusion and separation in the illusion.

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## Thinking about Education through Examining Human Beings

Yuhi FUJITA  
*Kyushu University*

Yuzo HIROSE  
*Kyoto University*

Yoshitsugu HIRATA  
*Okayama University*

More than 200 years after Immanuel Kant's statement that 'the human being is the only creature that must be educated', it is now obvious to those of us living in the modern world that humans are beings that indeed require education. This view of human beings, also known as '*Homo educandus*', has been the basis of various institutions, cultures, and ideas that shaped subsequent eras, supported by the objectivity of the human condition as being 'educated'.

However, contemporary insights from biology and evolutionary psychology push us to rethink the human condition from the aspect of 'educating' rather than 'being educated'. While learning is a widely observable phenomenon in a broad range of biological species, 'teaching' has only been observed in a limited number of species, with humans being a unique species that has maintained society and created and passed on culture through this practice of 'teaching'. Evolutionary psychology has revealed the characteristics of the human cognitive system (shared intentionality), the tendency towards collaboration and the 'we-ness' that supports these characteristics, and has clarified the basis on which humans learn norms, internalize values and inherit culture in the social environment.

In this research discussion, through dialogue between these contemporary Human Sciences and Educational Studies, we would like to redefine the relationship between education and human beings, and the nature of 'education'. What does education look like to us when we rethink it not from the perspective of Persons, but from the perspective of

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**Correspondence:**

Yuhi FUJITA, Kyushu University. Email: fujita.yuhi.043@m.kyushu-u.ac.jp

Yuzo HIROSE, Kyoto University. Email: hirose.yuzo.3n@kyoto-u.ac.jp

Yoshitsugu HIRATA, Okayama University. Email: yoshitsugu@okayama-u.ac.jp



‘Human Beings who have built up history’? This work will also lead us to reconsider the uniqueness of human culture and human society.

## Philosophy of Education as Clinical and Critical Action

Mika OKABE  
*Osaka University*

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore a future possibility for the philosophy of education, drawing upon the achievements of existing educational sciences, including the philosophy of education, and using the history and research trends of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan as a case study. In Japan, philosophers of education have created and refined concepts and frameworks of thought for students, teachers, and researchers of various other educational sciences to re-examine education in ways previously unexplored, thereby enriching present and future education and educational sciences as components of modern enlightenment projects. However, the current philosophy of education, as evidenced by the current research trends seen in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Education* edited by the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan and published in July 2023, tends to be confined within the bounds of Western modernity. From a postmodern and postcolonial perspective, it is necessary to cautiously acknowledge that the actions and practices of contemporary philosophy of education in Japan are somewhat lacking in terms of self-reflection and self-critique. Consequently, this paper highlights the potential of a clinical philosophy of education, building upon the comprehensive self-reflection practices found in cultural anthropology.

**Key words:** Thorough (self-) reflection, (Cultural) Anthropology, Clinical philosophy of education, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Education*, (Avoiding) the modern enlightenment hubris

## Achievements of Educational Sciences in the Modern Age

Our world teems with myriad activities involving countless individuals, numerous non-human organisms, and inanimate objects. Thus, the world is in a perpetual state of flux that is both unpredictable and beyond our control; as a result, the world may become incongruous with our understanding, or we may find ourselves disconnected and alienated from it. Consequently, institutionalised habits and customs that ought to guide

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### Correspondence:

Mika OKABE, Osaka University. Email: mioka@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp

us through life may no longer be dependable and robust.<sup>1</sup> As we navigate through the passivity imposed by our constant involvement in the vicissitudes of the world we cannot wholly comprehend or even be conscious of, we are compelled to initiate our own actions and practices, including inaction, despite lacking a comprehensive understanding of the world.

The logos of the enlightenment (Aufklärung/lumières) have endeavoured to transform the inherent passivity and struggle of human existence into activeness as a subject. The educational sciences generate and accumulate knowledge, techniques, and technologies that enable individuals' participation in education as a modern Western enlightenment project.

## Achievements of the Philosophy of Education

A shift from passivity to activeness has assisted educators, students, and educational researchers in avoiding nihilism, providing hope and motivation for the actions and practices within education and educational sciences. Nevertheless, this shift might entice individuals into the 'hubris' trap, wherein they seek to control what lies beyond the realm of human knowledge and capability, which ought to be considered sacrosanct even if technically accessible. Consequently, the aspiration for actions and practices is subconsciously supplanted by an expectation that one's desires can, or indeed must, be fulfilled in the future, and the impetus for actions and practices is replaced by an urge to achieve predetermined objectives.

Although we cannot entirely extricate ourselves from this system of 'expectation' and 'urge' for the future—given our perpetual involvement in education and educational sciences as part of the modern enlightenment project—we ought to initiate actions and practices as free agents to sidestep the 'hubris' pitfall of the modern enlightenment projects. I argue that the philosophy of education generates and refines concepts and theoretical frameworks, enabling those engaged in education and educational sciences to (re)consider, conceive, and discuss ideas anew, thereby averting the 'hubris' trap.

The *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Education*<sup>2</sup>, edited by the Philosophy of

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<sup>1</sup> Such instances are abundant, ranging from mundane issues, such as our understanding of ourselves and others and the interpersonal relationships, to global matters, such as generative artificial intelligence, pandemics, and climate change.

<sup>2</sup> The Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, ed. (2023), *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy of Education*, Tokyo, Maruzen Publishing.

Education Society of Japan, published in July 2023 (hereinafter referred to as the *Encyclopaedia*) encompasses numerous entries and phrases elucidating how the philosophy of education clarifies and critiques the principles underpinning the actions and practices of conventional modern education and educational sciences. Furthermore, it depicts how the philosophy of education has endeavoured to introduce alternative concepts and theoretical frameworks for considering, conceiving, and discussing actions and practices of education and educational sciences in a manner distinct from the past. In essence, the philosophy of education aims to challenge and generate difference—‘différance’ in the terminology of J. Derrida—, and to incorporate this into the actual actions and practices of education and educational sciences, where conventional principles persist irrespective of their efficacy.

Furthermore, the *Encyclopaedia* elucidates how the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan has critically revised and updated its ‘political positionality’, enhancing the depth and precision of reflection on the principles that function both overtly and covertly within the Society’s discussions and research. According to Takuo Nishimura (the *Encyclopaedia*, pp. 568–571), upon the Society’s establishment in 1957, politics were viewed as an external obstacle to education. This notion, accepted as a self-evident truth, dictated that researchers in the philosophy of education should lead educators and researchers in other fields of educational sciences by offering ‘universal and objective’ guidelines rooted in the ‘genuine’ logic of education in its ideal state, whilst distancing themselves from ‘external political’ influences on education and from other sectors of educational sciences engaged with politics.

However, the emergence of postmodernism and postcolonialism, which critiqued conventional Western and modern ideas—an approach widely adopted by Japanese educational philosophers in their studies—began to gain public recognition in Japan in the 1990s. These movements instigated a complete reversal in the political stance of Japanese educational philosophy. Educators, students, and researchers in the philosophy of education and other fields of educational sciences are now perceived to be inherently engaged in modern Western enlightenment project initiatives. Consequently, political issues, such as the dynamics of power and the central-peripheral structures, are also regarded as inherently embedded within education and educational sciences, functioning both overtly and covertly, rather than as external elements. Following this postmodern and postcolonial realisation, Nishimura articulated that the *raison d’être* of educational philosophers in Japan could be discerned solely through the rigour of self-reflection on their narrative and construction of reality via language (the *Encyclopaedia*, p. 570). This insight, along with the influence of the linguistic turn in the humanities and social sciences

at large, became a ‘common understanding’ within the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan.

How can one reasonably reflect on the validity and thoroughness of one’s reflections? In other words, how can one inquire about the political operation and influence of one’s positionality that guides their reflections? If the philosophy of education is an academic discipline pursued by human beings capable of committing the ‘banality of evil’ (H. Arendt), and the *raison d’être* of educational philosophers lies in valid and thorough reflections on their narrations and constructions of the reality of education and educational sciences, then the fundamental responsibility of educational philosophers should be to maintain the self-awareness and self-reflection regarding their linguistic actions and practices, and the mechanisms that motivate them. This is particularly imperative for any researcher who has lived after and through the historical experience of the modern barbarism of reason and enlightenment.

## Achievements of Cultural Anthropology

The subsequent section investigates the mechanisms that facilitate the actions and practices of reflection within the philosophy of education, taking Japan as a case study. However, initially, this section delves into the mechanisms of the actions and practices of reflection in cultural anthropology. The philosophy of education shares two significant points with cultural anthropology.<sup>3</sup> The first is the politics of their origins, established and evolved as disciplines for assimilating, dominating, and controlling ‘savages’ or children to convert them into ‘human beings’ fashioned after Western adults. The second is the gradual revision and enhancement of the initial politics by researchers, particularly the operations of power within the centre-periphery structure of academic perspectives, through rigorous self-reflection on their research approach amidst the critique of post-20th-century modernity and the West.<sup>4</sup>

Cultural anthropology has been significantly influenced by the linguistic turn,

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<sup>3</sup> Yujiro Nakamura (1984), ‘Kodomo: Shinso-teki Nin’gen, Chi’isai Otona, to Ibunka’ (Children: Deep Level of Human Beings, Little Adults, and Different Cultures), Yujiro Nakamura, *Jutsugo-syu: Kininaru Kotoba (Glossary: Words of Interest)*, Tokyo, Iwanami Shinsho, pp. 76-80 [in Japanese].

<sup>4</sup> Okabe (2021) discusses the process of reflection on academic perspectives in cultural anthropology and primatology (ecological anthropology). Mika Okabe (2021), ‘Mou wo Hiraku Pathos, Mou ni Hiraku Pathos’ (Pathos to Enlighten the Ignorant, and Pathos for Opening to the *Ignorant*), Mika Okabe and Fumio Ono, eds., *Kyouikugaku no Pathos-ron-teki Tenkai (The Pathological Turn in Education)*, Tokyo, University of Tokyo Press, pp. 218-224 [in Japanese].

resulting in the development of notable theories, such as the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss and the interpretive anthropology of Geertz. In recent years, a number of radical reflective theories have critiqued anthropocentrism and logocentrism, entrenched in human thought and behaviour. These include Latour's actor-network theory and the theories of ontological anthropology by Strathern and Cohn. These theories have exerted a wide influence across the humanities and social sciences, beyond cultural anthropology alone.

This profound reflection in cultural anthropology is facilitated not only by the deep educational and cultural experiences of individual researchers in the humanities and social sciences but also by the academic methodologies employed by researchers conducting fieldwork in cultures that are extraordinary to them and that help define them as a 'minority'. During fieldwork, cultural anthropologists reside alone or in small groups among the local people in diverse cultures for extended periods, such as one or two years, undertaking participant observations and interviews in the local language. 'Minority' in this context refers to individuals regardless of their number, whose thoughts, words, and actions are likely to be perceived as 'strange', 'exceptional', or 'abnormal', despite being natural and self-evident to themselves, leading them to adopt a position of articulating 'excuses' for their 'unique' thoughts and actions to those in the majority. Cultural anthropologists introduce a 'strong parallax' into their own thoughts and actions, acquired over time in their native region, by living long-term in other distinct cultures and experiencing the positionality of 'minority'. Cultural anthropologists strive to become more receptive to opportunities to challenge the creation of differences and incorporate them into their familiar, often Western and/or modern thoughts and actions. Moreover, they seize opportunities to regard their own thoughts and actions as 'strange', 'exceptional', and 'abnormal' and to scrutinise their positionality as the 'majority', which they have considered 'standard', 'typical', and 'normal'. Thus, cultural anthropologists aim to avoid adopting a stable position as part of the 'majority' with a safe and secure attitude. Instead, they aspire to assume a 'minority' stance, questioning the self-evidence and certainty of their thoughts and actions. This position enables them to thoroughly reflect on their actions and practices when engaging with other cultures and facing incommensurable situations. Furthermore, conducting interviews in the local language, with translations that do not rely on the stable foundation of their mother tongue, empowers cultural anthropologists to become acutely self-aware and reflective on their 'minority' premise.

Consequently, we are led to pose the following fundamental question: do Japanese educational philosophers have the same mechanism for profound self-reflection as

cultural anthropologists?

## Challenges revealed by the *Encyclopaedia*

The methodologies employed in the philosophy of education can broadly be categorised into philosophical and intellectual-historical approaches. Philosophers of education refine their methodologies through the critique of other people's thoughts.

In the *Encyclopaedia*, entries on ancient and medieval thought (both Eastern and Western) include few members from the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan. Furthermore, the majority of entries in the *Encyclopaedia* focus on Japan and the West. In the discipline of philosophy and cultural anthropology, theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism, which deeply reflect on modern and Western thoughts, are often developed through the critical study of ancient and/or medieval thought and fieldwork in 'peripheral' regions of the world—such as Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the islands of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. In contrast, the philosophy of education in Japan, heavily influenced by Western and modern thought, finds the range of texts for study that provide clues for researchers to actively distance themselves from thoughts and behaviours deemed self-evidently 'standard' or 'normal' to be limited, both in terms of periods and regions, despite such clues being crucial for the proper and thorough conduct of reflective actions and practices.

Research in the philosophy of education in Japan has undeniably focused on modern criticism, particularly since the 1990s, but only within a Westernised and modernised context. The geopolitical position of Japan as the 'East' or 'Far East' country, which may have served to avoid the pitfalls of colonialism and orientalism in the past, requires careful reflection among contemporary philosophers of education in Japan. Most modern philosophers of education inhabit a world that favours global standardisation and predominantly engage with Western modern thought rather than Japanese classical thought.

However, even within the contexts of modernity and the West, many researchers have reflected—due to their 'minority' positions—on their political positionality and championed postmodern and postcolonial ideas that challenge conventional academia. The crux is that the intensity and accuracy of researchers' self-reflections must be preserved. Cultural anthropology underscores the necessity for researchers to create opportunities for encounters with diverse people and incommensurable situations as a 'minority.' I advocate that practising a clinical philosophy of education in public spheres

alongside diverse individuals can facilitate the creation of such opportunities for philosophers of education.

Philosophical educational research employing the methodologies of philosophy or intellectual history can indeed be clinical. These methodologies engage with the original linguistic situation and the original multifaceted contexts of concepts and theoretical frameworks through one's linguistic abilities and critical interpretation of texts from their own perspective and positionality. This clinical approach sheds light on historical problematic situations, linking them with the present. It might be considered to create a virtual reconstruction of past situations and contexts as another culture through linguistic and academic imaginative skills, as opposed to cultural anthropologists' direct and physical experience of these situations and contexts.

Researchers ought not to adopt concepts or theoretical frameworks from differing periods, regions, and contexts by unconsciously applying their own modes of thought, linguistic usage, or perspectives. Nonetheless, the current state of philosophy of education in Japan, as depicted in the *Encyclopaedia*, indicates numerous challenges in avoiding such appropriation.

Given this scenario, could adopting a 'minority' stance and engaging in discursive actions and practices in a pluralistic public sphere with others committed to different principles help maintain or enhance the intensity and precision of our reflective actions and practices? Indeed, such actions and practices have been explored through various means by several members of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan. Could their insights and bricolage<sup>5</sup> abilities be recognised as public knowledge, benefitting not only the Society but also the global field of educational philosophy?

Japanese philosopher Megumi Sakabe posits that the actions and practices of clinical reflection should be 'philosophical practice'.<sup>6</sup> According to Sakabe, philosophical scholars should avoid placing themselves in a 'privileged' position, which is 'exceedingly inaccessible to non-specialists'. The language of philosophy extends from everyday natural language rather than being distinct from it. The engagement in clinical philosophy of education within the public realms of daily life, alongside individuals of diverse backgrounds, necessitates a return to this essential understanding of language use

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<sup>5</sup> According to de Certeau, actions and practices of/as a 'minority' are an alternative type of creative activities, referred to as the poetics of everyday practice. They also differ from production activities and language production by the elite. The creative activity exercised in such contexts is called 'bricolage' and can secretly form another web of anti-discipline that cannot be controlled by the 'majority', such as the elite. (Michel de Certeau (1980), *ART DE FAIRE*, Paris, Union Générale d'Éditions.)

<sup>6</sup> Megumi Sakabe (2007), *Sakabe Megumi Shu 4: 'Shirushi', 'Katari', 'Furumai'* (Collected Works of Megumi Sakabe 4: 'Symbols', 'Narratives', 'Practice'), Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, pp.359-368.



in philosophy and the pursuit of comprehensive and appropriate reflection.

Sakabe further suggests that ‘the role of philosophy is to prepare dictionaries and grammar for ordinary people’s thought’.<sup>7</sup>

Publishing the *Encyclopaedia* could be seen as fulfilling one of the roles of the philosophy of education. The *Encyclopaedia* ought not to serve as a means for readers to accumulate and flaunt knowledge to secure a privileged status and bolster existing theories within their own culture. Instead, it should enable them to seek, explore, and refine their use of language to initiate in-depth reflection on their actions and practices regarding education and educational research.

This positionality aids philosophers of education in developing alternative terms and frameworks, enhancing the efficacy of their research approaches within education, educational sciences, and philosophy of education. Philosophers are encouraged to embrace the continuous intervention of anti-foundational translation in their interactions and engagements with others and the incommensurable. Moreover, philosophers of education may discover that the same terms and frameworks can lead to vastly different, and occasionally conflicting, principles compared to conventional education, educational sciences, and, particularly, conventional philosophy of education. In public spheres, philosophers of education have the opportunity to contemplate and refine their use of terms and frameworks while undertaking research actions and engagements with others and the incommensurable. This could promote profound self-reflection on anthropocentrism, orientalism, logocentrism, and ethnocentrism, which may have inadvertently infiltrated their actions and practices.

Despite such extensive self-reflection, mistakes are inevitable. Complete immunity from errors and biases is unattainable, given the world’s perpetual state of unpredictability and uncontrollability, and the constant evolution and transformation of human beings. Hannah Arendt underscores the importance of ‘forgiveness’ (*verzeihen*) and ‘promise’ (*versprechen*) in safeguarding discursive actions and practices from succumbing to modern enlightenment hubris or the banality of evil.<sup>8</sup> Building on this, I would like to aim to explore which issues the philosophy of education should address and respond to, through rigour and thorough reflection in future research.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.: p.369

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt (1967), *VITA ACTIVA, oder Vom tätigen Leben* Piper Verlag GmbH, München. Chapter 5 discusses ‘Forgive’ (*Verzeihen*) and ‘Promise’ (*Versprechen*). *Zeihen* means to blame or condemn someone for a sin, whereas *sprechen* means to speak, talk, or tell a story either intentionally or involuntarily. It is prefixed by *ver-*, which means substitution, exceeding temporal limits, and various changes (such as closure, prevention, elimination, removal, consumption, distortion, reversal, and coercion). The original terms in German have nuances not present in Japanese or English.

## Intelligence toward Truthfulness:

### A Perspective Based on Rancière's Educational Theory

Satoshi TANAKA

*The University of Tokyo*

#### Abstract

What Jacques Rancière requires teachers to do is to hold an attitude of "ignorance." This is a roundabout way of stimulating the "intelligence" of the students themselves. This intelligence means the ability to understand the "truth," and it is assumed to be the same for all people. However, in contemporary Japanese society, education is expected to lean heavily toward "competence formation"(qualification and socialization), and is far from the intelligence that seeks the "truth." Though, if we value properly our natural sensibilities in a proper way, we can stimulate our own intelligence. The "truth" here means "truthfulness without truth." It is one's own destination ("telos") where the "inner other" is heading toward. The activity toward one's own telos is limited to what one testifies = expressing oneself. In sum, the education proposed here is to position one's own intelligence toward truthfulness as the indispensable foundation of education. Therefore, it can be said that education is a new type of human formation.

**Key words:** competence formation, human formation, ignorance, Jacques Rancière, intelligence, sensibility, telos, testify, truth, truthfulness.

## 1 Envisioning education

In order to envision "education" as a new type of human formation, I would like to use the French philosopher Jacques Rancière's conception of teachers' activity as a foundation of this discussion(JR, MI). What Rancière demands of teachers in his educational theory is, above all else, to be "ignorant." Of course, this "ignorant" does not mean in a literal sense, but rather refers to the behavior that teachers act like "as if" he/she does not have much knowledge. It is the prerequisite for teachers to carry out the act of "teaching." In

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#### Correspondence:

Satoshi TANAKA, The University of Tokyo. Email: [sgf-liberalitas@nifty.com](mailto:sgf-liberalitas@nifty.com)

short, it is the basic attitude. The teaching act based on this premise is "teaching without explication." In other words, "teaching" is equal to "stimulating the intelligence" of students.

At first glance, Rancière's theory of teachers seems to emphasize students' "self-learning" rather than teachers' "teaching"(GB, RT). However, if we remand Rancière's concept of intelligence to the history of European thought, as Rancière himself suggests, the excitation (activation) of intelligence may be caused by not only a concrete other person, but also by someone who can be called "inner other." For example, the inner other is what Augustine called the "inner person" (homo interior)(AA, C: 10. 6. 9; DVR: 39. 72). If we think of Rancière's theory of teachers in this way, even though at first glance it may seem like "learning by him/himself," it actually means "being taught by the inner other. "

However, what is considered here is not whether education means teaching-centered or learning-centered, but education is becoming increasingly tilted to competence formation (qualification and socialization) and moving away from the "will to truth." This "truth" includes not only the truth of natural science, but also the telos that a person desires. Moreover, that "will" is not only inherent in oneself, but also derives from one's "inner other" (deep "self"). To put it simply, the basics of the education proposed here are that competence formation should be carried out based on the "will to truth" that is unique to oneself and responding singularly to the "inner other."

## 2 Will of Intelligence, Equality of Intelligence

### 1 Intelligence penetrated by the will to gain truthfulness

Let us summarize the two characteristics of Rancière's concept of intelligence. The first is that Rancière's intelligence is not so-called intelligence, such as "academic knowledge" or "educatedness," but rather "power to understand oneself[*puissance de se faire comprendre*] through the verification of others[*vérification de l'autre*]"(JR, MI: 123). In other words, Rancière's intelligence is "the ability to think" that is permeated by "will"(*volonté*) toward the "truthfulness"(*vérité*) of oneself and others(the difference of "truth" and "truthfulness" will be mentioned later). Basically, Rancière says that a person is a "will" subjugated to an intelligence"(JR, MI: 88).

Let us elaborate a little. Rancière, relying on the 18th century French poet Jean François de Saint-Lambert(1716–1803), writes: "It[=Will] is the divine intelligence, already written as the norms gifted to human beings by Divinity, as the very acts of

language. It is not original [human] nature or human skill, but a gift of Divinity" (JR, MI: 89). In other words, a person's "will" does not belong to him/her, but to God, and is a dynamic movement towards God.

The second is the assumption that intelligence is equally endowed to all persons. Looking back at the history of European thought, Rancière's intelligence is, for example, the "*intellectus*" or "*spiritus*" as "*humanitas*" talked about in ancient era by Aurelius Augustine(354-430) and in the medieval era by Thomas Aquinas(1225-74). Rancière himself writes "intelligence" as "*esprit*" (JR, MI: 85). Intelligence, which has been talked about in Christian thought since at least the ancient era, is a gift from God to all persons, and is another name for the "inner other"("inner person") mentioned earlier.

Let us elaborate on this. In the case of Thomas, the activity of the "*anima*" that overflows in human hearts can be divided into two abilities called "*potentia intellectivae*" and "*potentia appetivae*" (TA, ST: I, q. 78, pr.). "*Potentia intellectivae*" is the intellectual activity of "understanding" God (*intellegere*), which is accompanied by the "will" (*voluntas*) that originates from God and returns to God(TA, ST: I, q. 79). The "*potentia appetivae*" is "the ability to seek sensual comfort and escape from what is harmful." The ability to seek sensual comfort is called "*concupiscibilis*," and the ability to escape from what is harmful is called "*irascibilis*"(TA, ST: I, q. 81, ad. 2, co).

## 2 Sincerity toward truthfulness

Now, the "truthfulness" to which Rancière's "will" directs is sharply distinguished from the language to describe things. That is, the "will" is not something that can be described. The truthfulness becomes envisagement and felt. Rancière said, "Truthfulness does not speak of itself. Truthfulness is one thing(*une*), language activity is scattered. Truthfulness is necessary, and language is arbitrary" (JR, MI: 102). In other words, "significations" that people make are manifestations of will [which are diverse but come from one divinity] " (JR, MI: 95).

However, the truthfulness that Rancière refers to is not the metaphysical "substance" talked about in medieval theology, but rather the destination that each person uniquely heads towards with "sincerity"(*vérité*). For Rancière, "truthfulness is not to be found in models that are represented by or transformed to [concrete] shapes"(JR, CM: 26). In other words, what is described(defined) as such-and-such is not truthfulness. "Thinking does not describe [something] as truthfulness(*vérité*); it is [naturally] expressed as sincerity(*vérité*)"(JR, MI: 106). "Truthfulness exists by itself. It exists and is not something that can be told [by human consciousness or intention] " (JR, MI: 99). "Nothing has any bearing on truthfulness, it is in [someone's] unique [thinking]

trajectory." "Truthfulness is only a friend of one's own thinking"(JR, MI: 101-2).

The reason why I translate Rancière's word "*vérité*" as "truthfulness" is because I use the word "truth" to describe(= to predicate) something that is not known. Also, the reason why I use the word "truthfulness" is because I wanted to express(= to appear by itself) something that is intelligible(*intelligibilis*). The word "*vérité*" which Rancière uses positively means truthfulness. It is shown by the fact that the "will" he refers to is the intention that proposes the method of conjecture(JR, MI: 106). "Sincerity" is "each person's privileged way of thinking of the truthfulness" (JR, MI: 98), and this sincerity is called "fictional truth" (*«vérité» de la fiction*)(JR, CM: 105).

### 3 Intelligence as subject

If we strengthen our imagination to some extent, this kind of intelligence toward truthfulness can also be found in "factuality" (Martin Heidegger(1889-1976)) and "activity" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe(1749-1832) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)) in the sense of the thinking power that is naturally generated. Rancière said, "The intelligence is attention and inquiry, which precedes the combination of ideas; and the will [of intelligence] is the force that moves oneself, acting by peculiar movement(*propre mouvement*), preceding [the ego's] choice" (JR, MI: 92). This "choice" is probably indicating "free will" (*liberum arbitrium*) that does not exclude human arbitrariness and self-righteousness.

In Rancière's claim, "will" is described as "rational force"(*pouvoir rationnel*), "rational being"(*être raisonnable*), and, simply, "self" (*soi-même*)(JR, MI: 92-3, 97). The "self" that Rancière refers to is the "self to which I return" (*retour sur lui-même*), so to speak, the inner other(JR, MI: 97). This "self" is the universal immanence that was often talked about in the history of European thoughts, and can be found, for example, in Goethe and Nietzsche, as well as in Augustine and Thomas.

For Rancière, the "root of evil"(*le principe du mal*) is equal to "unfaithfulness to oneself"(*infidélité à soi*)(JR, MI: 98). In brief, this indicates the a lack of sincerity. Rancière said, "Evil is wandering around, straying from the path [ that the "self" leads to], paying no attention to what those [who follow one's "self"] say(*qu'on dit*), forgetting what it is **to be a person**(*qu'on est*)[who is fighting toward ons's own "self"]. Therefore, [you] must go your own way(*Va donc ton chemin*) ". Being true to one's "self" is being "sincere"(*véracité*) and "being a person" in one's own way" (JR, MI: 98 bold is by quotor). That is, to be human is to continue to face the telos of one's own "self" with sincerity. Rancière says, "People think, because they exist"(*l'homme pense parce qu'il existe*)(JR, MI: 105).

### 3 (Lost) intelligence toward truthfulness

#### 1 Being Explicated and Understanding

As mentioned earlier, Rancière's intelligence does not require "explication" by teachers. For Rancière, "teaching" does not mean explicating something to students. This is because explications put students' intelligence into doze mode. Teachers who stimulate students' intelligence are "ignorant teachers." In Rancière's theory, teaching is to teach what teachers do not know (JR, MI: 100). It is about encouraging students to use their own intelligence and to move toward their own unique and singular "understanding." Each student's unique and singular "understanding" is something that teachers cannot grasp. In Rancière, "explication is a myth of pedagogy" (JR, MI: 15). The explication is not really "teaching". This is because explications can create "accepting it as it is" and "impression"(worship) of the person who is giving the explication.

For Rancière, the "driving force" of education is the human desire to "understand"(*comprendre*). Indeed, it can be recognized that the desire to understand, that is, to "want to understand what we do not understand" is universally found among all human beings. However, if a teacher tries to make his/her students understand in the same way as he/she understands (isomorphically), that is to make their understanding foolish. Keeping in mind the uniqueness(othersness) of each person's thinking, Rancière describes this desire as the "power of translation"(*puissance de traduction*)(JR, MI: 108), and he makes "improvisation," produced by this desire, the center of his educational method(JR, MI: 109). It is a unique idea, trial, and invention that occurs together with the "other", even if they are modest or small. And if we infer from Rancière's expression "the silent dialogue of the soul"(*le dialogue muet de l'âme*)(JR, MI: 116), the "other" shall be considered to include the "inner person"(="self").

#### 2 Truthfulness without Truth

Elaborating Rancière's thought in my own way, Rancière's intelligence toward truthfulness has an inclination toward European theology and metaphysics, so, even if it were introduced into modern Japanese pedagogy, it would not take root and would disappear. Although this is just an impressionistic outlook, the background of this inference is the social spread of utilitarianism and ICT in contemporary Japanese society. In addition, the social tendency to prioritize the pleasure principle in decision-making

may also be mentioned, as the background. Among these factors, the utilitarian orientation is most conspicuous.

I also think that, in this social trend of utilitarianism or prioritizing the principle of pleasure, the emotion as the irreplaceability of a singular life would be lost. The emotion comes from the ephemerality of a life's transience that once was expressed in the word "*Schein*" (appearances) by Goethe and Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805). This is because "*Schein*" is the opposite of "*Wahrheit*" (truth), the eternal and universal "Life" (because a life is an "appearance" (*Schein*) of "Life"). Incidentally, Nietzsche said, "we have also lost the world of appearances [*scheinbare*], along with the world of truth [*wahren Welt*]" (KS 6, GD: 81). The "will to power" (*Der Wille zur Macht*) that Nietzsche sought beyond the distinction and association between truth and appearance was something that Nietzsche earnestly sought "without faith." It can also be described as "truthfulness."

Anyway, if we lose interest in the truth, as a result of this, we will also lose interest in the truthfulness, and the intelligence that Rancière refers to will be lost too. In other words, intelligence, although somehow assumed, will be virtually forgotten. Intelligence will become, so to speak, just a "margin" (*marge*), and the world of education will overflow with ordered and justified knowledge and skills that can be taught through accurate explications. As a result, teachers (as instructors) will set up "individually optimized" student learning.

What governs school education, in which ordered and justified knowledge and skills are taught effectively and efficiently, would be "competence" in which the content is defined by the main social trend (for example, OECD's "agency"). The competence is certainly important, it can be thought of as "truth" (meaning justified knowledge and skills). However, the competence formation would make difficult to hope for some kind of "invention" while moving toward truthfulness. Simply put, some kind of "chaos" is necessary for the emergence or arrival of truthfulness. For example, as Nietzsche said in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "In order to produce dancing brilliance, a person must have chaos within himself" (KS 4, ASZ: 19).

#### **4 Intelligence that testifies to oneself**

Even if intelligence toward truthfulness is forgotten socially, it would be remembered empirically in each individual. "Empirical" here refers to sensitive and perceptive original experience ("primary experience") of external things that gives rise to inner "reality." It is a raw "thing that is the sensible" (*le sensible*) before being incorporated into Rancière's

"regime of sensibility" as "the sharing of the sensible"(partage du sensible), and "the aesthetic experience"(expérience esthétique)(JR, PS; JR, ME).

If we think of our experience in this way, what philosophy of education should tell us is that each person is intelligent in their own way. It is not something that can be told to others or verified as an objective fact, but something that each person says to oneself. It is the imagination of aesthetic reality, and it enriches one's own mind. To be intelligent, as it were, means to bear witness to one's autopoiesis (self-creation) of truthfulness. It can be said that each person is uniquely and singularly "being a person"(existence). This "existence" is likened to a skillful physical technique. A skillful physical technique embodies a fleeting and unsatisfactory endeavor, but it also constantly creates a self with a unique and singular purpose. Just as a person who continues to make extraordinary efforts is simply beautiful, the functionality of a physical technique which has been enhanced to the utmost is beautiful. In any case, as mentioned earlier, what is proposed here as a new conception of education is to place "intelligence toward truthfulness," as the foundation of competence formation.

However, this kind of support for intelligence(or existence) toward truthfulness is not a universal(meaning "all the same" or "uniform") school lesson being enacted in our national educational policy, but rather the foundation of each individual's thinking. It is to reserve for each one's each intelligence that is permeated by each one's own will to truthfulness. Perhaps the will to truthfulness helps each person's unique and singular struggle in the real world. Some persons with a sincere self will struggle with their own foolish ego, and we can imagine that some beautiful wonders will shine faintly in the gloomy real world. In sum, the task of philosophy of education that I propose is not to extrapolate some plausible and specious educational policy (for example: "individually optimized learning") but rather to bring about a "thinking environment" that encourages each individual's intelligence to be stimulated by him/herself." he goal is to secure a unique and singular realm of thought in educational practice, and to support the struggle of the "self" against the real world; the "self," behind the "ego," which is one and only one.

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# Analytic Philosophy of Education, Then and Now

Koichiro MISAWA  
*Kyoto University*

## Abstract

Analytic philosophy of education is now a somewhat forgotten tradition of enquiry in Japan, or so it often appears. In this paper, I challenge this ignorance or indifference by highlighting the striking parallel between the historical and contemporary thinking and literature on reason, represented most clearly by the so-called London line's *Education and the Development of Reason* (1972) and David Bakhurst's *The Formation of Reason* (2011). I have no wish to claim that looking into the parallel is the only right way to give analytic philosophy of education the fuller attention it deserves. Exploring the parallel, however, offers the advantage of allowing us to recognise that reason and human rationality pervade human life and to acknowledge the importance of enquiring into education with that recognition. Questions regarding acquiring a mind at all and having the capacity to reason at all are therefore part and parcel of philosophical studies of education. Significant attention to the two overlapping threads of analytic philosophy of education reminds us of the commonsensical, but often academically overlooked, notion that the question of what it is to be a human being is inseparable from the question of what it is to become a human being. Such a philosophical-educational exploration, or 'philosophical anthropology', can be advanced most substantially when we pay due respect to the fruitful interactions between early and contemporary analytic philosophy of education without favouring one at the expense of the other.

**Key words:** analytic philosophy of education, reason, human nature, the London line, David Bakhurst

## I. Introduction

The last fifteen years have witnessed the deaths of the founding figures of the so-called analytic philosophy of education. The eastern side of the Atlantic lost Richard Stanley Peters (1919–2011) and Paul Heywood Hirst (1927–2020); the western side lost Israel Scheffler (1923–2014).

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### Correspondence:

Koichiro MISAWA, Kyoto University. Email: misawa.koichiro.5i@kyoto-u.ac.jp

Many readers of this journal might see the deaths of such principal protagonists of yore as threatening the existence of, or representing the demise of, the analytic philosophy of education itself. Indeed, this classical discipline easily succumbs to caricature, especially in Japan – painted as constantly and hopelessly engaging itself in the foundationalist business of formulating high-level/foundational directives which would guide educational research and practice, through the austere but inadequate methodology of logical/conceptual analysis (cf. Carr 2004). I am highly sceptical, however, of this and many other criticisms directed at analytic philosophy of education.

In this paper, I attempt to justify my scepticism, thereby underlining the importance of giving analytic philosophy of education the attention it merits. Contrary to the standard image in Japan, and though often neglected and sometimes even maligned, analytic philosophy of education *is* surviving and even flourishing – to the point of *resurrection*. Addressing its resurrection clearly requires attention to *two* periods. One is obvious: the period of excitement and enthusiasm in the 1960s and early 1970s when Peters, Hirst and Scheffler played leading roles in establishing and solidifying the philosophy of education as an independent academic discipline, whose methods, insights and outlooks derived from analytic philosophy. The precise dating of the other period and, in fact, the existence of the resurrection itself might well be much more controversial, but I would identify the period of resurrection with the 2010s and after, taking David Bakhurst's *The Formation of Reason* (2011) as a primary point of departure for an analytic new wave.

It might be objected that no such landmark revival occurred around 2010. My insistence, critics might continue, makes it sound as though the account I provide is little more than a manifesto for a preferred history, and tendentious as a result. Only time will tell, of course, whether and how my resurrection perspective makes sense in the history of analytic philosophy of education. It is by no means my intention, however, to boldly assert that Bakhurst's book will prove to have been seminal of a whole new tradition. Nor am I intent on claiming that currently there exists a large cadre of philosophers who identify themselves as analytic philosophers of education, working towards a common goal; Bakhurst and like-minded thinkers are, unlike the London line, not developers or promoters of a new academic discipline. My aim is simply to draw attention to a clear and interesting parallel between what progenitors of analytic philosophy of education did in the heyday of the discipline and what Bakhurst and others have recently been trying to do, bringing out not just that the analytic discipline is neither moribund nor already dead but that it keeps evolving in ways that would enrich philosophy of education discourse.

The following sections provide a lens through which the *evolution* – as opposed to two separate programmes in separate periods – can be recognised. In Section II, I lay out

a historical account of the way in which (British) analytic philosophy of education took distinct shape in the 1960s and developed subsequently as a new academic discipline. As reliable commentators (e.g. Cuypers 2018) as well as some founders themselves (e.g. Hirst 1993) admit, analytic philosophy of education at that time had a rather ‘rationalist’ ring. (Those already well acquainted with the contours of the analytic paradigm may wish to skip to Section III.) In Section III, I describe why this paper omits (i) the North-American tradition of analytic philosophy of education (represented by Scheffler and Harvey Siegel, for instance) and (ii) a considerable body of work by analytic philosophers of education in the intervening period (roughly from 1980 to 2010), in favour of the remarkable similarities that contemporary analytic philosophy of education bears to early analytic philosophy of education. The account is intended to indicate that the two strands can be seen to work with so broad a conception of reason – broader than is standardly interpreted – that it informs and even permeates human life. In Section IV, after elaborating on John McDowell’s philosophical view of transformation from human animals to rational agents, a view that may not be identical with but is closely analogous to Peters’s conception of ‘education as initiation’, I look to Bakhurst’s philosophical-educational exploitation of McDowell’s transformational view. In Section V, I seek to clear the ground for fascinating future investigations into how the early and contemporary versions of analytic philosophy of education feed into each other, appreciating the centrality of education (in the broadest sense) for the human condition and thus for the human life-form. I conclude with some remarks on the distinctive character of the philosophical-educational exploration adumbrated in the preceding sections, with one caveat that calling such an exploration ‘analytic philosophy of education’ might be a misnomer – ‘philosophical anthropology’ being a better candidate.

## **II. The London Line and Analytic Philosophy of Education in its Heyday**

British philosophy of education, also known as analytic philosophy of education, is roughly sixty years old. As the sobriquet indicates, it has its explicit origin in analytic philosophy, which appeared on the scene through what Gilbert Ryle and others called a ‘revolution in philosophy’ (Ryle, et al. 1956) during the first half of the twentieth century and has since been prevalent in many Anglophone countries and their zone of influence. The founding figures of analytic philosophy of education, often called the ‘London line’,<sup>1</sup>

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1. In his final published work, Peters recalls a description by Bernard Williams of him and his fellow analytic

successfully applied the techniques developed in such a revolutionised philosophy, in particular the methodology of logical and conceptual analysis (of the sort the so-called ‘ordinary language philosophy’ had honed), to educational problems and practices or, perhaps more accurately, to educational *concepts*,<sup>2</sup> such as learning, teaching, training, creativity, autonomy, indoctrination and punishment. The analytic paradigm came into prominence, however, not only by virtue of its method or approach, but also of a family of *substantive* conceptions of education – education understood as a distinctive epistemic and moral enterprise concerned with the promotion of mind, knowledge, understanding and rationality (Martin 2021: 98). The general climate of the analytic philosophy of education in its heyday is well epitomised by the title of the compilation edited by the central members of the London line (i.e. Peters, Hirst and Robert Dearden): *Education and the Development of Reason* (2010/1972).

By the mid-1960s, analytic philosophy of education had taken clear shape and progressed as an autonomous academic discipline. In 1962, R. S. Peters, who was already an established analytic philosopher with one co-authored book, *Social Principles and the Democratic State* (1959, with S. I. Benn) and two monographs, *Hobbs* (1956) and *The Concept of Motivation* (1958)<sup>3</sup> as well as having been described by John White as ‘the founding father of British philosophy of education as practised in the second half of the twentieth century’ (White 2001: 118), was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London.<sup>4</sup> In 1964, Peters and P. H. Hirst, who, alongside Peters, played a major role in the establishment and development of the analytic philosophy of education, launched the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB), where Peters occupied the seat of Chairman from 1964 to 1975; Peters was also the editor of the society’s annual conference *Proceedings* and its successor the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* from 1966 to 1982. In 1966, Peters published his ground-breaking *chef d’oeuvre* in the philosophy of education, *Ethics and*

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philosophers of education as the ‘khaki regulars from Malet Street’ (Peters 1983: 36). The London line dominated the subject, at least during the decade of 1965–1975 (ibid.). The majority of philosophers of education during this period, who tried, along with Peters, to bring about a revolutionary break with the past styles of philosophy of education, were based in, or had intimate connections with, the Department of Philosophy of Education at the London Institute, which itself, under Peters’s influential leadership, expanded rapidly to become the largest in the world. In addition to Peters and Hirst, the London line included, among others, Robert Dearden, R. K. Elliot, David Cooper and John White (Cuypers and Martin 2013: 6).

2. Thanks to John White for this point.

3. In addition, Peters published *Authority, Responsibility and Education* (1959), whose first edition was based on his talks delivered mainly on the Home Service and Third Programme of the BBC between April 1956 and January 1959. Its revised edition (1973) incorporates his further work in the decade that followed, and it is this revised edition that was reprinted in 2015 by Routledge.

4. Peters was the second Chair of Philosophy of Education at the London Institute, preceded only by Louis Arnaud Reid, who took office in 1947 as the first Chair.

*Education* (Peters 1966a), whose influence can easily be perceived in the fact that that title has been adopted for the official journal of the International Network of Philosophers of Education (INPE).

In the ‘General editor’s preface’ to the first volume of the acclaimed book series *International Library of the Philosophy of Education*<sup>5</sup> starting in 1965, Peters, after describing the volume as ‘the first English collection of essays on philosophy of education written from the “analytic” point of view’, proclaimed: ‘Philosophy of education has now become firmly established in England as a branch both of *educational theory* and of *philosophy*’ (Peters 2010/1965: xi, italics added). It is of crucial importance here to understand how this newly established academic discipline diverged, conceptually and substantively, from the then extant types of philosophy of education: (i) ‘principles of education’, (ii) ‘the history of educational ideas’ and (iii) ‘philosophy and education’ (Peters 2010/1966b: 62–9; Peters 2010/1983: 30–2). Peters claimed that calling (i) ‘principles of education’ philosophy of education is tantamount to ‘[making] a takeover bid for the philosopher as a kind of oracle’ (Peters 2010/1983: 32). Principles of education consisted, at their best, in ‘wisdom and aphorisms about education’ (ibid., 31), and Peters and other analytic philosophers of education neither made little of their importance, nor were they sceptical about whether they have any place at all in educational research or in the training of teachers. Nonetheless, Peters averred, and others agreed, that ‘the philosopher, *qua* philosopher, cannot formulate such principles’ (Peters 2010/1966b: 63) on the grounds that they necessarily contain *empirical* elements. And empirical speculation, as found in A. N. Whitehead’s *The Aims of Education* (1967/1929) and Percy Nunn’s *Education: Its Data and First Principles* (2009/1920), is not a task for philosophers proper; philosophers are not oracles.

The analytic conception of philosophy of education differs also from (ii) ‘the history of educational ideas’ or ‘the Great Educator’s approach’ (Peters 2010/1983: 31). On the latter conception, students in most colleges of education were taken on ‘a Cook’s tour of thinkers’ typically from Plato (*Republic*) through J. J. Rousseau (*Emile*) to John Dewey (*Democracy and Education*), mainly by historians,<sup>6</sup> with the aim of relating great educators’ thought to current educational problems (Peters 1966b: 64; Peters 2010/1983: 31; Cuypers and Martin 2013: 9). Peters saw (at least some of) the ideas of the great

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5. *International Library of the Philosophy of Education* comprises 24 distinguished books and essay collections, published by Routledge & Kegan Paul. Volume 1 is Reginald Archambault’s edited *Philosophical Analysis and Education* (1965), and all 24 texts were reprinted in 2010 by Routledge.

6. This was not surprising, given the fact that while ‘philosophers were not, in general, interested in the study of education’, educational psychology and the history of education were ‘most fully developed within the orbit of teacher education itself in the first half of [the twentieth] century’ (Tibble 1966: viii).

thinkers of the past as ‘the heritage’ into which every teacher ought to be initiated at some stage of their career, but regarded such initiation as ‘supplementary to and not a substitute for the philosophy of education’ (Peters 2010/1966b: 65). This historical conception does not count, according to Peters, as philosophy of education due to two main flaws. For one thing, works treated in courses of this kind were ‘works in general theory of education’; thus, those works also have components other than philosophical ones, such as ‘empirical generalizations’ (ibid.). They were thereby ‘only minimally philosophical’ (Peters 2010/1983: 31). For another, those courses seldom bear fruit unless students are given some philosophical training, without which they will be unable to critically evaluate the ideas offered; ‘*Plato Today* has to be very skilfully contrived to be effective’ (ibid., italics in original). In effect, students with no such philosophical preparations, almost inevitably, found difficulties in grasping the relevance of classical ideas to the pressing issues with which they were confronted (ibid.).

Finally, the analytic style of philosophy of education must not be conflated with the conception of philosophy of education as (iii) ‘philosophy and education’. This third conception concerns itself with drawing out and examining the ‘implications’ of ‘pure philosophy’ for education (Peters 2010/1983: 30). There were, and are, basically two motives for this conception of philosophy of education. The first is sociological or institutional. Those working in colleges or departments of education were (and are) often eager to convince their ‘pure’ colleagues in the Faculties of Arts or Philosophy Departments, who were (and are) occasionally ‘supercilious critics’, that they are genuinely and competently doing philosophy. The second, more philosophical motive derives from the belief that ‘one cannot go very far without tackling fundamental issues in logic, epistemology, and metaphysics’ (Peters 2010/1966b: 67). This ‘applied approach’ (Cuypers and Martin 2013: 9) struck Peters as quite dubious, because, in his conception, philosophy of education must start from actual problems of *education*. So, while the first two conceptions of philosophy of education from which the analytic conception sought to mark itself off were concerned with ‘many matters that are not strictly philosophical’, the third conception was ‘not concerned specifically enough with what is *educational*’ (Peters 2010/1966b: 67, italics added). Not surprisingly, therefore, Peters thought more highly of John Dewey’s writings on education (though he found them insufficiently analytic) than of D. J. O’Connor’s *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1957), which is quintessentially analytic in style.

### III. Analytic Trajectories

Analytic philosophy of education was established and prospered in the 1960s and the early 1970s as a branch both of educational theory (like educational psychology and the sociology of education) and of academic philosophy (like the philosophy of science and political philosophy). For the founding figures, ‘analytic philosophy of education’ was a pleonasm, as it were, since they believed all philosophy of education worthy of the name was analytic.

According to the generally accepted account (at least, in Japan), the excitement and enthusiasm did not last long (e.g. Miyadera 1997; Carr 2005; White 2024). From the late 1970s onwards, the analytic paradigm was subjected to serious criticism from various quarters (e.g. existentialism, phenomenology, (neo-)Marxism, neo-Aristotelianism, critical theory, multiculturalism, postmodernism and poststructuralism). This diversification of philosophical traditions and intellectual resources that contemporary philosophers of education draw on characterises the philosophy of education in the post-analytic era; the place of the analytic approach, within the discipline, is now accordingly peripheral in a recognisable sense.

This account, while not entirely without foundation, is untenable. Analytic philosophy in no way faded from the philosophy of education scene around 1980 (in the U.K. or, more broadly, in Anglophone areas). On the contrary, much philosophy of education in the ensuing decades might well have been described as ‘footnotes to Peters’<sup>7</sup> in many respects, through to the end of the century and after. Many carved their own significant paths in the analytic tradition – e.g. Robin Barrow, Eric Bredo, Eamonn Callan, Emily Robertson, Hugh Sockett in North America and David Bridges, Andrew Davis, Penny Enslin, Richard Pring, Judith Suissa in the U.K., to name but a few.

But if the familiar account fails to carry conviction, would it not follow that my picture that places considerable emphasis on a close parallel between the London line and David Bakhurst also loses ground? Why not give closer consideration to the North American tradition of analytic philosophy of education? More specifically, why suppose, in relation to the London line’s conception of the development of reason, that Bakhurst’s *The Formation of Reason* has more to say about reason and rationality than Harvey Siegel’s *Educating Reason* and *Rationality Redeemed?* have to say about them?

Certainly, my description of post-Second World War English-language philosophy of education is severely partial, not least because it makes little or no mention of what

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7. I owe this phrase to Paul Standish.



happened on the western side of the Atlantic, which has clearly also served its own role as a vital and leading force in the Anglophone philosophy of education. Indeed, the U.S. also witnessed the analytic turn in philosophy of education around the 1960s, advocated and promoted most notably by the American counterpart to Peters, Israel Scheffler, who is perhaps better known than his British counterpart in the world of academic philosophy today.<sup>8</sup> Analytic developments in North America were undoubtedly and inarguably an essential and integral part of the development of analytic philosophy of education.

My aim is not to offer an exhaustive historical account, however. For my purposes, I opt to emphasise the analytic trajectories in the U.K. rather than giving both sides of the Atlantic equal billing. The primary reason for this is, apart from my personal commitment to British philosophy of education (as an outsider to both sides of the Atlantic), that there does seem to have been a North American tendency to address the issues of reason and human rationality in the light of *critical thinking*. The work of Harvey Siegel, a powerful successor to Scheffler, at least in terms of his analytic spirit, exemplifies this tendency. Few would, of course, deny the importance of fostering one's reasoning ability in schools or elsewhere. The ability to reason well (or better), or to think critically (or more critically), is necessary for a flourishing life. Yet the ability is often (naturally enough) associated with the ability to *step back* from situations with which one is (unreflectively) engaged. Whether the scope of reason extends beyond the ability to step back into our unreflective perceiving and acting is an issue as yet unresolved but one that needs to be addressed if we want to make sense of the character of reason and rationality and of the place they occupy in education and in human life more generally. And the question requires attention to the capacity to reason at all, including but not exclusive to the ability to step back, and this in turn necessitates attention to the nature of human beings as such, which at least some of the London line set themselves the task of considering. Largely for this reason, while fully aware that it is possible to cast, in a different context, Siegel's seminal works, such as *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking and Education* (1988) and *Rationality Redeemed?: Further Dialogues on an Educational Ideal* (1997), as sequels to the London line's *Education and the Development of Reason* (2010/1972) and as precursors of Bakhurst's *The Formation of Reason* (2011), I highlight the likenesses and

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8. Like the London line, Scheffler thought of philosophy of education as a discipline, whose methods, insights and outlooks should derive from analytic philosophy. Scheffler's inclination is well represented in, for example, his 'Toward an Analytic Philosophy of Education' (1954), *The Language of Education* (1960) and *Conditions of Knowledge: An Introduction to Epistemology and Education* (1965). The clear parallel between Scheffler and the London line was not a strange coincidence; they fed each other. For instance, Peters took advantage of Scheffler's invitation to Harvard and spent some time there as a Visiting Professor in 1961 (White 2001: 119; Cuyppers and Martin 2013: 6).

differences between the latter two.<sup>9</sup>

The two versions of analytic philosophy of education – one led by the London line and the other reanimated by Bakhurst and others – have much in common, especially in terms of their endeavour to develop accounts of human beings as rational animals. They share the conviction that we cannot understand how (best) to educate our children if we do not take due account of the human condition. And yet, Peters, reflecting back on the two decades after the establishment of analytic philosophy of education, deplored the lack of ‘an explicit theory of *human nature*’ (Peters 2010/1983: 33, italics added). In those days, philosophers of education were enamoured with analysing such concepts as ‘reason’, ‘autonomy’, ‘needs’, ‘interests’ and ‘learning’, but Peters was adamant that ‘they drifted on the surface with no general account of man [*sic*] and his place in the natural world and social order to anchor them’ (ibid.). This is what many contemporary analytic philosophers of education are centrally concerned with, as far as I can see. One of the major issues addressed in such a new analytic philosophy of education is the question of what it is to be *distinctively human*.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the reinvigorated analytic philosophy of education attempts to provide a fuller account of not just reason but of human nature – the latter of which Peters diagnosed as remaining largely and problematically unexplored in the analytic philosophy of education of his time.

Despite Peters’s diagnosis, however, I do not think it is the case that the issue of human nature was totally ignored for the first twenty years in the history of analytic philosophy of education. The work by the London line – in particular, Peters himself – did yield insights about human nature and the human condition. And yet it is the case that they are often only implicit and lurk in the discussions that focus on other issues, such as reason, mind and initiation. Hence, revisiting this and other neglected aspects of the ‘old’ analytic philosophy of education, with twenty-first-century eyes, deserves to be promoted and deepened. No substantial treatment has yet been offered of their affinities and tensions and of the transition between early and more recent strands of analytic philosophy of education. To embark on such a project, it is advisable to situate the line of argument advocated by the ‘new’ analytic philosophy of education *vis-à-vis* that provided by the London line. The next section is an initial effort for that.

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9. I hasten to add, though, that attempts to draw a sharp line between British and American lines of development in philosophy of education are practically useless, especially in recent times. It is also noteworthy here that the agenda of research on critical thinking continues to expand, too. For a succinct account of recent scholarship in critical thinking, see Kunimasa Sato’s contribution to Misawa, Tsuchiya and Sato (forthcoming).

10. The title of Jan Derry’s recent article, ‘A Problem for Cognitive Load Theory—the Distinctively Human Life-form’ (Derry 2020), exemplifies this present-day trend.

#### IV. The McDowellian Preliminary to the Resurgence of Analytic Philosophy of Education

In an oft-cited passage of *Mind and World*, John McDowell claims: ‘Human beings are not [born at home in the space of reasons]: they are born mere animals, and they are *transformed* into thinkers and intentional agents in the course of coming to maturity’ (McDowell 1996: 125, italics added).<sup>11</sup> There immediately arises a familiar temptation to dismiss this claim as being ignorant or uninformed of the achievements of, say, the biological and ecological sciences (e.g. MacIntyre 1999: 60–1). There is indeed no shortage of empirical studies that seem to show that newborn human babies and at least some of the ‘mere animals’ exercise or are guided by a kind of practical reasoning – reasoning about what to do – implying that it is hubristic and anachronistically anthropocentric to suppose that rationality is the sole preserve of mature human beings.

Such an implication is ostensible, however; McDowell’s claim does not necessarily conflict with the best discoveries of today’s natural-scientific investigations. His point is that a human animal with no *second nature* becomes a human individual who is capable of responding to *reasons* with a distinctive mode of rational-conceptual intelligibility that is open to the world. It is ‘*initiation* into conceptual capacities’ (McDowell 1996: 84, italics added) that makes us inhabitants of what Wilfrid Sellars calls ‘the logical space of reasons’ (Sellars 1997/1956: 76), where its denizens are rational, not just in the sense that they can, like non-human animals, flee from danger, but also in the sense that they are, unlike non-human animals, responsive to reasons as such. McDowell claims that we need not be spooked by this transformation, for which he evokes the German idea, *Bildung* (ibid.). There is no mystery in the story, he urges, because such initiation is a normal part of human maturation as long as we are first initiated, except in very special conditions or circumstances, into a natural *language*. McDowell writes:

In being initiated into a language, a human being is introduced into something that already embodies putatively rational linkages between concepts, putatively constitutive of the layout of the space of reasons, before she comes on the scene. ... [A] natural language, the sort of language into which human beings are first initiated, serves as a repository of tradition, a store of historically accumulated wisdom about what is a reason for what. The tradition is subject to reflective modification by each generation that inherits it. (McDowell 1996: 125–6)

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11. Compare Peters’s ‘No man is born with a mind’ (Peters 1965/1964: 102).

Through this initiation into the space of reasons, an individual human being acquires a *mind* – i.e. the capacity to think and act intentionally at all, the capacity that enables her to live her life in the world (ibid.). McDowell’s line of argument is strikingly analogous to what Peters insists in ‘Education as Initiation’: ‘To have a mind is not to enjoy a private picture-show or to exercise some inner diaphanous organ; it is to have an awareness differentiated in accordance with the canons implicit in all these inherited traditions [constituted by distinctive forms of knowledge such as science, history, mathematics, religious and aesthetic appreciation as well as the practical types of knowledge involved in moral, prudential, and technical forms of thought and action]. “Education” marks out the processes by means of which the individual is initiated into them’ (Peters 1965/1964: 103).

The picture of initiation into the logical space of reasons is key to apprehending the way in which McDowell painstakingly denies the prevailing view, which he calls ‘modern naturalism’ (e.g. McDowell 1996: 85), the view that our being natural animals is profoundly at odds with the distinctive character of our mindedness, namely with the *sui generis* character of our responsiveness to reasons as such. The seeming oddity and the threat of incoherence disappear once we acknowledge that such initiation equips us to acquire rational powers by means of which we can live a certain kind of life – a distinctively human life. Human life is our natural way of being, which is ‘already shaped by meaning’ (McDowell 1996: 95), but this ‘natural’ cannot be exhausted by the *modern* conception of nature that tends, as in the natural sciences, to suppose ‘whatever is natural is as such empty of meaning’ (McDowell 2000: 107). McDowell’s corrective to this excessive domination of the modern conception of nature is to bring into view the simple ‘reminder’ that ‘our nature is largely second nature’ (McDowell 1996: 91) since ‘responsiveness to reasons is second nature to human beings’ (McDowell 2008: 225). With the notion of second nature in mind, he seeks to accomplish the overarching project of *Mind and World* and many other writings: ‘We need to recapture the Aristotelian idea that a normal mature human being is a rational animal, but without losing the Kantian idea that rationality operates freely in its own sphere’ (McDowell 1996: 85).

Obviously, the notion that human animals are transformed into thinkers and intentional agents through initiation into conceptual capacities that enable us to become able to be at home in the logical space of reasons – i.e. to live our lives in the world – has developmental and *educational* aspects and implications. McDowell is notoriously silent, nonetheless, about such dimensions (except his frequent reference to Aristotle’s story of moral education, in which, McDowell thinks, the idea of second nature finds expression). It does not mean, of course, that McDowell fails to countenance the importance of

*Bildung* in human life; it is rather that talk of *Bildung* in detail does not fall within the sphere of philosophical enquiry as he conceives it.

Greatly inspired by McDowell's line of argument, David Bakhurst, a former student of McDowell's at Oxford, brings illuminating the *Bildungsprozess* into focus as a genuine philosophical exploration. Extending and complementing McDowell's picture, his programme culminates in *The Formation of Reason* (2011). As he admits, Bakhurst originally did not set out to write a book in philosophy of education, but, through the influence of Jan Derry and others, the book came out as part of *The Journal of Philosophy Education Book Series*.<sup>12</sup> In that widely read book, he develops a socio-historical account of the human mind primarily by defending and expanding McDowell's philosophy, along with the work of thinkers on which he has extensively written, such as that of Lev Vygotsky, Evald Ilyenkov and Jerome Bruner. The broad thrust of Bakhurst's argument is that the distinctive character of human mindedness resides in our responsiveness to reasons, which is not an inborn ability but one that we normally acquire as a child through initiation, typically via the acquisition of our first language, into styles of thinking and reasoning by virtue of which we can navigate the relevant normative landscape. In the process, human children become minded beings, that is, rational agents who self-consciously appreciate reasons about what to think and do. Thus, one of the most significant educational ends is the cultivation of *autonomy*, the power to determine for oneself what to think and do in light of what there is reason to think and do. In this way, the philosophy of McDowell in general and what Bakhurst terms McDowell's "transformational view" of human development' (Bakhurst 2015: 302) in particular have been successfully brought to the attention of philosophers of education, leading to the symposium 'Second Nature, *Bildung* and McDowell: David Bakhurst's *The Formation of Reason*', which appeared in the first issue of the 50th anniversary volume of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* in 2016.<sup>13</sup>

## V. The Centrality of Education in Human Life: The Bakhurstian Orientation

I was – and, in fact, still am – enamoured of Bakhurst's philosophical accounts (with

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12. Bakhurst, who was not originally trained as a philosopher of education (in colleges or departments of education), has taken over as Executive Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* since 2021.

13. For a good overview of the current state of the debate about the transformational view, see C. J. An (2018, esp. sections 1–3); I have also discussed each symposium contribution in Misawa (2017).

relevant empirical insights) of the process of initiation, and thought – and still think – that they have a vital bearing on the way we think about education in human life. I therefore thought *The Formation of Reason* and his subsequent writings broke new ground in philosophy of education (especially in its analytic tradition). It is not that I was unaware of Peters's well-known conception of 'education as initiation' and that that conception had been honed and amplified by the London line and subsequent generations. It is rather that I held 'initiation' in the educationally relevant context applies to two different levels and that the London line's conception is concerned, as Hirst's famous 'forms of knowledge' thesis exemplifies,<sup>14</sup> with the *later* stage of initiation – i.e. initiation into particular knowledge domains (e.g. physics). For this stage of initiation to come about, someone who will be initiated into or participate in a particular domain of knowledge needs to have a mind at all, even if she has no knowledge or skill in the domain in question prior to the initiation or participation. Bakhurst's McDowellian conception of initiation, in contrast, focuses attention on the *earlier* stage – i.e. the very beginning of human life, a special kind of life being transformed from a merely animal mode of living. I therefore took the view that whereas the London line's conception still afforded a framework capable of examining and improving the way we consider schooling, it said little about the issue of our fundamental condition as rational beings, which Bakhurst's conception directly addressed. In effect, their difference in emphasis seemed to be vividly reflected in the titles of their representative works: the London line's edited *Education and the Development of Reason* (2010/1972) and Bakhurst's *The Formation of Reason* (2011).<sup>15</sup> The analytic philosophy of education as the London line established and advanced it would be rejuvenated, I thought, if it incorporated the new wave of philosophical-educational interest in the human condition, human nature and the human life-form, the wave that had almost brought about a sea change in (analytic) philosophy of education by Bakhurst and like-minded philosophers (of education).

I now find the view I took – that the publication of *The Formation of Reason* inaugurated a new era in philosophy of education – rather premature and perhaps tendentious. It is true that central members of the London line were eager to engage with the *development* of reason and Bakhurst is keen, as the 2011 book title shows, to elucidate the *formation* of reason. The former members – notably Peters – did, however, give a substantial treatment of the formative period of human development without necessarily

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14. For more on Hirst's forms of knowledge thesis and his later turn of focus from forms of knowledge to forms of social practices, see Misawa and Watanabe (2023) and Misawa (2023).

15. Perhaps, the two apparently different levels (of initiation into the realm of reason) can be seen to be implicit in the block quote from McDowell and the quote from Peters that follows in the previous section.

presupposing children's capacity to exercise rationality; Bakhurst has, from the 2010s onwards, taken further steps towards enriching the development of reasons. There emerges the question, then, of the extent to which, and the sense in which, the London line (especially Peters) and Bakhurst share a similar view on such fundamental elements necessary in contemplating education as mind, reason, initiation, experience, personhood, freedom, knowledge, understanding, rational autonomy, human development and liberal education. Further questions would be whether and how ideas and conceptions, especially concerning reason and human nature, developed in the twenty-first-century analytic philosophy of education, are really anything more than an echo of the insights of the traditional analytic philosophy of education; and whether and how the London line might, if we look back from the twenty-first century, have actually gone beyond what has generally been found in their work.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to pursue these issues in detail, but I want to take note, before closing, of Bakhurst's recent slight modification of his McDowellian 'transformational view' of human development.

Neo-Aristotelian ethical naturalism features the concept of human nature. As Irene Liu notes, however, neo-Aristotelians have focused more on advancing 'a satisfactory naturalism of *first nature*' than on fully developing the naturalism of *second nature* (Liu 2017: 598, fn. 5, italics added). Rosalind Hursthouse, a leading proponent of that ethical naturalism, provides a vivid gloss on the basic Aristotelian idea that is supposed to lend credence to the naturalism of *first nature*: 'what human beings *are* is a species of rational, social animals and thereby a species of living things—which, unlike "persons" or "rational beings", have a particular biological make-up and a natural life cycle' (Hursthouse 1999: 206, italics in original, note deleted). Hence comes the central concept of the naturalism of first nature: 'species nature' or 'life form' (Liu 2017: 600). This line of thinking readily invites us to see the findings of natural-scientific investigations as constituting the primary part (if not the whole) of our understanding of the human condition.

Bakhurst's main project is roughly the following: he seeks to substantiate the classical view that humans are rational animals, in a way which basically agrees with a McDowellian naturalism of second nature, but whose key focus is on a *sine qua non* for a fuller realisation of the nature of the beings we are that has largely escaped the attention of McDowell and his followers: the *educational* character of the human condition. Bakhurst once liked to call this line of argument McDowell's "'transformational view" of human development', as we have seen. This view is, of course, not without its critics; for instance, Sebastian Rödl and Andrea Kern recommend conceiving of the process as

an actualisation (of potentials) rather than a transformation (e.g. Rödl 2016; Kern 2020). This is a matter of debate in contemporary philosophy of education, in the course of which Bakhurst has made some concession to the actualisation view according to which we have a single nature—i.e. human nature (e.g. Bakhurst 2016, 2020, 2021). What matters here is not to pursue and analyse the relevant arguments (with which I will engage on another occasion) but to recognise the basic thrust of his argument: the centrality of education to human nature or our life-form (Bakhurst 2021, 2023).

Many current discussions around, say, human nature, practical rationality and the formation of reason are moving on in step with recent developments in the broadly analytic tradition of philosophy (whether in a neo-Aristotelian fashion or not). In other words, new conversations between philosophers of education and ‘mainstream’ philosophers interested in education (broadly conceived) have now re-started, where education is no longer almost exclusively associated with ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ in schools but is taken (by many, though not most, philosophers) as central and critical to the human condition.

Such new conversations have now ‘re-started’ because there was a period in which the disciplinary and institutional barriers between philosophy of education and general philosophy were far less stringent than was the case during the intervening period. The period was, of course, the 1960s and early 1970s when British philosophy of education – i.e. analytic philosophy of education – was born and advanced. The London line may not be Bakhurst’s direct intellectual ancestors, but they are, no doubt, intellectual relatives in various respects.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

It is absurd to try to turn the clock back to the heyday of analytic philosophy of education – the 1960s and early 1970s. No room is left for nostalgia for the better times, economically and institutionally, that enabled its ‘heyday’. And a diverse range of philosophical traditions and intellectual resources that characterise contemporary philosophy of education may well be a sign of the health of the discipline rather than a source of misery. A sharp distinction should be drawn, however, between the fact that Anglophone philosophy of education today is no longer equivalent to the *analytic* philosophy of education and the capricious observation that it has (long) run out of steam.

In this paper, I have tried to build a case for bringing into view striking points of affinity between the work by the London line and the McDowell-derived Bakhurstian



line of philosophical-educational exploration. My attempt must not be taken as glorifying the resemblances with a halo, since such a glorification and/or a simplification might give the reader the wrong impression that during the intervening period between the two in question there did not emerge much work that seeks to answer the need for a theory of human nature, as Peters had put it. As alluded to in the third section, many analytic philosophers of education have attempted to broaden the focus of reason and human nature, even if their works frequently have not advertised themselves in those terms. But the resemblances between early and contemporary analytic philosophy of education scarcely need repeating, most vividly with respect to the formation and development of human reason and to the conceptuality that permeates human life.

Analytic philosophy of education is now a somewhat forgotten tradition of enquiry in Japan, or so it often appears. I hope I have made it explicit that this indifference constitutes a massive loss for the philosophical study of education, by demonstrating that the underlying rumour that the analytic discipline is obsolescent is not true. The advent of the recent ‘resurrection’ can stimulate renewed interest in the earlier ‘incarnation’. With today’s philosophical-educational perspective, for instance, one can read the work of Peters as concerning himself with not only later stages but also the most formative years of human development (e.g. Peters 2015/1981); hence, the familiar accusation that Peters’s concept of education is much too narrow (e.g. Martin 2011, 2020) is unwarranted. The relationship between the London line and Bakhurst (and scholars broadly aligned with him) goes the other way also. Just as the work by the latter can rekindle interest in the work by the former (with twenty-first-century eyes), so the latter work can and ought to be situated more thoroughly in the context of the history of analytic philosophy of education. This is so that we can gauge the extent to which contemporary analytic philosophy of education has moved the way forward and, *pari passu*, acknowledge the sense in which it sheds new light on the educationally fundamental issues previously discussed by classical analytic philosophers of education, such as mind, reason, nature, normativity, personhood, freedom, knowledge, understanding, rational autonomy and liberal education. (Remember that in the Introduction I wrote that analytic philosophy of education keeps *evolving*, which does not imply that newer stages are better than earlier ones.)

As the London line guards against the ‘philosophy and education’ approach (as described in the second section), the Bakhurstian line of philosophical-educational exploration is also *not* one that seeks to glean educational implications and lessons from (purely) philosophical discussions of reason, human nature and other profound issues. Rather, it is an exploration that contends that educational questions are inherent and (at

least sometimes) fundamental to these philosophical discussions. In other words, the exploration is premised on the assumption that it is utterly wrong to think that ‘What is it to be a human being?’ is a question addressed (purely philosophically) in ‘mainstream’ philosophy, whereas ‘What is it to become a human being?’ is a question addressed (more educationally) in the philosophy of education—the latter being regarded as an applied sub-branch of the former. The question of what it is to be a human being cannot adequately be approached in isolation: it entails first and foremost, or, perhaps more accurately, presupposes, the other question. The cogency of the assumption that the question of the nature of the beings that we are is a single, philosophical-educational question will become more apparent in further investigations.

One final point worthy of attention: it might not be necessary to make so much of the ‘analytic’ identity in advancing and amplifying the philosophical-educational exploration just outlined. Given that both McDowell and Bakhurst are not exactly typical analytic philosophers in that their works do not confine themselves to the narrow sense of the discipline, and that they are widely read beyond it and often hailed as bridging the analytic-continental divide or moving beyond those terms, it might well seem somewhat odd that I depict their works as being celebrated for their contributions to a revival of ‘analytic’ philosophy of education. Understood in the way I have been delineating, ‘philosophical anthropology’, as Bakhurst puts it (e.g. Bakhurst 2020, 2021), might be a better label for such philosophical human studies, although I have used the expression ‘contemporary analytic philosophy of education’ or its cognates for ease of discussion. Whatever the label, the philosophical-educational exploration as we see it will, no doubt, make a fresh contribution, together with renewed focus on the works by early analytic philosophy of education, to addressing perhaps the most difficult question throughout the entire history of the human race: what is the nature of the beings we are?

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## Summary Report on the Thematic Research

Yasuo IMAI

*The University of Tokyo (Prof. em.)*

Masamichi UENO

*Sophia University*

On October 8, 2023, the 66th annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan was held at Kyushu University. At the event, a Thematic Research titled "How to Envision 'Education': Based on the Publication of *Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education*" was conducted. The concept statement for the theme of this project was as follows.

*Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education*, whose project was initiated in 2019, was published by Maruzen Publishing in July of this year with the collaboration of many members of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan. This encyclopedia represents the first attempt by the society to create a specialized encyclopedia and covers over 300 items across three parts and fifteen chapters, presenting the forefront of contemporary educational philosophy research. The preface, titled "On the Publication," contains the following passage:

Education, whether it is interpersonal educational activities or public educational policies, involves influencing others who may not necessarily follow our intentions. Furthermore, the success of these influences is determined not in the present but in an uncertain future that cannot be predicted with certainty. This uncertainty in education cannot be eliminated even through empirical scientific research. Regardless of how meticulously one designs empirical investigations and demonstrates causal relationships, the very premises of those causal relationships may be unexpectedly overturned by unforeseen others or may change over time. Philosophy underpinning education needs to overcome this uncertainty that arises in both the social and temporal dimensions. This does not mean denying or excluding uncertainty but rather having the capacity to encompass it. Multiple

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**Correspondence:**

Yasuo IMAI, The University of Tokyo (Prof. em.). Email: imaiyapa@gmail.com

Masamichi UENO, Sophia University. Email: maueno@sophia.ac.jp

perspectives on an unpredictable future, a broad consideration of unintended consequences, flexible and robust value consciousness to support decision-making, and a historical perspective that looks from the past to the future are all required. Therefore, philosophy of education needs to have the depth and endurance that go beyond individual experiences and empirical data limitations. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education* aims to provide a solid foundation for this purpose.

As mentioned, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education* as a whole strongly emphasizes the standpoint of "education." However, considering the current state of educational discourse in our country, there is a noticeable trend towards "Individualized Optimal Learning" and "collaborative learning," with recent discussions on the potential of "learner and learning environment matching" using "educational AI tools" (as articulated in the 2018 Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology's statement on "Human Resource Development for Society 5.0"). This trend is evident, echoing what Gert Biesta terms "the 'learnification' of education," where "the language of education is increasingly replaced by language that is specific to learning." In light of these developments, how can we academically conceptualize "education" from the standpoint of educational philosophy? Or should we perhaps contemplate its impossibility?

In this year's research project, we aim to deepen the discussion around the question of "How to envision 'education,'" as outlined above. To do this, we have invited three members to present their views. These members include Satoshi Tanaka, who played a central role in selecting entries for the encyclopedia as the editorial coordinator, Mika Okabe, who was involved in the editorial work of the encyclopedia as an editorial board member, and Koichiro Misawa, who can offer critical perspectives from a position of relative detachment from the editorial process. It is important to note that we have requested each presenter to provide insights and perspectives that directly address the aforementioned question, rather than merely reflecting on the editorial process and its outcomes. The three presentations will differ significantly in terms of their foundational perspectives and the prospects they offer. It is in the coexistence of such diverse perspectives and outlooks that the significance of this academic society lies. By interweaving diverse and alternative viewpoints, we hope to create a forum that allows us, as the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan, to fundamentally question "education."



# Touch and Force: On the Ambivalence of Touching as a Possible Theme in the Philosophy of Education

Jun YAMANA

*The University of Tokyo*

## Abstract

The impacts of COVID19 have led to major changes in the social lives of people on a global scale in the years since 2020. This has provided an opportunity to rethink the fundamental issues of various social activities. Education is one such activity. During the pandemic, human contact was severely restricted to prevent infection. Education has traditionally been seen as inherently based on the premise of “touching,” both literally and figuratively. One of the questions that arose in the era of “social distancing” was what touching means for education. In this essay, I draw on the theories of asylum and the sacred to focus on the view that touching has an ambivalence that gives rise to both the power to protect and the power to exclude. According to such a view, the pandemic may have endangered the protected status of individuals and at the same time made it possible for us to distance ourselves from the forces of exclusion. This essay explores the implications of such a hypothesis for the field of education.

**Key words:** force, touching, asylum, power, violence, human transformation

## The Emerging Issue of “Touching”

What would happen if the element of “touch” were removed from human lives? Due to the outbreak of COVID19, we have inevitably become involved in such an “experiment” on a global scale. Avoidance of direct touching has been universally recommended, and “social distancing” has become the catchphrase of our time. This so-called ‘new lifestyle’<sup>1</sup> has impacted all cultural spheres, including that of education.

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<sup>1</sup> The “new lifestyle” is an action guideline published by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus infection. In layman's terms, it refers to a lifestyle that incorporates measures

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## Correspondence:

Jun YAMANA, The University of Tokyo. Email: jyamana6s@p.u-tokyo.ac.jp

In its 122nd number (November 2020), the editorial board of *Studies in the Philosophy of Education* (『教育哲学研究』), in the *Journal of the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan* (PESJ), announced a special issue on “*Fururu* (Touch) and the Philosophy of Education”, and called for submissions (SPE 2020: 119). In the end, a total of nine essays were published in a special issue, the 124<sup>th</sup> number of the journal,<sup>2</sup> indicating the importance of this theme for contemporary educational philosophers.

As the Editor-in-Chief at that time, I was responsible for this initiative. In soliciting papers for the special issue, the editorial committee envisioned several specific topics; for example, attachment and physical contact, the significance of touching in schooling, the possibility of education being paradoxically enhanced by non-touching situations, and the problem of the binary thinking that makes a hard distinction between “online” and “offline” (i.e., in-person) contact. As it turned out, however, the contributed articles dealt with a wider variety of topics, and considered the relation between a broader range of philosophical perspectives on “touching”, than the editorial board had expected. In my own case, the keyword “touching” prompted consideration of the relationship between touch and force. The philosophy of “touch” turns out to be dizzyingly complex; and in this brief paper, I will explore the reasons for this complexity.

## Power and Asylum for Protection through Touching

The relationship between touching and power is also of profound significance to education, especially through its connection to the element of protection in the concept of asylum. The term “asylum” (*Asyl* in German, *asile* in French) derives from the Greek *asylos*, meaning “inviolable,” which in turn suggests “shelter” or “refuge.” The monograph *Formen des Asylrechts und ihre Verbreitung bei den Germanen* (*Forms of the Right of Asylum and Their Connection with the Germanic Peoples*) (1954), by Ortwin Henssler (1923- 2017), which focuses on the history of legal systems, describes the evolution of asylum law.<sup>3</sup> The theoretical potential of his thought has been more appreciated, accepted, and developed in Japan, mainly in the context of historiography, than in his native Germany (see Yamana 2021 for an overview of the process of acceptance of his theory).

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against novel coronavirus infection in daily life.

<sup>2</sup> The call for papers for the special issue is in Japanese; however, the special issue includes a table of contents and abstracts of the essays in English at its end (SPE 124 2021: 276-284 and back cover of the journal).

<sup>3</sup> The following summary of Henssler’s asylum theory is based on my previous paper (Yamana 2021).

Henssler's account of the essential logic of asylum is the most important feature of the monograph for our purposes. In his view, in the primitive "sacred-magical stage," the "constant crisis of survival" (Henssler 1954: 23) - the human struggle with other humans, animals, nature, and even ghosts - is a prerequisite for the emergence of place of asylum. Such a critical state triggers the fundamental emotions of "fear and anxiety" (*ibid* 14) and "the search for a protective principle" (*ibid* 15). One becomes an object of magical awe when he or she is in *touch* with an "orenda" (sacred power).<sup>4</sup> Thus, "in order not to disturb the harmony with the transcendent, the community must refrain from any further action against such an orendized person, at least as long as the orendization continues" (*ibid* 18 f.). This is the source of the power to create a space and time of protection.

In Henssler's view, the thesis that the sacred touch exerts a protective effect is itself a finding of religious anthropology; the importance of Henssler's approach lies in his historical and systematic thesis regarding the evolution of asylum culture from the religious phase to the phase of secularization and modernization. On the basis of his analysis of the example of asylum law, he proposes a historical-stage theory of asylum, arguing that asylum culture is still present, in an evolved form.

In Japan, Henssler's theory of asylum attracted especial attention from the late 1970s to the 1990s. The Japanese historian Kinya Abe (1979), for example, examined Henssler's theory more closely from a historical perspective, and discussed the German medieval culture of asylum; while another Japanese historian, Yoshihiko Amino (1978), using Henssler's thesis as a theoretical foundation, argued that asylum culture also existed in Japan. He notes that Japanese temples were referred to as *muen-jo* (無縁所), places where one can be in touch with the gods; and at the same time, spaces severed from the domain of secular power, which may thus also serve as places of escape. Amino notes that, in Japan, the "unattached culture (無縁文化)" symbolized by temples "has taken extremely diverse forms and permeates every area of people's lives in minute detail" (Amino 1978: 255).

Inspired by Abe's and Amino's studies, sociology and other fields in Japan have also discussed asylum culture in the modern era, but the theory of asylum has never been fully accepted in the field of educational sciences, including the philosophy of education. However, given the fundamental vulnerability of children and their need for

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<sup>4</sup> Henssler calls the sacred power, "orendism," recalling the Iroquois belief in the existence of strong, tangible and intangible forces and spirits (Henssler 1954: 16).

protection, the possibility of asylum being created through touching offers a suggestive locus for discussion of protective space for children.<sup>5</sup>

## Forced Exclusion through Touching

It is a curious fact of cultural history that the sacred touch can also be a source of impurity, and thus an occasion for prompting forced exclusion. French thinkers such as Georges Bataille and Roger Caillois drew attention to this point, which Henssler rarely emphasized. They talked about the issue philosophically. Caillois, for example, writes in his book, *L'homme et le sacré (Man and the Sacred)* (1939), “Even in the most advanced civilizations, a certain word very often means both ‘impurity’ and ‘holiness’. The Greek word *asylos* also means ‘impurity’ and ‘the sacrifice to remove it’ (Caillois 1994: 47). The exclusion from the community of a person who has come in touch with the overwhelming force of the sacred, and the protection of that person, are here regarded as inseparable. As aforementioned, the Greek word *asylos*, which means purifying sacrifice as well as impurity, is also the root of the word “asylum”.

Caillois draws attention to those, such as the clergy, who can transform impurity into “blessing,” exercising a cleansing force (*ibid* 62). The modern state system has sought to expunge the force of the sacred, with its mixture of the pure and the impure, and has questioned, even to the point of undermining, the authority of religion. Returning to Henssler's argument, focusing on legal history, he advances the thesis that the area of asylum generated by the sacred has shrunk in the modern era. “The state, he writes, monopolizes all coercive power and law” (Henssler 1954: 37), and “increasing differentiation of the individual areas of life takes place.” The events of life, once governed by religion, are subjugated to a more rational order in modern times, and the asylum laws become not only “superfluous, but hostile to the legal system” (*ibid* 37). This is because, in the increasingly complex legal system, “asylum granted nevertheless brings uncertainty and arbitrariness into the organizing principle of law” (*ibid* 37). In this era, “the right of asylum loses its function and sinks to form without content” (*ibid* 38).

Nonetheless, every culture needs a time and space of protection - both from the

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<sup>5</sup> The pedagogical objects of consideration as potential spaces of asylum could be established in a variety of ways. As examples, we may think of the “child-centered” spaces in the new education movement at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the institutions that rescue children from abuse or bullying in the modern era. Alternatively, schools themselves can be interpreted as a kind of asylum for children. See Yamana 2015 and 2021 for discussion of education and space from the viewpoint of asylum theory.

standpoint of vulnerable individuals and from the communal standpoint for the maintenance of collective order. Nowadays, the clergy and religious organizations generating asylum have largely been replaced by modern institutions such as nation states. The mixed energies of protective and exclusionary forces are divided into two types. One is the power that governs the community, and the other is the violence that threatens the “security” of the community. However, the power of modern institutions, which are supposed to provide protection, can itself be violent, stigmatizing as “heretics” those who threaten the institutions, and marginalizing or excluding them from the community. Walter Benjamin's essay, *Zur Kiritik der Gewalt* (1920/21), emphasizes this point. *Gewalt* is a German concept that can originally mean both “power” and “violence” (Waldenfels 1990). The young Benjamin argues for a distinction between power through human institutions (“*die mytische Gewalt*”) and power beyond them (“*die göttliche Gewalt*”); and attempts to justify revolutions by placing them in the latter category. The creaking of the modern system, dividing inherently ambivalent forces into two, seems to be alluded to his theory. What is power? What is violence? The answer ultimately depends on the standpoint of the individual who experiences the force.

I might summarize the essential lineaments of my approach here in the following manner. According to the asylum theory, the force generated by the sacred touch can create a space-time of protection. However, that same force can also evoke the violence of exclusion, based on the notion of sacrificial purification. The modern system tries to avoid such complications and ambiguities inherent in such force. However, the system is itself caught up in the ambiguity of the force in other ways. How, then, can we best approach the question of human transformation and education with respect to the relationship between touch and force outlined above?

## Dealing with Force and Human Transformation

Japanese researchers on asylums often allude to a prototypical children's game called *engacho*, based on an old folk custom, a form of play that is unusually suggestive to anyone interested in human transformation. The “play” starts suddenly. Children abruptly begin teasing one child, saying “*engacho*”. The child is considered to be “impure” and becomes untouchable by the other children. In order to be cleansed of the impurity, he/she needs to touch someone, and thus the child chases after other children who are running away to escape from his/her touching. There is, however, a spell which can break the cycle of the impurity transfer. If you make a circle with your thumb and forefinger,

and ask someone to cut the circle with their hand, the child will no longer be affected by the impurity. According to Amino, the *en* in *engacho* means “impurity (穢)”, but can also signify “connection (縁)”; *cho* signifies “cutting” (Amino 1978: 13).

There are two elements of touch at work in this play: one that transfers the impurity, and the other that halts its spread. In light of our discussion above, the *engacho* game can, I think, be understood as a kind of lesson in dealing with the complex relationship between touch and force, already in childhood. Of course, this play is not without its problems, at least from the perspective of modern society; for example, the play may turn into bullying, and we can imagine a case in which the child who intervenes to save a child from a bullying situation can themselves become the next target. Through touching, the forces of exclusion and protection can alternate in complex ways, as the sacrificial cleansing viewpoint on bullying suggests (Sugano 1997). Bataille and Caillois' understanding of the violence of exclusion has evolved into the ritual theory, which also interprets such force positively, as an aspect of the death and rebirth of a community. However, when the focus is on the excluded, especially when children are assumed to be the object of exclusion, such force may be decidedly negative in nature.

In order to spare children such complexities of force, the Act for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying (2013) was enacted in Japan, according to which a “school bullying task force” should be established within a given school when bullying occurs, and the school board is required to intervene more proactively. In light of the seriousness of the problems surrounding bullying, the establishment of such a law is certainly to be commended as an improvement in society's response. However, given the problem of the complexities of force that persists in the modern state, are we right in viewing such institutional measures as sufficient to address the many difficulties presented by bullying? Moreover, the problematic relationship between touch and force extends well beyond bullying behavior. The complexities of force at work in such cases lie buried also in the depths of education, as modern anxieties regarding the growth of children and youth.

At the beginning of this paper, I noted that we have been forced by the pandemic to participate in a grand experiment in non-touching. Of course, this is an unfavorable situation; however, I sometimes wonder if it might actually conceal an opportunity for a temporary escape from the complicated influence of the forces associated with touching. I may be the only one who feels this way. What about children and students? I wonder if, when the world of touching is restored, some of them will feel uncomfortable with this influence, which had been accepted as “normal” before the pandemic. Has the Internet space become their new asylum? Or might it be the case that even in the online world, where there is no direct touching at the physical level, a shadow of the problematics of

force may persist, in the metaphorical role of digital “touching”? It is far from easy to come to terms with the ambiguous yet compelling forces associated with touching; and this is a major reason why, as I said at the outset, the philosophy of touch is dizzyingly complex.

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