

# Reconsidering an Economy of Teacher Education

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*This article has an overall aim as follows: to develop an alternative understanding to a narrow view of education, and in particular teacher training—preparatory and continuing—in terms of economy, as well as the competencies needed for the teaching profession. It takes the view that such an alternative is or could be found in the ideas put forward by Paul Standish, where poetry, or a more poetic understanding of education, is necessary—particularly in regards to teacher training.*

## I INTRODUCTION

In Japan the implementation of the Teacher Certification Renewal System (hereafter abbreviated as ‘TCRS’) has been taking place since 2009. The legal basis of TCRS is the Revised Teachers’ License Law, which was enacted in 2007. The law requires a total 30 hours of training, intended mostly for in-service teachers, to renew their certificates and keep their validity. The purpose of introducing TCRS was ‘[t]o ensure that teachers systematically acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills in order to maintain the professional competencies necessary for today’s educators, teach with confidence and pride, and gain public respect and trust’ (JACET, 2008, p. 23). It seems to be true, in this fast-paced and multi-valued society, that ‘up-to-date knowledge and skills’ could be helpful for teachers to engage professionally with daily practices. In terms of access to ICT, for example, TCRS may have a point.

Nevertheless, is it really the case that the systematic acquisition of ‘knowledge and skills’ would ensure teachers’ self-confidence and public trust? Paul Standish casts doubt on this view. In an essay in which he criticises an oversimplified perception of higher education which equates learning in a certain course to the purchasing of a set of knowledge and skills, he states: ‘What is taught, in higher education especially, should not be conceived in terms of banks of knowledge or transferable skills or competences of whatever kind’ (Standish, 2005, p. 61). He believes this because:

In fact subjects of study can never be rightly understood as brute facts about the world or as free-floating skills: they are always in some sense linguistically constituted practices (*ibid.*).

His criticism of confining education to merely obtaining competences results in advocacy for awareness of an ‘open-ended approach’ (p. 55) in teaching and learning:

Thus, instead of a set of predetermined skills or competences that can be prescribed, good teaching requires something more like Aristotelian practical reason—doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right circumstances, where the good teacher is in part the orchestrator of these circumstances—but also something less centred, more exposed and perhaps more vulnerable, more open to the event (pp. 65–66).

Along with the emphasis on openness, he elucidates the notion of ‘[t]wo economies’ in education (p. 46). The first is ‘a closed economy’ (p. 54) that confines education to forms of exchange (p. 54), while the other is an alternative that ‘exceeds’, or goes beyond, the former (p. 62). Standish calls such a realm ‘[t]he economy of excess’ (p. 62).

Standish points out that the closed economy is dominant in the current education market (p. 53). Similar tendencies are found in Japan, for both students and teachers. Within the closed economy of education, the ‘deal’ is settled in the classroom, once teachers provide what their students need. Any additional or unexpected element such as extra activities is cut off or neglected. In teacher education prior to licensing, once prospective teachers acquire enough competencies to teach a certain module, it is considered that they have completed their pre-service education. Professional development for in-service teachers is considered to be a mere updating of these competencies. A desire for further inquiry is regarded as a deviation from the teacher’s duties.

In fact, according to Takahiro Miura’s survey of attendees of the TCRS training in 2009, many teachers felt that their pride was infringed because, in order to maintain their teaching positions, they were forced to take courses no matter what they had accomplished in their teaching career, or how enthusiastically and spontaneously they had been engaged with their professional development, either as individuals or within the school community (Miura, 2010, pp. 35–36). Miura’s analysis resonates with Hidenori Fujita’s sociological analysis of the qualifications of the teaching force in Japan. He states that current ‘market-oriented education reforms’ seem to end up ‘undermining the bases for teacher collaboration, discouraging teachers from taking initiative, and damaging their sense of efficacy and confidence, thereby deteriorating the quality of teaching and schooling’ (Fujita, 2007, p. 41). Manabu Sato and Shigeru Asanuma also say that in contrast to the tradition of ‘informal, grassroots movements’ (Sato and Asanuma, 1992, p. 115) of professional development among educators in Japan, ‘top-down reforms’ narrowly enclose

teacher education in a curriculum composed of ‘technical knowledge and practical routine skills’ (p. 113). They conclude that this casts teachers less as ‘autonomous professionals,’ and more as ‘public servants’ in a bureaucracy (ibid.). These studies show that teachers are put in an ironic predicament: although TCRS is supposed to secure their professional competencies, confidence and trust, there is a sense that the system deprives teachers of their professional autonomy, infringes their self-esteem, and narrows the very notion of education down to an increase in prearranged knowledge and skills. In this sense, TCRS, and Japan’s educational reform as its background, exemplify the closed economy in education in terms of its stress on gaining competencies and an indifference to the other dimensions—more open and elusive ones—of teaching and learning.

Based on this understanding of the trends in pre- and in-service teacher education in Japan, this article aims to develop an alternative understanding to this narrow view of education, and in particular of preparatory and continuing teacher training. It uses the different terms of ‘economy’ distinguished by Paul Standish, taking the view that such an alternative understanding of teacher training can be found in Standish’s defence of a more poetic understanding of education. Along this concern, Section II clarifies the distinction between two economies that Standish discusses. It helps us to see that a sense of absorption represents his long-lasting concern on what is neglected by the dominant impoverished understandings of education. Section III sheds light on how the notion of poetic language plays a central role in exploring a route towards an alternative understanding of economy in education. Section IV examines whether Standish’s criticism on the dominant trends in education is valid in Japan, where his book has been translated and TCRS is implemented. Section V focuses on the etymological background of the term economy, namely, *oikos*, in comparison with *polis*—its antonym. The relationship between these two Ancient Greek terms displays difficulties and possibilities of the idea of transcending the existing economy. Section VI connects Standish’s emphasis on poetic language to Stanley Cavell’s reading of R. W. Emerson, and suggests how TCRS and a teacher’s competencies could and should be understood from the viewpoint of an alternative economy.

## II THE IMPOVERISHED UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION IN THE DOMINANT ECONOMY

How could it be possible for teacher education to take an alternative path to the one that is characterised by the closed economy? Here, it is helpful to examine Standish’s concerns, which compelled him to coin the term ‘closed economy’. His criticism of the closed economy took root at least twenty years ago, when he first expressed reservations about it; these become more evident when considering the Japanese translation of his book *Beyond the Self* which was published in 2012, following the original version, published in 1992 in the U.K.

The 1992 version of the book is composed of six chapters. Its aim as a whole may be understood, according to Standish, ‘in terms of two directions of concern . . . towards a better understanding of aspects of the work of Heidegger and Wittgenstein’ and ‘towards a deeper understanding of certain practical problems which manifest prevailing features of the modern world’ (Standish, 1992, viii). The two ‘converge on questions concerning language and self’ (ibid.). The way in which these cross over is explained in terms of the way that ‘[t]he later Wittgenstein and Heidegger offer rich potential sources of criticism’ of ideas based on ‘the positivism in education’ (p. 3). He defines the forms of positivism which have particular consequences for education as ‘positivism in language’ and ‘positivism in the idea of the individual agent’ (p. 2). These forms emerge as educational issues in terms of curriculum content which is focused on ‘a concern for information’ and skills, rather than ‘the initiation into a subject’ (pp. 1–2), and, furthermore, preoccupation with ‘efficiency and effectiveness’, ‘assessment and evaluation, and quality control’ (p. 2). It is apparent that Standish’s concern about the market-oriented tendencies of education was one of the main forces which drove him to write his first book. Moreover, further connections can be drawn when one considers how he reorganised the book for its translation. For example, in the 2012 Japanese version, there is a new preface and three new chapters (Chapters 7 to 9) have been added. The independent essay mentioned above (2005)—the one that addresses the closed economy—becomes the new final chapter. In this regard, seeing the links between the original chapters and Chapter 9 enables us to appreciate Standish’s two-decade concern, and thus, to elucidate an alternative path in education, and in particular, teacher training.

So is there a theme that is present in *Beyond the Self* all the way from Chapter 1 to 9, and thus in Standish’s twenty-year process of writing and rewriting? The answer is yes and no. It is yes because it seems fairly plausible to say that the author crafted each chapter and composed the book under the overarching title with certain organizing principles, though the structure may be a less traditional tree-styled alignment and more like associations akin to the rhizome model or family resemblance. Alternatively, I could say no because those principles are not something to be reduced to just a single proposition. What this section tries to illuminate is, therefore, one of the feasible depictions of a question that Standish deals with from the viewpoint of the formation and translation of the book as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

In order to do this, let us first look at Part 2.7 in Chapter 1. Here, Standish refers to D. H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers*, and quotes a passage in which Paul Morel and his sister Annie, children of a miner, are helping their father in making pit fuses (Standish, 1992, p. 12). While Walter, the father and miner, cleaned wheat-straws, polished them, cut them, and made a notch in each of them, his two children poured gunpowder into the straw and stuffed a bit of soap to plug it. Lawrence writes: ‘But the best time for the young children was when he [Morel] made fuses’; ‘Paul loved to see the black grains trickle down a crack in his palm into the mouth of the straw, peppering jollily downwards till the straw was full’ (Lawrence, 1992, pp.

88–89). Standish draws attention to the charm and wonder of the moment that the three share: ‘He [Morel] is evidently absorbed in the activity and his absorption seems to infect them [Paul and Annie]’ (Standish, 1992, p. 11); ‘[t]he objects described here seem larger than life even though they are to these people ordinary and familiar’ (p. 12).

Readers of the 2012 version of *Beyond the Self* would again come across this sense of absorption experienced in daily practices in the final chapter. Standish argues for ‘intense absorption’ (Standish, 2012, p. 58; 2005, p. 65)<sup>2</sup> in elucidating the Dionysian aspect of learning, in which a learner somehow touches upon Nietzsche’s later emphasis, namely, ‘the affirmation of life in the upsurge of energy’ (Standish, 2012, p. 57; 2005, p. 64). This is elucidated, in Chapter 9, by looking at an example of a student who is hesitant to write an essay:

At one sitting, however, there comes a point where the words start to flow, and the student, almost in spite of herself, so it seems, suddenly finds that an hour has gone past while she has been writing, an hour not noticed, and that she is in the thick of the argument . . . She finds herself preoccupied with this work and eager to get back to it when she is away, and for a while, at least, this intensity is sustained (Standish, 2012, p. 580; 2005, p. 64).

Is the similarity of these two examples, which appear in the first and the last chapter respectively, a mere coincidence? Careful readers of the text would not think so. A line that connects the beginning to the ending of the book is necessarily drawn. One way of referring to this line is that it demonstrates the author’s uneasiness about the prevailing discourse in education, both in policy making for and in management of the practice of education. He adds, ‘In the best case . . . this will not result only in a satisfaction at having completed, say, the requirements for this module’ (ibid.). Instead, he hopes, the intensity experienced by the student would bear ‘a kind of exuberance that gives her a desire for more’ (ibid.).

In Chapter 1, this concern is shown as criticism against the view of a learner as a ‘self-disciplined, self-motivated, self-assured’ (Standish, 1992, p. 4) holder of legitimacy for and authority over his or her education, and against those who promote and enforce such understanding. Such a view is based on the assumption that ‘education must to a great extent meet the needs of industry’, and it shall seek to attract the learner by implying ‘rich rewards’, i.e. a higher probability of ‘success’ (ibid.). In Chapter 9, this assumption, which confines education to the mere transaction of packaged teaching and learning, is defined as an ‘economy of exchange’ (p. 59)—a synonym for a closed economy.

So it is fair to say that one of Standish’s long-lasting concerns is about something that is represented as a sense of absorption, and about the fact that it tends to be neglected by the dominant impoverished understandings of education, such as those based on market-oriented and management-friendly forms of thinking. To be more precise, he consistently seeks to find a way in which an alternative approach to education would be possible, an

approach that could capture the significance of experiencing teaching and learning beyond the economy of exchange.

Still, some might say that, concerning teacher education, the image of teachers experiencing the economy of excess remains unclear. Before exploring this concern further, however, this article will now discuss the notion of language in other parts of the book. This analysis will shed light on how ‘questions concerning language and self’ contain a route ‘towards a deeper understanding of certain practical problems’ (Standish, 1992, viii), thereby clarifying the means by which a teacher’s sense of absorption can be illustrated.

### III TURNING TO THE POETIC: WORDS AND CURRENCY IN HEIDEGGER AND THOREAU

How does Standish elaborate the theme of language in connection with the ‘prevailing features of the modern world’ (Standish, 1992, viii), and specifically the world of education? In Chapter 3, ‘the language of curriculum design’ (p. 91) is discussed. It is this type of language that he objects to. According to him, it has ‘relevance to many facets of the education system’, including ‘a relevance to the current concern with policy statements’ (ibid.). It is linked, in other words, to ‘a network of concepts’, in which ‘the curriculum is geared towards objectives or targets, promoting skills or competences’ (ibid.). As a result, ‘the new vocabulary of management is dominant’ (ibid.). Here, his worry about the closed economy of education takes the form of discontent with its language.

This becomes more evident in Chapter 7. Before discussing the issue of language itself, however, I need to briefly map the project that he engages with there. The chapter begins with exploring Heidegger’s reading of Plato’s allegory of the cave (Standish, 2012, p. 511; 2002, p. 151). Heidegger points out the danger of the liberator depicted in Plato’s text. The danger is twofold: the first danger is that, the liberator who returns to the cave risks the ‘danger of succumbing to the overwhelming power of the kind of truth that is normative’ (Heidegger, 1998, p. 171) among the chained slaves. It is assumed that those who stayed inside of the cave would insist ‘common “reality” to be the only reality’ (ibid.). The second danger is that the liberator risks his life because he faces ‘the possibility of being put to death, a possibility that becomes a reality in the fate of Socrates, who was Plato’s “teacher” ’ (ibid.). Standish focuses on the first crisis, in which the liberator’s, or the teacher’s, capacity for seeing and talking of the truth is ‘understood in terms of criteria that prevail amongst the cave dwellers’ (ibid.). This relates to ‘nihilistic tendencies’ (Standish, 2012, p. 516; 2002, 154) of current educational institutions. In such tendencies, the ‘substance of education’ is replaced with ‘proceduralism’, ‘performativity’ and ‘instrumentalism’ (ibid.).<sup>3</sup> The question here is, ‘[h]ow is this teacher to turn the heads of those who are taught’ (Standish, 2012, p. 517; 2002, p. 154) in these tendencies? In responding to this, he states that in order to understand ‘the nature of the turn’ one must refer to Heidegger’s own ‘turn’, namely,



‘his turn from philosophy to poetry’ (ibid.). After the 1930s, Standish understands, Heidegger starts to grant the ‘supreme status’ to language (Standish, 2012, p. 517; 2002, p. 155), taking the process as follows:

The degeneration he associates with technology is then progressively understood as tied essentially to language, while the possibility of a resistance to technology’s totalizing effects is seen especially in the nature of the poetic itself (ibid.).

Standish’s disquietude over mechanical handling of education manifests itself here in relation to his emphasis on language.

In line with this, he clarifies risks and possibilities of language. Our words are, he says, ‘a kind of currency that stands in danger of becoming dull in their circulation and exchange’, and, under such circumstances, ‘our thinking can remain static’ (Standish, 2012, p. 535; 2002, p. 164).

This echoes Standish’s discussion in his 2006 paper: ‘Uncommon Schools: Stanley Cavell and the Teaching of *Walden*’. Upon studying the teaching of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, in the light of Cavell’s *The Senses of Walden*, Standish considers *Walden* to be a ‘text for education’ (Standish, 2006, p. 145), especially in the sense that it demonstrates the linguistic experiment serving as ‘a kind of example’ (p. 147) of an ‘experience in such a manner that one departs from one’s settled and accustomed ways of understanding them’ (p. 151). There are times that words are ‘just repeated or passed along down the line’ and ‘go dead on us and on the culture’ (ibid.). Standish juxtaposes Thoreau’s metaphor of borrowing the axe<sup>4</sup> with the possibilities of language. Thoreau writes that ‘[i]t is difficult to begin without borrowing’ (Thoreau, 1997, p. 38), thereby implying that everyone starts to use language upon acquiring it from others (Standish, 2006, p. 151). However, Thoreau also states: ‘I returned it sharper than I received it’ (Thoreau, 1997, p. 38), and thus, ‘as with an axe that you borrow, you can return words sharper than you received them’ (Standish, 2006, p. 151). This concept epitomises Thoreau’s ‘economy of living’ (p. 155), where words are used and returned with ‘interest’ (Thoreau, 1997, p. 38; Standish, 2006, p. 151) through ‘one’s daily engagement with language and life’ (Standish, 2006, p. 151)—in contrast with ‘a globalised knowledge-economy’ (Standish, 2006, p. 155).<sup>5</sup> Of particular interest here is that the sentences which describe the axe and its sharpening appear in the very first chapter of *Walden*, entitled ‘Economy’. Standish calls attention to a frequent use of vocabulary relating to money, such as ‘borrow, interest, invest, return, economy, currency’ (p. 151). It is implied that Thoreau’s experiment of living at the Walden pond is depicted as his own reengagement with language, as Saito describes in her analysis of the characteristics of the economy of living: ‘it [Thoreau’s economy]’ concerns the building of a house, and metaphorically, the building of the world as the house of words’ (Saito, 2006, p. 350). Thoreau actually borrows accustomed words and returns these to his language community with a sharpened meaning and deeper interest.

Likewise, in Chapter 7 of *Beyond the Self*, strategies to turn the stagnated state of words are addressed as a reengagement of language:

[O]ur poetic language, or, better, our language to the extent that it is poetic, gives the possibility of coming new words, not, ridiculously, by the contriving of neologisms, by finding new ways of expressing the way things are for us, by finding a language that points forward in multiple ways (Standish, 2012, pp. 535–536; 2002, p. 164).

This possibility is, he concludes, our responsibility in education (Standish, 2012, p. 536; 2002, p. 164). Drawing upon Heidegger's reading of Rainer Maria Rilke, Standish sees the nature of coagulation in currency—either as sterling or as words. On the one hand, in Chapter 7, he suggests that the metal from mountain veins degenerates once it is congealed into coins and wheels of industry in modern, technologised societies (Standish, 2012, pp. 519–520; 2002, p. 156). On the other hand, in Chapter 9, Standish implies that the practice and substance of education are assimilated with commercialised terminology. He presents this notion in the form of a question, 'Might we not expect a lover of learning to exceed the currency of star ratings and CVs?' (Standish, 2012, p. 571; 2005, p. 59) How could this congealed currency—either in a monetary or locutionary sense—of a closed economy regain its flow, or be exposed to the upsurge of energy in teaching and learning? This question will be examined in the next section, by revisiting the image of a teacher, or the liberator in the cave.

#### IV TRANSLATION OF A TEACHER

In Plato's cave, a teacher is depicted as a liberator, in terms of one who has seen the true world and tries to make other people head towards it. Compared to this, recent trends tend to regard teachers as mere providers or traders of congealed packages which are circulated in an educational market. Nevertheless, is this criticism valid in a different culture, for example in Japan, where Standish's book has been translated and published? It is interesting to see how Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930), one of the representative intellectuals and educators in Meiji Japan, writes about the widespread understanding of education in Japan at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century.

In a chapter titled 'Nakae Tōju—A Village Teacher', in *Representative Men of Japan*,<sup>6</sup> Uchimura records that the Japanese, himself included, were often asked by 'civilized Westerners' questions like: 'What kind of schooling had you in Japan before we Westerners came to save you?' (Uchimura, 1972, p. 88) The reason for their asking this is, 'You Japanese seem to be the cleverest set of people among heathens', and, thus, 'you must have had some training, moral and intellectual, to make you what you have been and are' (ibid.). Uchimura emphasises the differences of schooling in Japan prior to its Westernisation:

We had schools too and teachers, quite different from what we see in your great West and now imitated in our land. First of all, we never



have thought of schools as shops for intellectual apprenticeship. We were sent there not so much for earning livelihood when we had finished them, as for becoming *true men*, *kunshi* . . . (ibid.).

The passage displays his censure for the fact that the understanding of education, among the Japanese in a time of rapid modernisation, tends to be oversimplified and taken over by that of shopping for practical and profitable Western knowledge and skills. The role of a teacher has been similarly simplified.

Though the literal meaning of *kunshi* (君子, *junzi* in Chinese) is ‘lord child’, the term is reinterpreted in the teachings of Confucius (which was the dominant moral scheme in the Edo Period). As a result, its connotation widened to mean someone who has high moral standards and superior understanding (Watson, 2007, p. 9). It is translated, when used in English publications, into such words as ‘gentleman’, ‘superior man’, or ‘noble person’ (ibid.). Uchimura laments the disappearance of ‘the relationship between teachers and students’, which used to be ‘the closest possible’ (1972, p. 90). The traditional term for teachers demonstrates this. They call teachers *sensei* (先生), instead of professors (ibid.). The term originally means ‘men born before’, and thus, it implies a sense of respect for their ‘prior birth’ (ibid.). This does not, however, only indicate the celebration of ‘the time of their appearance in this world’, but also reverence for ‘their coming to the understanding of the truth’ (ibid.). Uchimura’s explanation about the nature of a teacher, or *sensei*, echoes the depiction of the teacher in Plato’s allegory that was discussed in the preceding section.

Here, it is reasonable to see Standish’s concerns about the imprisonment of education in a closed economy and his search for a change, hinted by the teacher in the cave, as relevant to the chronic problems that Japanese education has suffered for more than a century. The influence of this tendency is obvious in TCRS, in terms of its overemphasis on competencies of teachers satisfying demands of students. Now that the pertinence of Standish’s point is affirmed in two countries, what is at stake is the implication of his text for ‘uncongealing’ (Standish, 2012, p. 535; 2002, p. 164) the currency of education and for altering the equation of teaching with retailing. This will be examined, in the following section, by looking at the translation of another key term in Standish’s work, namely, economy.

## V DRAMA OF *OIKOS*

In searching for an alternative economy of education to a closed one, Standish, as discussed above, calls such a realm ‘economy of excess’ (Standish, 2012, p. 577; 2005, p. 62). This alternative type of economy is perceived in the moment of absorption, which was depicted in the Section II of this article. This section tries to elucidate the implication of the way in which the congealed currency of education in the closed economy regains its flow. The term economy itself, at this stage, needs to be examined. As

Standish himself mentions in a separate essay though, its etymology is from Ancient Greece, namely, the ordering (*nomos*) of the home (*oikos*) (Standish, 2006, p. 150).

*Oikos* (οἶκος) is a term that is often explicated in comparison with *polis* (πολις). Roy studies the distinctions between *oikos* and *polis* in classical Athens and notes that ‘Aristotle saw the household—in his vocabulary the *oikos*, or sometimes the *oikia*—as the basic social unit of the *polis*’ (Roy, 1999, p. 1). He refers to lines from *Politics*, for example: ‘. . . since every state consists of households, it is essential to begin [his studies of state] with household-management’ (Aristotle, 1962, p. 62). Shields writes, while illuminating the interconnectedness and tensions between the *oikos* and the *polis* shown in Greek tragedies, that the two terms in classical Greek life ‘loosely correspond to modern conceptions of public and private spheres’ (Shields, 2007, p. 1). On the one hand, the *oikos*, the household, ‘along with the sphere of relations and activities directly attaches to such, which moderns might call the domestic or private sphere’ (ibid.). *Polis*, on the other hand, refers to ‘the emergent city-state, with its rules, customs, and attending morality’, and involves ‘the voluntary subordination of the individual and his needs and interests to the community’, though the implication of the term in its broadest sense is not so much as ‘a form of political organization’ than ‘an entire cultural spiritual system’ (ibid.).

Hanna Arendt echoes the distinction of the terms. She understands that all ancient political thought finds the ‘decisive division’ to be ‘self-evident’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 30). It is a division between ‘the public and private realms’, ‘the sphere of the *polis* and the sphere of household and family’, and ‘those related to a common world and those related to the maintenance of life’ (ibid.). In other words, the distinctive trait of *oikos* was driven by people’s ‘wants and needs’, while ‘the realm of the *polis*’ was ‘the sphere of freedom’ (ibid.). Some may ask: is it too firm a distinction? That is a question that distinguishes modern societies from the city-states in Arendt’s work. In ancient Greece, the only relationship between the two was that ‘the mastering of the necessities of life in the household was a condition for freedom of the *polis*’ (pp. 30–31). After the emergence of the nation-state, in contrast, the dividing line is blurred: ‘we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of a family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping’ (p. 28).

Nagle thinks of *philia* as one of the main factors that connect the *oikos* to the *polis*. If ‘children received right formation (*paideia*) as a result of the proper ordering of *philia* relationship with their parents and siblings’, then ‘they learned how to behave as citizens’ (Nagle, 2006, p. 178). Here again, the *oikos* functions as the smallest, yet still an important, unit of the *polis*. The relationship of *philia* shared by members of a household consists of the basis for love of their state.

Shields provides an additional insight into the interconnectedness between the *oikos* and the *polis*. Besides the tension of their relationship, he sees creative transactions, which are perceived in Sophoclean drama. Both in *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex*, ‘the New Order of the *polis*, despite its

weakness, resigns supreme at the end of the drama' (Shields, 2007, p. 1). Antigone breaks the rules of the state, following her discipline as a member of her family, even though she puts herself in peril. Oedipus, as a saviour and a competent ruler, finally leaves the state by coming to know the identity of his own blood. In either case, Shields analyses, harmony of the *polis* has been disturbed by the protagonist's actions founded on the *oikos*, and though that requires a sacrifice, the unity of the state is restored as '[N]ew order justice ultimately prevails' (p. 4).<sup>7</sup>

The unity and harmony of the *polis* are affirmed, in Shields' view, at the expense of 'certain individuals and their respective *oikoi*' (ibid.). From this, some may feel that in spite of the fact that the dividing line may be permeable, *oikos* is, after all, defined as a hierarchical subdivision of *polis*. The nature of the relationship is vital because it implies how it could be conceived by the characteristics of the realm to which the economy of excess leads. In other words, where does education flow into when it exceeds the closed economy? This question is asked not to substantiate Standish's conception of economy, but to clarify the sphere that his argumentation helps us to see. If *oikos* is only understood as the subordinate unit of *polis*, the notion of economy, accordingly, cannot be anything but a domain of satisfying, or at its best, managing the needs and wants of individuals and their families. In such a view, the very term 'economy of excess' is contradictory in terms. Exceeding the realm of economy, closed or otherwise, would mean going up the stairs to the territory of *polis*, the world in which people can enjoy freedom from the essentials of biological life and pursue the common good. If this is the case, education for transcending the existing economy is something that aims at guiding citizens to abandon the issues concerning the self and home, and to subject themselves to their state. There could be a danger that totalitarians take advantage of the logic to force its citizens to sacrifice their biological and everyday lives. There, poetry of language would be reduced into mere rhetoric or indoctrination. Is an attempt to save education from the dominance of the prevailing economy bound to have a tragic ending? The alternative scenario, suggested by Standish, with his reading of Emerson's notion of a poet, will be discussed in the final section.

## VI BECOMING A TEACHER AGAIN

Standish quotes Emerson's essay 'The Poet', as a text that displays the work of poetical language: 'The poet did not stop at the color of the form but read their meaning; neither may he rest in this meaning, but he makes the same objects exponents of his new thought' (Emerson, 1982, p. 279; Standish, 2012, p. 529; 2002, pp. 160–161). The lively flow of the language of a poet is captured: from form to meaning, from that meaning to new thought. Standish elucidates the nature of poetry in Emerson by citing Stanley Cavell's reading of the Emersonian theme. Cavell lays out, Standish argues, 'the way for examination of Emerson's preoccupation . . . with the very idea of condition itself', an idea that encompasses 'the

dictation and conformity' (Standish, 2012, p. 528; 2002, p. 160). 'The words that I must inherit, my very means of expression, can impel me towards conformity' (ibid.), Standish explains. It is plausible to conceive poetic language as something to reverse totalitarian threat, in a sense that it does not settle in conformity but moves on to express new thought. Therefore, transcending the closed economy is not something to be equated with abandoning individual spheres and assimilating the self with the supreme or the whole. Instead, it relates to the reconsideration and recreation of the existing distinction between *polis* and *oikos* itself, by offering a new way of viewing.

Thus, it is understood that Standish's discontent with the closed economy and his search for the alternative is not intended as a movement from the domain of biological needs to metaphysical sophistication. Rather, it is headed towards going deeper, just as the liberator in the allegory of the cave turns downward, into the prevailing practice and understanding of economy. This echoes Emerson's saying, 'The axioms of physics translate the laws of ethics' (Emerson, 1982, p. 53; Standish, 2012, p. 528; 2002, p. 160).

Also, it resonates with the inventor of the allegory, Plato. The older interlocutor, Socrates, asks the young Glaucon which position the one who has happened to be liberated would choose: an honoured position in the cave or that of a slave in the world under the sun (Plato, 1968, p. 195). This is a complex but profound question in Plato's understanding of *polis* and *oikos*. It is a choice of either enjoying aristocratic prestige in the *polis* of shadow play or serving as a slave, the lowest constituent of *oikos* in the new and wider world.<sup>8</sup> The response from the young Glaucon is, 'I suppose he would prefer to undergo everything rather than live that way [in the cave]' (ibid.). When the boundaries of a closed economy are blurred, what comes into sight is not the otherworldly domain of *polis*, but the renewed notion of economy itself and the city a person is participating in and trying to change.

The conversation between the liberator and those who are in chains is, it is surmised, not about how to move upward in the present picture of the world. Instead, it is about which direction is upward at all. It is in this conversation that a poet needs to bring up the idea that there might be another world, employing the language that has been learned and used only among those who live in the cave.

In this regard, the work and education of teachers become clearer. To teach and learn beyond the currency of the present economy, a teacher needs to go into the core of the economy, or *oikos*—the needs, wants, desires, calculations, suspicions, anger, and all that is everyday, the lower feelings of her and her students. The learners are invited to reconsider what they used to think of as the realm of *polis*, as they are helped to re-see a dimension of life, a dimension in which they have already been participating, namely, what Cavell calls cities of words (Cavell, 1990, p. 7), through conversation in their own language. The participation they become aware of may take the form of an affirmation, or of a feeling of disdain, or of a change within the self and society. Thus, going into *oikos* is neither a blind

affirmation of the present needs and goals nor a total avoidance of these. Rather, this is what Emerson suggests and Cavell calls aversive thinking (Cavell, 1990, p. 37), a way of thinking and thinking differently, going into the issue and departing from it, with a strong sense of shame for conformity, resulting in transformation of self and society.

This conjuncture is implied, I suggest, by the ending of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. The long story ends with a scene in which Paul, now grown up, is perplexed by his most beloved mother, but departs towards the alternative direction from the world he has dwelled in with his mother; a direction that, I suppose, somewhat reconnects himself to his father, who invited him to the moment of absorption in his days as a child:

'Mother!' he whimpered, 'mother!'

She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself! He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her.

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His fists were shut, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly (Lawrence, 1992, p. 464).

The turn that young Paul takes encompasses something which parallels Thoreau's leaving of the woods. In 'Conclusion', Thoreau writes, 'I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there' (Thoreau, 1997, p. 287). He further describes this reason as having been driven by a wish 'to live deliberately' or 'to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life' (p. 83). He also mentioned his wish to 'reduce it [life] to its lowest terms', and 'if it proved to be mean', he would 'publish its meanness to the world'; or 'if it were sublime', then he hoped to 'be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion' (ibid.). It is implied that he went to Walden because he would write *Walden* in any case, and in any form. As Standish indicates (Standish, 2006, p. 147), Thoreau plays the role of a teacher in front of his readers and neighbours (whom he wrote to (Thoreau, 1997, p. 6)). That is not, however, the first time Thoreau has taken the role of a teacher. He confesses that he once failed in teaching and its economy:

I have thoroughly tried school-keeping, and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income, for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe, accordingly, and I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the good of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure (p. 63).

He tried to be a teacher by acting and training himself like a teacher, and to make ends meet through teaching as a profession. This was far from successful, and he left his town of Concord to live in the woods. However, the departure was not a way of resigning from teaching. Instead, it was time

for his linguistic experiment to restart teaching and economy in education. While this is something that cannot be confined to conventional schooling, it is true that he literally exceeds his accustomed place of living and his narrowed view of what teachers do and how they are. In this sense, it is plausible to say that Thoreau becomes a teacher again by inventing his own (poetic) way of being a teacher. What emerges here is an example of the economy of excess in teacher education.

Nevertheless, one may ask: how could Thoreau's example possibly make sense and be relevant to (the reconsideration of) teacher education in 21st century Japan, TCRS included? Teachers, current and future, are not able to leave their houses like Thoreau, nor do they have time to write a long book like his. In response to this, Thoreau's words may offer some guidance: 'I would not have any one adopt my mode of living . . . I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way' (pp. 64–65). Thus, an alternative economy of education should not be achieved through an escape from current educational institutions, nor by an uncritical acceptance of them. Rather, it helps teachers to reconsider their daily practices and understanding of education, from their teaching and learning, to planning and accounting, and in their own ways, in their own places, with their own hands. The economy of excess in education should therefore not be understood as avoidance of the closed economy. Rather, in order to exceed the latter, one needs to go through it and beyond it, aiming to change it and be changed by it through the process.

It is at this point that the poetic view of education is called upon. Using words that are understandable to all, teachers could help others to experience difference, and air alternate views of the world. This rereading and rewriting of the world is as much a practice of training for the teacher as it is a process of teaching. The teacher's questioning could be a part of their education, both in terms of becoming a (better) teacher, and teaching to others. They may ask, for example, what teachers do, who and what licenses teachers to teach, what renewal of these licences means, and what kind of education systems and institutions we desire. TCRS has, thus, risks and possibilities: if it deals with professional competencies as transferable commodities, it would just reinforce the dominant economy. Alternatively, if it helps teachers to be absorbed in recounting their teaching and learning, it could be a part of an open-ended approach to transforming the existing economy from within, and to changing the education system itself—TCRS included.

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## NOTES

1. Standish supplies a self-analysis in the Preface to the Japanese translation of *Beyond the Self*: 'There are three main factors that had a bearing on the development during the 1980s of the central



- ideas I presented in the text' (Standish, 2012, pp. 3–4). These can be summed up as follows: (1) 'The kind of sea-change' that occurred in the 1980s, either in 'socio-political' scenes or the 'education system', most notably as policy changes by Thatcherism. (2) His frustration with the 'philosophy of education in the UK at that time'. (3) Addressing then-unacknowledged resonances between Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Naoko Saito, in the Translator's Postscript, discusses these three factors in detail (Saito, 2012, pp. 592–593). My reading of Standish's long-lasting concern is most allied with (1), but, hopefully, also displays, if partly, how it formulates a triangle with other two factors, as the discussion evolves.
2. For the convenience for an Anglophone audience, references to the newly added chapters of the 2012 version of *Beyond the Self* (Chapters 7, 8, and 9) are hereafter indicated along with pages of the original essays (Standish, 2002, 2001, 2005, respectively).
  3. Foucault's discussion of subjectivation captures a sense of the learner's experience of such educational institutions. Unlike the pre-modern system in which a pupil works 'for a few minutes with the master, while the rest of the heterogeneous group remained idle and unattended', educational spaces developed from the 18th century are homogeneous and classified (Foucault, 1995, p. 147). Foucault writes that '[b]y assigning individual places it made possible the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all' (p. 148). It organised 'a new economy of the time' of training (ibid.), that is to say, 'the educational space' functions like as much a 'learning machine' as 'a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding' (ibid.). It is possible to see roots of an aspect of what Henry David Thoreau calls a 'system of common schools' (Thoreau, 1997, p. 99). This notion is discussed in Standish's essay (2006), referenced at a later point in this article.
  4. According to Walter Harding, there are (at least) three transcendentalists who are claimed to be a lender of the axe: Amos Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Ellery Channing (Harding, 1962, p. 276). It is interesting to see three friends of Thoreau claiming that his experiment is indebted to their belongings.
  5. Amanda Fulford links the metaphor of borrowing and returning an axe to the sense of loss and recovery of language in education (Fulford, 2009, p. 233).
  6. As the title indicates, the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a writer of *Representative Men*, on Uchimura is apparent, though Uchimura's book was originally written and published in English with the title of *Japan and the Japanese* in 1894. Howes affirms, in Uchimura's English writing, 'a resemblance to the works of Emerson and Thoreau, both of whom Uchimura admired' (Howes, 2005, p. 133).
  7. It is possible, of course, to interpret other works of Greek drama from the viewpoint of *oikos-polis* tension/relation other than Sophocles'. Shields himself mentions that Aeschylus's *Eumenides* represents a contradiction between the moralities of the two spheres as its plot of seeking a public good by acts of private revenge (Shields, 2007, p. 2). Another example could be Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*—its plot is that the long-lasting war between the two states is forced to an end by the wives' sex strike.
  8. For detailed subdivision of *oikos*, see Aristotle, 1962, pp. 62 f.

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