International Conversations on Curriculum Studies
Subject, Society and Curriculum

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This collection of essays from the most prominent scholars in the field of curriculum studies paint an intellectually rich palette of the present state of curriculum research across the countries and continents when the traditionally prevailed national imaginaries give increasingly way to transnational, international, and postnational impulses. The main parameters of education, subjectivity and its belonging, is shifting by employing the contradictory and broader issues around the question of nation and nation-state as well as around its traditional educational counterpart, the psychologized individual, both radically reinterpreted by post- and rereadings of old educational and social canons. International Conversations on Curriculum identifies the present transformations at work nationwide, worldwide, between and beyond, by focusing on these shifts from a variety of methodological, theoretical, national, political, and pedagogic concerns. It will open new and, one could argue, compelling vistas for reconsidering the social and political mission and moral purpose of education policies, of curriculum theory and practice in the increasingly but unevenly connected world characterized by economic volatility, unfair trade, ethnic and religious conflicts, and growing social instability and collective existential insecurity. As such, the essays are a vital international testimony to the scholarly vibrancy and to the global awareness of the current intellectualized field of curriculum studies to alertly recognize and register the cultural, educational, and political urgencies of our times.

This collection will provide a rich and up-to-date source and an essential reading for scholars and students in the fields of curriculum studies, philosophy, psychology and sociology of education, and comparative education.
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CONTENTS

Preface ix

Tero Autio
Globalization, Curriculum, and New Belongings of Subjectivity 1

PART I
CURRICULUM STUDIES AND SOCIAL FUTURE

William F. Pinar
Bildung and the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies 23

Janet L. Miller
Curriculum Studies and Transnational Flows and Mobilities:
Feminist Autobiographical Perspectives 43

Ivor F. Goodson
Curriculum, Narrative and the Social Future 71

PART II
EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM

Heinz Sünker
Democratic Education – Educating for Democracy 89

Ulf P. Lundgren
Political Governing and Curriculum Change
– from Active to Reactive Curriculum Reforms 109

Petra Munro Hendry
Wisdom as Compassion: Social Justice in the Narratives
of Kuan Yin and Julian of Norwich 123

Denise Egéa-Kuehne
Curriculum and Serres’s “New Organization of Knowledge” 133

Maria Palmira Alves, José Carlos Morgado & José Augusto Pacheco
Globalisation, Curriculum and Assessment 147
CONTENTS

PART III
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CURRICULUM

ALICE CASIMIRO LOPES & ELIZABETH MACEDO
An Analysis of Disciplinarity on the Organization of School Knowledge 169

ZHANG HUA
The Ongoing Curriculum Reform In China:
Philosophy, Objectives, and Structure 187

SHIGERU ASANUMA
Toward an In-depth Comparative Study of the School Curricula and Practices in Japan and Finland 197

TERRANCE R. CARSON
Re-thinking Curriculum Change from the Place of the Teacher 213

SINAN OLKUN & CEM BABADOGAN
Reform in Turkish Elementary Mathematics Curriculum 225

RAILI HILDEN
Transforming Language Curricula Through a Research and Development Project – A Case from Finland 235

DANY ETIENNE
The Winding Road Towards Cef-integrated Curricula 257

SIRKKA LAHIALA-KANKAINEN
Continuity and Change: Recent Developments in the Russian Curriculum for the Comprehensive School 273

COLIN MARSH & CATHERINE HARRIS-HART
Power, Knowledge and Curriculum Change in Australia 291
PART IV
IDENTITY AND SUBJECT IN CURRICULUM

José Augusto Pacheco & Nancy Pereira  
*Globalization and Educational Identities*  
311

Andrzej Zaporowski  
*Border and Cultural Identity*  
327

James Anthony Whitson  
*Is There no Outside of Curriculum-as-text?*  
339

João M. Paraskeva  
*Portugal’s Colonized Colonialism*  
355

Denise Egéa-Kuehne  
*Current Debates and Contemporary Issues in French Curriculum Studies*  
391

Contributors  
399

Author index  
407

Subject index  
413
What should we teach our children to prepare them for life? What knowledge, skills, values, experiences, or learning are necessary and important for them to become healthy and wellbeing adults and productive citizens of the world? These kinds of questions are crucial for the design of education both nationally and locally.

School curricula are typically nationally legislated, planned, and administered. Municipal authorities, schools, and teachers are also involved in the curriculum planning, although the amount and nature of the local planning varies between countries. For instance, in Finland school-based curriculum planning is an essential part of teachers’ work, although the majority of the work is done every ten years when the national frame or core of the school curricula is published. Based on experience we may say that most teachers are not well enough educated for this kind of curriculum work.

William Pinar and his colleagues argued in the modern “bible” of the curriculum studies (Understanding Curriculum, Peter Lang 1995, p. 663) that the practice orientation of the curriculum research in the last century led to development in which researchers lost their influence on schools. Consequently, research efforts produced rhetoric that was ahistorical and atheoretical in its nature.

If teachers are not well educated for curriculum work and researchers have lost their influence on the curricula, who are taking care of curricula? Are we ready to leave the important decisions to politicians or different interest groups whose motives are often unknown?

Research on curriculum has long divided into at least two main perspectives. The so-called microperspective deals with questions that are typically local, practical and contextually restricted. An example of this perspective is a question related to the specific contents of school curricula. What subjects should be taught, how much and what kinds of goals, objectives and contents should be included in the programs and courses. Macroperspectives focus on studying, for instance, political, philosophical, or psychological frameworks and foundations of education and curriculum. This perspective has often been called as ‘curriculum studies’. To be short, curriculum studies is an interdisciplinary approach to understand the myriad dilemmas, questions, and problems related to societally and institutionally organized education.

The foundational research and theoretical work has traditionally been discipline specific aiming at providing structures, objectives, and contents for the subject matter curricula. Consequently, schools have “balkanized” into the direction of cultures in which school subjects live their own life separated from each other and struggling for time and other resources in the curricula and school practices. Curriculum studies
PREFACE

aims at opening and continuing the inter- and transdisciplinary conversation of the foundations in which integration of knowledge and unity of different perspectives is the main method. Need for this kind of foundational conversation is more than evident. It will benefit teachers and researchers, as well as other stakeholders of education and curriculum.

World around us does not organize itself into school subjects. Neither do we as human beings nor the problems we encounter in life. What should be taught to children is as much a political as scientific question. It would be naive to believe that there are simple or permanent solutions or responses to this type of questions. The message the authors of this book want to promote is continuous conversation. Different voices should be recognized and heard. This is incumbent on all of us. The aim is not to manage or lead the development, but rather to influence on the directions by scientific efforts to understand who we are and what are the complex contexts and situations we live in. Consequently, the question of identity is one of the important topics in this book. Also other fundamental questions have inspired the writers of this book. Articles of the book are partly based on the authors’ presentations at the Second World Curriculum Studies in Tampere, Finland in May 2006. The book is named after the conference theme ‘curriculum as international conversation’.

The book is divided in four themes. The first section discusses curriculum in the context of social future. The second part consists of articles focusing on the relations between curriculum and education. Third part describes recent international developments in the curricula in different continents and countries. The last part of the book addresses the question of identity and subject in the curriculum.

We are grateful to all the contributors of the book. I am particularly grateful for Bill Pinar and Bill Doll for initiating and helping us to organize the Tampere conference and the support during the years. Without your help and patience the book would not have been published. My special thanks goes to Sirpa Randell, who has done the layout of the book and collected the indexes.

Education is our best hope for the better new world. Let us keep the conversation on.

Eero Ropo
June 2009
In this introductory article I will make a short journey to outline from my intellectual and geographical locale the changing contours of curriculum discourse in the context of increased internationalization and globalization. Even if globalization is not a new phenomenon, still paradoxically, and despite the transnational affinities with philosophies and theories of human nature, of culture and society throughout the modern time, education systems and their historical and cultural undercurrents have remained surprisingly unfamiliar outside the particular contexts of their application, the respective nation states. Even the comparative education as a discipline rather has maintained the unfamiliarity between different national systems than has been instrumental to fostering understanding of the cultural variations on the always-already global theme of education. The parameters of comparative education usually set the “differences” on the quantitative scale without questioning the undergirding rationale and its broader historical, cultural or political platforms. Differences come to be explained as a deviation from the range of the average and “normal” and without revealing which is possibly silenced, marginalized or disregarded. The same normalizing discourse has prevailed in other educational disciplines and approaches; in philosophy, when human consciousness and action have been presented as anthropomorphically anchored abstractions of good life or of the operations of human consciousness that discard or neglect the effective realities; in sociology, when through the overarching net of standardizing discourses, like agency and structure, the idiosyncratic, hybrid dynamics of the society become dismissed in order to be replaced, reinforced and legitimized by other homogenizing and assimilatory discursive forces of the nation state. In psychological theories of learning and curriculum the purification of subjectivity from the stains of the cultural, social, and political has turned the scientistic discourse of parsimony, objectivity and neutrality to the limits of epistemic grotesque:

For centuries the poet has sung his [sic!] near infinitudes; the theologian has preached of his depravity and hinted of his participation in the divine; the philosopher has struggled to encompass him in his systems, only to have him repeatedly escape; the novelist and dramatist have captured this fleeting moments of pain and purity in unforgettable esthetic forms; and the [man!] engaged in the curriculum has the temerity to reduce this being to a single term—learner. (Huebner, 1966)

The propensity for reductionism by universalizing, standardizing and normalizing—and, by the same token, marginalizing and segregating—the linguistic, cultural and racial differences under the authoritative canon of Euro-American rationality has prevailed in all the traditional disciplines of education: history, philosophy, psychology and sociology. The prevalence of those epistemic closures has effectively censored the recognition of the power/knowledge nexuses in education and curriculum by camouflaging them, as they were, faithful to the empiricist tenets, unproblematic and pre-given. The prolonged lack of theory and theorization in curriculum and education in any other sense than in the atmosphere of control, method and normalcy in accordance with the Western epistemic canon owes to the prolonged reign of empiricism: reality is already ready out there to be discovered and named on empiricist whim with a marginal interest in the constitution of reality: how phenomena, reality, and knowledge are made up, ordered, and patterned by human interests.

Due to globalization and internationalization, social and educational sciences are forced to revise their thinking to find new ways to speak about the changed circumstances around us and to reorient themselves conceptually in the non-integrated multiplicity of a world without frontiers. The recent international research in education has convincingly shown how global changes are reflected in shifts in our understanding of who we are, what education is for, and how the future appears. The most important shifts are taking place or have already taken place in the understanding of the conditions of constitution of the self/subjectivity and of the other traditional framework of education, the nation state.

DIDAKTIK AND CURRICULUM AS MASTER DISCOURSES

Altogether this book draws on those educational shifts that are taking place in different rhythms in different parts of the world and in one sense the book can be seen as fostering further the internationally vibrant infrastructure in the field of curriculum theory and studies as manifested in the series of conferences and in the establishment of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum
Studies in 2000. Prior to the eventual establishment of the IAACS there were a couple of conferences that in retrospect foreshadowed as a kind of catalyst in the founding of the organization. The first important events where a dialogue between different international intellectual traditions in curriculum research were initially launched took place in some conferences, especially in the Oslo conference in 1995, that took together researchers from Germany, Great Britain, the USA, Switzerland, and Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Oslo conference was foreshadowed an internationally less inclusive conference in Kiel a couple of years earlier. In the proceedings of the Oslo conference, Bjoerg Gundem and Stefan Hopmann (Eds.), Didaktik and/or Curriculum, the tentative contemporary mapping of the internationalizing field of curriculum studies were undertaken mostly in terms of the Euro-American discourse: between the Continental European Didaktik and the Anglo-Saxon-American Curriculum traditions.

This starting point was obvious on the basis that many national curriculum theories and designs worldwide outside Germany and the USA and despite their variegated current manifestations and national idiosyncrasies have drawn their initial theoretical and organizational inspirations from these two predominating discourses. The educational preoccupations presented in the Didaktik and/or Curriculum rekindled a broader interest in the Didaktik tradition especially in the US context arguably for the first time since the American Herbartianism at the turn of the twentieth century. Ian Westbury (1998, pp. 47–78) sees in his article Didaktik and Curriculum Studies these two traditions “embedded in very different practical, cultural and structural contexts. They are very different intellectual systems developed out of very different starting points, and seek to do very different kinds of intellectual and practical work.” He attempts to outline a theoretical framework that would offer “a way of seeing a constructive complementarity between the two traditions.” This interest in promoting Didaktik in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of curriculum grew a couple of years later into a book-lengthy historical and theoretical account in English, Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts (Eds.) (2000), Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition. That book finished the in the early 1990’s started research project between Didaktik and Curriculum. Apart from the general mapping of the trends and traditions in respective intellectual traditions in the project, one theme was emphasized especially Ian Westbury’s instructive contribution to it (Westbury, in Gundem & Hopman 1998, pp. 47–78) where he analyzed both the commons interests and differences in both traditions. One of Westbury’s main concerns focuses on the void of the active and professionally independent role of the teacher in the American educational...
policy and educational settings as well as in curriculum theory more generally, and for that “void” he seeks remedies from the traditions and practices of Didaktik theories. “It is their view of the teacher, and the role of the teacher within their theoretical and institutional systems, which represents the most dramatic difference in viewpoint between Didaktik and curriculum studies” (Westbury 1998, p. 53). Westbury’s criticism based on the institutional history of the American school systems shows the detriments to good education and teaching what follows when teachers’ work is subdued mainly and mechanistically to the systemic interests. He writes (p. 52):

Thus, from the origins of curriculum work in the urban school bureaucracies of the 19th century, through the period of reform of the 1920s and the 1930s which created the modern comprehensive high school, through the curriculum reforms of the Sputnik era to the concerns of today with nation-wide systemic “reform” and the national curriculum, the focus has been on public needs and on the adjustment of the system to the perceived public “needs” of each time. Within the perspective of the curriculum, teachers are always, …, the invisible agents of the system, to be remotely controlled by that system for public ends, not independent actors with their own visible role to play in the schools. They are seen as “animated” and directed by the system and not as sources of animation for the system.

Westbury’s critique continues to maintain that to focus on “systemic technologies” of perpetual school reforms tends tacitly emphasize that “the curriculum and its transmission, teaching, is ideally ‘teacher-proof’.”

Thus both traditional curriculum theory and “practical” curriculum work have seen the abstracted teacher as a (if not the) major brake on the necessary innovation, change, and reform that the schools always require, a “problem” which must be addressed by highly elaborated theories and technologies of curriculum implementation. Teachers are seen as the conservative source of the “failure” of much innovation. It is the task of teacher education to prepare teachers as effective vehicles for delivering the curriculum and its goals to students by equipping them with the most effective methods for delivering that content. It was and is not their task to reflect on that content. (p. 53)

Westbury locates the broader concerns of actual practices of educational and curriculum policy visible worldwide in the Anglo-Saxon curriculum. It could be contended, however, that is not as much the curriculum itself as its theoretical amenability to the uses of broader political initiatives of neoliberalism where
curriculum is employed as its operational core in education. In this context, however, education loses its Deweyan specificity as an institution and a practice and it comes to be drawn to the universal regime of other organizations, a regime of corporate managerialism, where parallel to the economic profit/loss, the bottom line discourse equals to the educational-organizational performance of the individual: success/failure in accountabilities and tests in the context of the neoliberal Evaluative State.

In the American case, the dominant idea of animating the curriculum idea has been organizational, focusing on the task to of building systems of schools that have as an important part of their overall organizational framework a “curriculum-as-manual”, containing the templates for coverage and methods that are seen as guiding, directing, or controlling a school’s, or a school system’s, day-by-day classroom work. These manuals replicate, in place after place, the somewhat open categories of the national, institutional curriculum; but, it is seen a major responsibility and task of each school system to decide, for itself and after appropriate public deliberation, what the larger national curriculum means for this place in the light of its circumstances. The resulting curricula are sometimes progressive in spirit and sometimes not so progressive, but that difference is not essential. What is essential is the idea that public control of the schools means that, whatever the character of the curriculum that is developed for a school or school system, teachers as employees of the school system have been, and are, expected to “implement” their system’s curricula—albeit with verve and spirit—just as system’s business officials are expected to implement a system’s accounting procedures or pilots are expected to implement their airline’s rules governing what they should do (…). Teachers are, to use Clandinin and Connelly’s (…) apt metaphor, seen as more or less passive “conduits” of the system’s or district’s curriculum decisions. Curriculum as a field of study with in American education has traditionally sought to address, and to prescribe for, the problems involved in developing and implementing curricula seen in this way. (Westbury 2000, p. 17)

Conceived the way Westbury does, the remedies for the detriments of the Anglo-American curriculum theory offered by the Didaktik discourses to orchestrate the curriculum, the teacher’s work, and the school seems prima facie appealing:

In the German case, on the other hand, the state’s curriculum making has not been seen as something that could or should explicitly direct a teachers work. Indeed, teachers are guaranteed professional autonomy, “freedom to teach,” without control by a curriculum in the American sense. … Didaktik is centered on the forms of reasoning about teaching appropriate for an autonomous
professional teacher who has complete freedom within the framework of the Lehrplan to develop his or her approach to teaching. Didaktik, as a system for thinking about the problems of curriculum, is not centered on the task of directing and managing the work of system of schools or of selecting a curriculum for this school or this district. Instead Didaktik, ..., provides teachers with ways considering the essential what, how, and why questions around their teaching of their students in their classrooms. These are, of course, the core issues that are the heart of a reflective practice of teaching! Within Didaktik the range of possible answers to these questions is further elaborated to become, in turn, frameworks for structuring, and sometimes assessing, the larger rationales teachers have for their classroom work. The centrality, Didaktik gives such rationales for teacher thinking reflects its starting point that every teacher must, necessarily, assume a role as reflective educational (and curriculum) theorist in order to teach anything, anywhere. … As I have suggested, it is these starting points around Didaktik, and the ways in which they are elaborated and worked out in relation to the idea of Bildung, that makes this tradition so interesting to those from outside its northern and middle European worlds. Didaktik offers ways of thinking about issues that have been, to this point, barely identified, and certainly not elaborated, in American educational theory. We argue … that a better-developed relationship between curriculum and Didaktik would promise a great deal for Anglo-Saxon educational theory, curriculum studies, and teacher education. However, seeing the promise of Didaktik takes work—because as Reid (…) pointed out, the Didaktik tradition, like the curriculum tradition, is rooted in the particularities of a national history, national habits, and national aspirations. (pp. 18–19)

Thus as Westbury’s account implicates the issue of the role of the teacher refers, not just to the unfertile comparative benchmarking of the national systems, but to the understanding of broader political, cultural, and educational genealogies. What is implicitly at stake in Westbury’s analysis is the aspiration toward academic freedom of teachers that would be at least in principle manifest in Didaktik practice. But as McKernan (2008, p. 51) poignantly remarks, “There is a huge difference in the freedom to plan curriculum enjoyed by college faculty and those who labor in schools … schoolteachers in both sides of the Atlantic today perform more as functionaries in a top-down bureaucracy.” I like to add that it has been that way throughout the history and the Didaktik tradition does not make any exception. Schoolteachers have never and nowhere been able to follow their educational interest in the spirit of academic freedom, and the teacher education curricula has hardly ever sufficiently provided them with the respective intellectual resources: “The
school has been considered the real space and the university the theoretical space” (Baker, 2001, p. 41). Consequently, Pinar (2004) discusses “the deep-seated and pervasive anti-intellectualism in the field of education, obvious in teacher education, and expressed in the anti-theoretical vocationalism found not only in that field” (p. 9). To prefer the Didaktik tradition as the discourse of teachers’ academic freedom to conceiving it as a particular national effort to prepare functionaries and civil servants for the nation-state educational bureaucracy, not very much alike to the US situation, proves questionable for reasons some of them I would like to disclose later in my chapter. Yet the question of the academic freedom of schoolteachers deserves serious scholarly attention in the times when “teacher educational policy has been managerial and technical-rational … when there is an unreal rhetoric of excellence that does not have any fidelity with education practice in schools, … policies that fly in the face of true autonomy and teacher professionalism” (McKernan, 2008, p. 55).

Westbury’s keen enthusiasm about Didaktik raises questions of more profound theoretical affinities and historically longer roots than just the professional status of the teacher. In the Didaktik texts there echoes more generally, without always explicitly articulating it, the voice of the German Idealism where the discourse between the balance between freedom and rationality creates the core of modern mentality and its cultivation in educational settings: To liberate oneself, in Kantian terms, from the “self-induced tutelage,” a sapere aude (dare to use your own reason) -attitude, to become human would mean to become free, but within the parameters of reason. Yet, to find a balance between freedom and reason is hard personal, organizational, and political dilemma where the conditions, as well as the obstacles, of possibility for becoming a free, autonomous subject are formed by the existing society as Kant’s account implicates as a kind of the history of the present in terms of curriculum and Didaktik debate:

One of the greatest problems of education is how to unite submission to the necessary restraint with the child’s capability of exercising his [sic!] free will—for restraint is necessary. How am I to develop the sense of freedom in spite of the restraint? I am to accustom my pupil to endure the restraint of his freedom, and at the same time I am to guide him to use his freedom aright. Without this all education is merely mechanical, and the child, when education is over, will never be able to make a proper use of his freedom. He should be made to feel early the inevitable opposition of society, that he may learn how difficult it is to support himself, to endure privation, and to acquire those things which are necessary to make him independent (Kant, 1991, pp. 27–28).
The German program of modernity explicitly geared to education that Kant articulates in the late-Enlightenmental context and what culminated in Hegel, who sees the whole world history as a process of becoming where Spirit frees itself through the constant interplay between subjective, objective, and absolute realms of Spirit manifested itself in the spheres of individuality, family life, bourgeois society and the state (Hegel, 1905). German Idealism and how Hegel envisioned the social and political processes anchored to it foreshadowed Marx’s and Engel’s materialistic and critical theories between economic basis of society and its embodiments in human consciousness. The multilayered educative dynamism manifested in the German Idealism discourse of permanent becoming and its often critical and variegated receptions formed the mental landscape and intellectual heritage of Western or “Eurocentric” thought—and as such it set the educational potential in the 1—World (Ich—Welt) framework which is both the bottom-line denominator of the theoretical commitments in Didaktik theories and the basic nexus for more nuanced and specified educational and curricular theorizing (see Klafki, 2000, pp. 85–107). Basically, this framework between subjectivity and its belonging still provides a structuring but critical vocabulary for the current social, educational, and philosophical thought from poststructuralism to postcolonial and subaltern studies. Yet, paradoxically, the dynamism of permanent ‘becoming’ of a human as a resource of Didaktik, resting on the pillars of classical German idealism, which took seriously the view that intersubjective, I-World relationships constitute our subjectivity and thus avoided ‘in advance’ the fatal flaws of atomistic individualism in liberal political and psychological theory, seems to have been exhausted:

In Germany, it has become quiet around general didactics. The controversies of the late 1960s and early 1970s have died down; the theoretical situation has been basically stable for decades. … this is surprising because one might perhaps expect, given the widespread talk about the crisis in instruction, in school, and the teaching profession, that the wheat of didactics would bloom on a theoretical level. Just the opposite is the case! In general didactics, there has been no theoretical discussion worth speaking of for around 2 decades … genuine theoretical discussion has been largely replaced by the development and defense of certain teaching methods on a more practical level (Terhart, 2003, pp. 25–26).

The suffocation of the theoretical conversation in Didaktik and its respective collapse into the everywhere else actual “culture of method” (see the genealogies of this phenomenon: Autio, 2006, pp. 34–57; Doll, 2005, pp. 21–75) is against the abundance of historical resources of the German intellectual history quite
GLOBALIZATION, CURRICULUM, AND NEW BELONGINGS OF SUBJECTIVITY

surprising. The consideration about the distinctive epistemic qualities of the human and cultural studies that led to the conclusion that those disciplines should not to be understood as sheer copies of the natural sciences was a result of the succession of German “critiques,” the conditions of possibility of variegated forms of human reason: theoretical, practical, aesthetic, historical, from Kant to Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). The original of Didaktik in its most influential, hermeneutically inspired form was theoretically sketched just by Dilthey in his hermeneutic efforts (Dilthey, 1910/1981). The cessation of the theoretical conversation during the last decades around Didaktik might have something to do with the obvious reluctance to ‘post’approaches of any kind. This in turn might have related to the German genealogy of rationality, its theoretical affinities and its institutional manifestations.

EMERGING CHALLENGES FOR DIDAKTIK AND CURRICULUM AND THEIR NEOLIBERAL OFFSPRING

The notion of rationality in Bildung and Didaktik, as in German social theorizing throughout and more generally, exemplified prominently and quite recently in Habermas’s theory of communicative action (Habermas 1984; 1987), rather deal with egalitarian practice than instrumental efficacy. Instrumentalism is there in Habermas’s theory, but immersed and contextualized within the ideals of communicative action and democratic practice, which in turn is located, arguably and fatally, within the discourse of universalized nation-state. This ambivalent stance on not-simply-calculative, comprehensive yet tightly controlled, nation-state bound notion of rationality present in theorists from Kant to Habermas might be one reason for the seeming German intellectual embarrassment, manifest also in the exhaustion of Didaktik discourses, with postmodern or poststructural or any other ‘post’-theorizing. In Habermas’s eyes, for instance, the Grand Narrative of modernity is still unfinished under the authority of reason conceived of as egalitarian practice (Habermas, 1996): the world is not ready and the Fukuyaman end of history was just one phase of continuing discursive battle in the Habermasian “still unfinished project of modernity.” The intellectual atmosphere is very dissimilar in France where the whole bunch of the contributions of their most prominent scholars,’ Baudrillard, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, explicit or implicit thrust to ‘postmodernize’ can be conceived as an effort to register the long French intellectual history reconceived as obsessed with instrumental rationality, starting from the Cartesian or French Enlightenment “l’homme machine” kind of fantasies and rationalities of human progress. The French postmodernism and poststructuralism is in one of its senses a reaction against absurdities and excesses of instrumental rationality as a part of the larger transformation of human sciences,
where the organization of knowledge, its epistemological premises and régimes, was questioned, as in Foucault’s re-visioning of Enlightenment science as deeply invested in the project of control (Foucault, 1989).

Against these general European developments, the American Reconceptualist turn in the Curriculum tradition (Pinar et al., 1995) manifests most interestingly historical and intellectual crosscurrents that transferred, maybe partly subconsciously like an instance of the Hegelian cunning of history, from Didaktik tradition its original disinterest in instrumentality, empiricism, and Explanation in favor of humanities, arts, cultural studies, and Understanding, and at the same time most strongly advocated French ‘post’approaches.

In their ‘pre-post’, modernist forms both curriculum traditions, Curriculum and Didaktik, are intellectual heirs of the Enlightenment yet in different ways. I have elsewhere (Autio, 2006, pp. 99–124) tried to depict the locales of control in respective traditions and their mingled intellectual undercurrents between “conformity of wills” and “predictability of behavior” as competing strategic political alternatives to massifying schooling in the 19th century United States. History tells us that the US solution was to choose psychology as the core discourse about the curriculum when there was no hope to find conformity of wills amidst nationally and culturally disparate immigration masses.

In the Anglo-American Curriculum tradition, individualization takes place in terms of collective interests stated and organized top-down, from the normalizing pressures of scientific universalism generated by psychological discourse of a “learner” intertwined with the social requirements to rule-obeyant behavior as a citizen. As such, a close affinity between Weberian instrumental rationality and the Tyler Rationale, “the bible of the curriculum field” could form. In the Tyler Rationale, a four-step model of education based on means-ends logic, faithful to the self-understanding of the modern era, instrumental rationality manifests itself on the one hand through empiricism—it is through “truths” as they are related to the existence of states of affairs in the world. On the other, instrumental rationality is featured through effectiveness, through interventions in the world with whose help states of affairs can be brought into existence (see Habermas, 1984, pp. 8–9). By psychologizing subjectivity and the curriculum, stripped out of metaphysical, moral, or political considerations, the Tyler Rationale would form a kind of circular reasoning in curriculum planning (“Curriculum Development”), where educational-psychological goals are constantly revised and shaped along with the most recent empirical findings and empiricist fashions (“brain-based,” “evidence-based,” “research-based,” etc.) and crossed with the current “needs” of society. This double-bind between psychologized subjectivity and society are to be tested against
its effective applicability indicated as preferred behavior changes in students (Autio, 2006, p. 114).

If the pinnacle of the regulation of the selves in the American curriculum was a “learner” around whose behavior the empirically produced psychological discourse would legitimize the universal features of the subject and, consequently, administrative standardization of educational enterprise and its systems, a different but discursively similar project of control, is manifest in Didaktik discourse. “Conformity of wills” was a more convincing form of political and educational discourse among more homogenous German population in the post-1800 as common history and language, similar geographical locales, and shared contestation between religious and cultural values bind people together. In this context the nation-state as a particular form of organization of the interactions became possible and desirable.

This imagining of the nation-state was mediated by Newtonian physics and operated as a new source for identity, encouraging those who had never met to believe that they have something in common. This “something” had to be worked at, though, for it had to transcend seemingly different religious beliefs. Once imagined as valid, however, the “something in common” authorizes zealous reform efforts. The efforts are to perfect, nullify, or make better those who are positioned as the detractors and whose “nationality” or kinship is now being named as the same as the reformers. Thus, there emerges with the imagining of a nation as an absolute space across which proximate, intersecting forces flow, the possibility for reform of its invisible particles. It is amid these imaginings and the possibilities they spawned that the New Man, New Woman, and New Child became significant to the identification of the modern German nation-state (Baker, 2001, p. 352).

Thus the directions of trajectories curriculum and Didaktik created for governing the formation of subjectivity were opposite: in the US context from micro to macro spaces, in Didaktik vice versa, reproducing and reclaiming the old Greek microcosmos-macrocosmos model of paideia, where macrocosmos is eventually drastically reduced to the secularized nation-state as the container of educational ideas and innovation, and as a locus of control.

The German Bildung/Didaktik tradition, where Bildung can be understood as a kind of self-formation along the lines of a wider belonging and where Didaktik refers generally to the pedagogical techniques for intertwining if not spiralling subjectivity and society together, has constituted instrumentality by its claims of unspecified notions of human nature, humanistic values, and by its special emphasis on the role of the nation-state as an “objective structure” of education. The tradition of Bildung
may appear as a powerful discursive attempt to inculcate in the teacher’s mind and behavior not only the procedural tenets and prescriptions of Didaktik but even to subordinate their pedagogic intentions and will through Didaktik to the speculative and, in the context of globalization, increasingly untenable values manifested in the mythical “inner form of the State,” where “the state is the pure form of Bildung”: … the state as an educating entity is school and is represented by the singular order of educational processes within it” (Weniger, 2000, p. 120, italics in original). Genuine professional consideration, necessary freedom, and self-responsibility are subtly but effectively harnessed, through the doctrines and discourses of the whole and unitary subjectivity, to the interests of the nation-state mandated by humanist science and ethics. This rigid institutional and intellectual framework strives toward governing subjectivity via the subtly mixed discourses of nationalism and humanity (Autio, 2006, pp. 5–6). Yet, the role of the nation state as the moral framework as well as the financial and material guarantee of Bildung is no longer self-evident. Nation state policy is subordinated to claims of a global economy, the result being the adoption of corporate logic as the operational philosophy and policy of nation-building. In this rhetoric, education worldwide under the reifying and colonizing effect of the (educational) market is converging toward a standardized performativity culture where there is decreasingly space for the humanist or national values promoted by the Didaktik tradition. Second, in the circumstances of multiculturalism and claims of globalization-as-uniformity, the humanist tenets of the Didaktik tradition themselves have been critically challenged in terms of race (Eurocentrism), class, gender, and dis/ability by postmodern, poststructural, and postcolonial studies. The onto-epistemological kernel of the educational discourse in both curriculum traditions becomes visible: Individualization and standardization go hand in hand, though in different guises.

For curriculum theory, the question for the emerging educational scaffolding for subjectivity and its belonging still remains after the crisis of the double nexus of psychologization and the nation state, when different forms of postnationalism and respective forms of belonging challenge the conventional locales of curriculum theory. This means that curriculum theory would necessarily detach itself from intellectually supporting intensified bureaucratic structures that are always reinvigorating themselves in renewed guises, most recently introducing “quality assurance systems” and other organizational corporate imitations, administrative structures and discourses that are spreading institutional mistrust, doubling, and externalizing the control already inherently in the processes of learning, teaching, and education. Emerging discourses of belonging transcend those flaws based on atomistic individualism of liberal political theory present in traditional Tylerian
curriculum, or the German nationalistic-humanistic Didaktik discourse, or likewise the current self-aggrandizing, autarkic rhetoric of neoliberal individuality à la Margaret Thatcher: “there is no such thing as society, but just a set of potentially entrepreneurial individuals …” (Lash & Urry, 1994, p. 6).

Thus the transformations in successive historical patterns to define subjectivity, agency, or self has been traveled through the Didaktik conformity of wills to behaviorist-cognitive predictability of behavior to neoliberal individual performativity (Autio, 2006, p. 155); from the nation-state citizenry of Didaktik to the behavior of a learner in Curriculum to the capacity of the individual to deliver ‘learning outputs’ at the lowest cost in neoliberal education discourse. The shifts in educational emphases reflect and draw on the shift in the scope of science traditionally understood: “‘performativity’ rather than ‘truth’ has become the criterion of scientific knowledge” (Lyotard & Luhmann in Crook et al., 1992, p. 216). The emphasis is in the production of individuality in the collectivist terms characterized not only by the quest for objectivity and universality, but also by the other extreme of unfettered neoliberal relativism and individualism:

Not only the subject of the psychological laboratory, but also the humanist self, is ahistorical and asocial. The ideal self has freed itself from tradition and authority and dissociated itself from the society it inhabits. (Kvale, 1997, pp. 42–43)

And, neoliberal economics rest upon the autarkic human self, it assumes that individual alone can master the whole of their lives, that they can derive and renew their capacity for action from within themselves. Talk of “self-entrepreneur” makes this clear. Yet this ideology blatantly conflicts with everyday experience in … the worlds of work, family and local community, which show that individual is not a monad but is selfinsufficient, and increasingly tied to others, … The ideological notion of the self-sufficient individual ultimately implies the disappearance of any mutual sense of obligation. (Beck et al., 2002, p. xxi)

What is then in the light of recent theory the further conditions of possibility for subjective belonging in the context of globalization characterized by the exhausting or untenable intellectual resources offered by the discourses of traditional critical theory, academic psychology, the nation-state, or of the performance-oriented society governed by the unruly rules of economic globalization? The common bind of Western rationality in these otherwise very disparate discourses still weaves individuals into “the unified, monolithic, essentialized subject, capable of fully
conscious, fully rational action, a subject assumed in most liberal and emancipatory discourse” (Lather 1997, p. 103).

THE NEW BELONGINGS OF SUBJECTIVITY

Despite the fundamentalist kind of return to the modes of instrumentality in education and curriculum policy manifested in quality and performance discourses as new locus of external control and supported by the neo-objectivist attachment to psychological and sociological theories, the basic structure in educational and curriculum theories, the relationship between the individual and society, has been drastically deconstructed by the processes of globalization. Even more, it has been radically rent asunder the very basis for social scientific research in general. In education, the traditional manner of thinking either in terms of individual psychology or discrete, geopolitical territories remains largely untenable in the face of youth culture, economic upheavals and instabilities on the free market, immanent prospects for eco-disaster, and rapidly shifting technological possibilities. The collapse of the main framework of research, the nation state, as a discrete territorial space and as a unit of analysis, is the case with other social sciences, too. The modernist discourse of the nation state in social and educational sciences, that assumes a container theory of society (see Beck, 2000, pp. 23–24), became an absolutely necessary concept in and through the work of the classical theorists. Beyond all the differences, such classical social theorists as Émile Durkheim, Max Weber and even Karl Marx shared a territorial definition of modern society, and consequently, a model of society centered on the national state. This view where society equals a nation state as a center of social, political and educational activity—and as a unit of scientific analysis—has today been shaken by globality and globalization. In the past, all kinds of social practices—production, culture, language, labor market, capital, education—were stamped and standardized, defined and rationalized, by the nation state—or at least were labeled as national economy, national language, literature, public life, history, national education, and so on. The categories of the state’s self-observation became the categories of empirical social science, so that sociological, psychological, and other social scientific definitions of reality confirmed those of bureaucracy (ibid., italics added). Today, the beginnings, endings, and interconnections of those activities such as production and education clearly exceed the borders of any one place, complicating if not obfuscating the role of nation states and “the individual” in governance in general.

These recognitions are extremely important. It has led to revision of how to account for who and where we are: neither subject-formation (psychological accounts of development or theories of Bildung) nor nation-formation in terms of container
theories of society suffice in the context of globalization. Important re-interpretations have emerged through the field of curriculum studies already since the 1970’s when the Reconceptualization Movement (Pinar et al., 1995) uncharacteristically in regard to the otherwise reactive and anti-avantgardist and anti-intellectual tradition in education research was among the first to recognize the need for a paradigm shift implicated by the linguistic turn and post-empiricism not only for education, but human studies and social sciences alike. The Reconceptualization Movement encouraged theoretical curiosity that created a springboard for more genuine interdisciplinary discourses in the field of curriculum studies that broke the tight boxes between the divisions of educational research as history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology of education, and was instrumental in recognizing the partisan alliance between empiricist science and (state) bureaucracy. Through a closer look of ‘post’approaches at the reality of fragmentary and dissensual identification and subjectification processes the presupposition of coherent, fully formed identities that psychological, humanist and nation state-centered theories of education and curriculum held are already crumbling. Important re-interpretations have emerged through the field of curriculum studies especially since the 1990’s and urged consideration of the different planes upon which the interlinkage between subjectivity and society can be understood in the context of the myriad role options and of the re-coding of citizenry of globality. As an implication informed by the big pictures of curriculum studies, the method-driven didactical models are being replaced by the more diversified and hybrid notions of learning, teaching and knowledge-production—paying critically attention to multiple intelligences, different learning styles, constructivist teaching strategies, virtual learning environments, and integrated curricula to name a few.

The lesson of those shifts was that neither nation nor state nor isolated individual are still available categories for organizing education. Globalization is undermining the project of modernity by dis-embedding of the political project of the state from the cultural project of nationhood. The most striking feature of these new discourses is the contested nature of national belonging. National culture has lost its integrative function and the nation has been deconstructed in contemporary public discourse. As a result the nation code is opened to new interpretations arising from global cultural opportunities. This has loosened or even decoupled the tie between citizenship and nationality; citizenship is no more unequivocally definable by nationality as a result of the growing presence of transnational processes in peoples’ lives as well as the result of the impact of globalization on the nation-state. While the nation-state is still the single most important geopolitical unit, it has not been able to reverse the worldwide swing towards transnational politics with
new forms of citizenship, for instance, cultural citizenship, ecological citizenship, technological citizenship with respective new rights and responsibilities. The classical duties of citizenship are no longer simply framed in terms of the obligations of the citizen to the state, which has been one of the classical frame of reference in traditional educational theories, but they concern responsibility for humanity, for future generations, all of which are increasingly wrapped within responsibility for nature and environment. Political, social and cultural globalization contribute that participation in political community no longer occurs exclusively on the national level. The new forms, flexibilities and differentiations of citizenship separate it from nationality at the same time when there appear ruptures between nation and state (see Delanty & O’Mahony, 2002, pp. 173–175).

The dissolution of the modern society and the social as a unit of analysis, fully-fledged in the globalization, was foreshadowed already in the discourses of modernity and its rational embodiments. The intensified individualization is tied to globalization and has become, consequently, but somehow paradoxically, “a structural characteristics of highly differentiated societies” (Beck et al., 2002, p. xxi, italics added). This paradox, explaining the social by individualization, could be accounted as an index of the completion of those modernist theories of society that took for granted the coherence of the idea of society as an institutional embodiment of a rational actor. In more recent approaches of social theory, “society as a fixed and objective reality has been replaced by global flows and mobilities, networks between diverse things, by forms of collective action, communities of interest, cultural discourses, self-constructing systems …”. The contingency, transience, and uncertainty that has been a feature of recent theorizing, especially while related to the processes of globalization, “highlights the multiple ways social reality is continuously created in processes that cannot be reduced to either agency or structures” (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 2). What would be, then, the mediations between the subjective and the social that are not fixed or reducible to institutional structures under the manifold conditions of globalization—and that that would recreate education and curriculum as social and cultural reconstruction in societies that can no longer be easily regulated or bounded by objectivist imaginings of modernist science and the nation-state?

A closer look of the recent study at the pre-histories of the nation-state reveals that many forms of national consciousness have emerged out of polyethnic contexts, that polyethnicity was actually the norm in history to the arrival of the nation-state.

Reacting against the view that in fact the identities that did evolve in the last 200 years were predominantly primordial and exclusivist, several theorists have emphasized the hybrid nature of nationalism. Thus rather than looking beyond
nationalism for a cosmopolitan future, these figures see within nationalism the signs of a more reflexive and hybrid consciousness but one which cannot be understood as liberal patriotism (Delanty & O’Mahony, 2002, p. 182).

Thus, in a closer poststructural and postcolonial scrutiny, the nation itself shares the qualities of the narrative to a much larger degree than the former approaches of social sciences circulating around, consolidating and reproducing the nation-state bureaucracy would admit. The postcolonial view of the nation defies more effectively the narratives of closure what was at stake in the heydays of the nation-state, when society was to be conceived as a closed territorial and cultural container. The nation is a narrative and discursive construction that does not exist outside language and imagination as less as does individual identity. The experience of difference underlies all kinds of identity, including national identity. This means that the nation today as a multicultural society is always beyond a narrative of closure and it is a constantly transgressing boundaries, when new peoples and different kinds of meanings are incorporating, and, at the same time, as a parallel process, the self must define itself as an other as a process of hybridity within self/other, inside/outside discourses (see, ibid.). In these recodification processes nations and selves as unified or unitary and their hegemonic status are becoming more and more contested as a normative basis of nationalism and national identity. For instance, like Delanty and O’Mahony (p. 183) argue referring to Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*,

the diasporic identities are not purely negative conditions, or shaped entirely by the dominant culture, its elites as well as publics, but instead are dynamic. Black consciousness, …, is transnational, drawing from the Caribbean, the United States, Africa and Britain. In other words, many forms of consciousness are formed in the context of social relations that are located in transnationalized and marginalized contexts. … To reveal how the nation can be reread in terms of hidden histories involves a deconstructive approach, which also has a constructive moment in bringing to consciousness subaltern voices. In another sense it is an attempt to ‘rescue history from the nation.’

Also in Europe, the old nationalisms give way to new interpretations of postnationalism within the culturally more porous frames of the nation-states. In Ireland, for instance, postcolonial Derridean perspectives have informed a new Irish postnationalism with the demise of the older forms of nationalism. This move “is characterized by a shift in the nation code from the state to culture and the rediscovery of the marginality as legitimate difference and the self as hybrid” (ibid., p. 182). In Germany, in a different way, Jürgen Habermas have advocated
in the context of public debates about the future of the German national identity, “irreversibly tainted since the Holocaust,” the view that the only viable form of national identity is one that is based on a identification with the principles of the constitution. The abstractness of moral universalism drawing on universal human rights is balanced by the cultural distinctiveness of the processes of globalization. This view of cosmopolitanism, rooted in the concrete contexts as the realities of globalization, “is always more than the homogenous standardization” unlike the older Kantian decontextualized cosmopolitanism, because “it involves a wide range of responses from the lifeworld.” In the context of multicultural societies, national identity cannot be based on any single ethnic or cultural identity as less as it can resist the reflexivity and self-confrontation that is irreversibly integral to all aspects of life. In these new deconstructions of the nation code, “the emphasis is on a transnational, postcolonial cosmopolitanism in which, under the conditions of globalization, national identities are reconstituted as sites of resistance. Like nations, cosmopolitanism becomes pluralized and instead of being founded on an ideal of unattachment, the new cosmopolitanism is a rooted one.” (Delanty & O’Mahony, 2002, p. 183.)

These hybrid forms of subjectivities with their intra-national re-codings, rooted in local contexts but being marked by global impact, is drawing and looking for their normative basis, however, more on the malleability of culture than the rigid bureaucratic structures of state or polity. Still, the cultural and psychological inertia guarantees that transnational forms of identity, despite their ‘under the permanent construction’—character and due to their global sensitivities, “are a good deal more stable than the postmodern accounts suggest” (ibid., p. 186).

These new constellations between subjectivity and the nation-state informed by a vast array of ‘post’theories confirm the observation that “nationalism was one kind of reaction to the particular constellation of social, political, and cultural forces that shaped modernity” (Delanty & O’Mohanty, 2002, p. 169). The same is true of the partisan role of the social sciences that were instrumental in the modernist nation building and its political authority. The respective view on education in particular as a modernist enterprise having drawn mainly on national, even nationalistic, views based on the unitary notion of the self and a container imagery of society have, as indicated shortly above, become highly contested in recent social and curriculum theory. While this contestation is increasingly intensified by the ambivalent process of cultural, political and economic globalizations, in education and curriculum policy worldwide this ambivalence and variety is still viewed as reducible towards uniformity, ironically, from a theoretically articulated concern for diversity. In a sense, such precepts uncritically reclaim the historical and cultural presuppositions
and limitations of Anglo-American Curriculum and European Bildung/Didaktik traditions. Or, more likely, such precepts is losing the intellectual heritage of those traditions; they are not any more in accordance with the psychological, humanist, or bureaucratic tenets of the self and society, but rather, being articulated in terms of economic competitiveness and individual performativity, as a conflated theory of individualized society and of the collectivized self accordingly.

REFERENCES


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PART I

CURRICULUM STUDIES AND SOCIAL FUTURE
I wish to participate in the dialogue proposed by Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts in their edited collection on Didaktik, “generally defined as the art or study of teaching” (2000, p. 3), a definition drawn, perhaps, from Eric Weniger (2000 [1952], p. 112), who defines Didaktik as “primarily, and certainly in everyday terms, the study of teaching and learning, the study of instruction.” If instruction and teaching are subsidiary concepts in U.S. curriculum studies, it appears we are creating a dialogue between differently positioned, as well as historically and culturally distinctive, concepts. Given these “fundamental” (2000, p. 3) differences, Hopmann and Riquarts acknowledge that such a dialogue will be difficult. Despite the difficulty, I want to share their conviction that (2000, p. 4) each tradition can offer the other “substantial insights” and “knowledge.”

Acknowledging (see 2000, p. 4) that curriculum theory has “taught” the Didaktik tradition “important” lessons concerning the relationship between school and society, on the nature and scope of educational planning, and on the socially constructed character of schooling, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 4) assert that the Didaktik tradition can, in turn, support curriculum theory’s interest in reflective teaching, curriculum enactment, and teacher thinking. As well, Didaktik’s emphasis upon content as the “core” of teaching intersects, they suggest, with the “recent awareness” of curriculum theorists that “subject matters” (2000, p. 4).

Drawing upon Comenius, Hopmann and Riquarts (see 2000, p. 4) list three elements of Didaktik. Teaching, they tell us, requires knowing 1) the content of instruction, 2) from where that content comes, and 3) how content is used. This third element is not a matter of “application” as North Americans might understand that concept, but, rather, “a crucial factor induced in any level of educational reasoning” (2000, p. 5). What does this mean? Drawing upon Herbart, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 6) describe instruction as “developing” the student’s knowledge of his or her “obligations, opportunities, and choices.” In Herbart’s view, they summarize, “instruction is education by content” (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 6; emphasis...
in original). This notion, we are told, constitutes the “core” of German Didaktik onto the present day (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 6).

The most important contribution of Herbartianism, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 6) stress, was its extraction of Didaktik from general educational theory, rendering it a discipline of its own, focused on instruction “under the conditions of schooling” as distinct from other instructional settings like self-education or education in the family. Indeed, the “overwhelming success” of Didaktik, they suggest, had to do with being embedded in “certain institutional environments” (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 7). The centralization of schools in Prussia required a theory regulating the interplay of these organizational domains (e.g. the state curriculum, centralized teacher education, and local schooling).

Certainly here is one historical difference, as in the United States, there has been (until four decades ago) a reluctance to centralize curriculum making and to align it with teacher education and local schooling. Despite this historical difference, in the 1960s there were German scholars who imagined that “the” American curriculum tradition seemed to be “far ahead, and much more appropriate, for meeting the needs of a rapidly changing society” (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 8). In Germany, the curriculum “fever,” as Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 9) characterize it, “did not burn very long.” The difference in “institutional structure” (2000, p. 9)—namely that difference between state and federal curriculum control, mentioned earlier—coupled with the strength of the Didaktik tradition within teacher education and school administration meant (Hopmann and Riquarts tell us) that the German appropriation of the American curriculum tradition was brief, a kind of “first love” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 9) describe it, “hot and fierce, but short.”

Didaktik did not emerge from these “wonder years” of “curriculum love” completely “unchanged,” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 9) continue. The changes Hopmann and Riquarts identify bear no resemblance to Mager or to Bruner (the names they associate with “the” American curriculum tradition with which Germans had become infected), but more to the critical tradition that would surface after Schwab’s famous 1969 pronouncement, during the decade of reconceptualization (see Pinar et al., 1995, chapter 4).

First, and “foremost,” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 9) explain, “there is a consensus … today … that Didaktik has to be critical, and even resistant,” especially when state requirements do not coincide with Didaktik’s conception of the “good” of students. (Who determines the “good” of students, asks Tero Autio [2006b], and by what criteria? Do issues of class, gender, and power disappear in such a formulation?) Second, and “no less important,” they continue, Didaktik had
reclaimed its “old strength” as a “mediator” between the content and the teacher by a “radical turn” toward “content” (2000, p. 9).

This is, however, no reconceptualization of the synoptic textbook for teachers, as I have proposed (Pinar, 2006a). Instead, Hopmann and Riquarts are referring to the substitution of general by specific subject-matter Didaktik, that is the “Didaktik produced and delivered inside the boundaries of the school subjects” (2000, p. 9). Just as general curriculum development was replaced by school subject specific areas in the United States (especially after World War II), it appears that in Germany, too, subject-matter Didaktik has replaced the previous, more generalized, versions.8 This fact both fields face.

In order to clarify differences as well as hint at resonances between the two traditions, today I will concentrate on the key concept of Bildung, as presented in the Westbury–Hopmann–Riquarts volume. I underscore two aspects of the concept: the first its historically variable meaning and the second its gendered structure. I conclude with the suggestion that the concept may help us focus our labor of internationalization.

### Bildung

*Humanity can be realized only in an individual way!*

Wolfgang Klafki (2000a, p. 93)

Key to Didaktik is the notion of Bildung, defined by Ian Westbury (2000, p. 24, n. 3) as “being educated, [or] educatedness.” He notes that it also conveys the connotation of the German word bilden, “to form, to shape.” He continues:

*Bildung* is thus best translated as “formation,” implying both the forming of the personality into a unity as well as the product of this formation and the particular “formedness” that is represented by the person. The “formation” in the idea of “spiritual formation” perfectly captures the German sense.

During the Weimar Republic, as we will see, “spiritual” meant “reactionary” (see Jonsson, 2000, p. 24).

The major figure in contemporary Didaktik is, Wolfgang Klafki, a figure whose ideas, are still “very much alive” in German teacher education (Gudmundsdottir, Reinersten & Nordtomme, 2000, p. 332). Klafki (2000b, p. 144) describes the “first step” in preparing to teach as understanding the contents of education, a phrase acknowledging Bildung as a “basic” term of pedagogy (2000b, p. 146). The content of education is not, Klafki (2000b, p. 147) cautions, an “externally given matter,” but
rather, an organic power contained in the content itself, which has a determining influence on the conceptions and thoughts during assimilation by the mind, bringing them into conformity with itself, and thus effecting internal organization. (Willmann, 1957, p. 324; quoted in Klafki, 2000b, p. 147)

If the site of that “internal organization” is the subjective, we may have found one point of resonance between Didaktik and North American curriculum studies, even if we differ over the educational significance of that fact.9

Historically, Klafki (see 2000a, p. 85) tells us, theories of Bildung developed (during the period 1770–1830) in response to the “dangers” and the “possibilities” of the bourgeois subject. The association of Bildung with the bourgeoisie is shared by German-born U.S. historian George Mosse (1996, p. 35), who defines Bildung as that “middle-class urge to self-education and character building that in central Europe was meant to create good citizens.” For Klafki (2000a, p. 87), the primary elements of Bildung include: self-determination, freedom, emancipation, autonomy, responsibility, reason, and independence.

Given these characterological aspirations for education, “creative self-activity”10 becomes the “central” form of Bildung. Klafki (2000a, p. 88) is quick to point out that the self-determination central to Bildung bears no resemblance to what he terms subjectivism, a disavowal designed, I suppose, to underscore subjectivity’s inextricable bond with the social. Self-determination and freedom of thought and action can only be achieved through the study of what is “outside” subjectivity: humanity, culture, the world.

We sense in this view von Humboldt’s emphasis on the “richness of the other” (Humboldt, 1792, vol. I, pp. 64–65; quoted in Lüth, 2000, p. 75). Despite the complexity of the concept, the question determining the content of Bildung remains, Klafki says, the same (see Klafki, 2000a, p. 90): “What objectifications of human history seem best suited to open a person who is engaged in his or her own Bildung to the possibilities and duties of an existence in humanity?” I am reminded of the basic curriculum question in the U.S. tradition, namely: what knowledge is of most worth? The American question is, the I believe, the more political one, especially given the rejection of political, and specifically democratic, concerns in earlier versions of Bildung (see Tröhler, 2003, pp. 760, 773).

To emphasize the inextricable link between subjectivity and objectivity in Bildung, Klafki (2000a, p. 91) quotes Humboldt’s fragment, Theory of the Bildung of Man (1793): “[Education] can be fulfilled only by the linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay.” In this sentence, self-formation occurs through that engagement with the world that promises animation. This order of engagement came to imply that the particular
dimensions of the world that are potentially the most educational are aesthetic in nature.

Indeed, since Schiller (1759–1805), Bildung has been associated with aesthetic education. Schiller regarded aesthetic experience as primarily a “means,” not an end-in-itself, Klafki (2000a, p. 100) tells us, a “tool” employed in the “formation of humanity’s capacity for moral-political reason.” In the Letters on Aesthetic Education, however, Schiller suggests aesthetic education has value in itself. That value has to do with (in Klafki’s words)

the experience of happiness, human fulfillment, of a fulfilled present in which an expectation always emerges that goes beyond that present moment, a hope, a future possibility of the not-yet-realized “good life” of human existence. (Klafki, 2000a, p. 100)

The meaning of Bildung has not remain unchanged. At the end of the nineteenth century, its political-moral potential faded as many embraced an exclusively aesthetic conception of Bildung. This development underscores the concept’s historicity.

THE HISTORICITY OF BILDUNG

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century aesthetes withdrew from political struggle in the public sphere to private worlds where they might cultivate perfection (Janik & Tolman, 1973; Le Rider, 1993). This is one critique of Robert Musil’s (1955 [1906]) character Torless, who watches but fails to intervene in the rape of a schoolmate (see Rogowski, 1994). Musil was an Austrian who denied the uniqueness and autonomy of Austrian culture, regarding it as an extension of German culture. Like George Mosse, Musil emphasized, Stefan Jonsson (2000, p. 41) tells us, the “intimate” relationship between the bourgeois subject and Bildung, especially within the literary genre of the Bildungsroman, the novel of apprenticeship. The Bildungsroman—Jonsson cites Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship (1796–1796) and its “great” precedent, Rousseau’s Emile—introduces its reader to a role model who represents an imaginary solution to the contradictions of modernity, namely the conflict between the unique subjectively-existing individual and the faceless automaton demanded by mass society.

In his inward moment, the modern individual is constituted as an autonomous male agent in the pursuit of personal happiness; in his outward moment, he is forced to assume the position assigned to him by society. It is this gendered contradiction—between agency and passivity, assertion and penetration—the Bildungsroman tries to transcend. Musil, Jonsson (2000, p. 27) reports, had “little
William F. Pinar

patience with the jargon of soul, personality, culture, and community.” *Young Torless* and—later—*The Man Without Qualities* portrayed Musil’s impatience.

As the social totality exceeded the everyday horizon of ordinary men and women (as, over the course of the nineteenth century, the rural was eclipsed by the urban: see below), the notion of an individual’s self-realization as occurring through harmonious participation in the social was no longer a realistic aspiration of education (Jonsson, 2000). Just as capitalism could not accommodate (except through commodification) the aesthetic education of the individual, the aesthetic education of the individual could not, by Musil’s time, accommodate capitalism. For Jonsson, it is the *Bildungsroman*, a literary genre wherein the social totality translates directly into the self-realization of the individual, that lost its rationale.

In those difficult decades before the cataclysm that was World War I, not all educators could be confident that Europe was a world in which their subjectivity-existing students could harmoniously participate. The “progress” of capitalism was unrelenting (despite the political challenges posed by communism and socialism). Today we live in a very different historical moment than did von Humboldt, when he (2000 [1793–1794], p. 58) could call for the “linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay.” Indeed, as Tero Autio (2003, p. 323) has observed,

[M]any features of personality we used to advocate as worthwhile in terms of *Bildung* and education have been badly depreciated by the political subordination to the sheer interests of commodification and economy.

In addition to the depreciation of subjectivity (see Jay, 2005, p. 328), the political and natural world itself is deeply degraded, a point Klafki (see 2000a, pp. 98, 101) himself acknowledges.

ON THE GENDERED STRUCTURE OF *BILDUNG*

Bernadette Baker (2001, p. 369) characterizes the gendered structure of *Bildung* as “building up from, and then away from, and then back to, Woman-as-Mother.” This is the basic movement of boys’ coming-of-age rituals worldwide (Gilmore, 1990), also narrated in psychoanalytic object-relations theory (see Chodorow, 1978). In aesthetic education and the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, Jonsson (2000, p. 40) suggests, the feminine—as well as nature and community—enticed the estranged male subject. Art came to evoke and represent these three and thereby harmonized the two sides of subjectivity: the (male) public self, subject to the laws of the world as it is, and the (feminine, natural or authentic) inner self, yearning for the world as
it ought to be (Yack, 1986). By the end of the nineteenth century, such yearning was often directed aesthetically, not politically (see Jonsson, 2000, p. 41).

Soon it would be, however. The “upheavals” structuring Europe one hundred years ago—culminating in World War I—produced a steady stream of conservative reactions. Jonsson (see 2000, p. 24) summarizes:

Worried that the intellectual spirit of modernity was too rationalistic and that the emergent social forms were too individualistic, or, even worse, too democratic, German and Austrian intellectuals sought to redress the powers of instrumental reason by asserting the spiritual powers of German culture, and to hedge the leveling impact of the masses by propagating the ideal of personal Bildung.

During this historical moment, Bildung would seem to be a politically reactionary notion, far from the “critical-constructivist” potential Klafki would later elaborate.

The work that best codified this reactionary response to modernity, Jonsson suggests, was that of the German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies. In Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (1887, Community and Society), Tonnies distinguished between “natural” and “rational” will, the former grounded in the body. This means, as Jonsson (2000, p. 26) puts it, “the identity of the individual subject and of the collective is grounded in an intrinsic essence, which conditions those manifestations, utterances, and ways of behavior through which this identity is externalized or expressed.” Jonsson (2000, p. 7) characterizes this subjective and aesthetic structure as “expressivist.”

Tonnies made no normative judgments regarding the historical shift from agrarian communities to mass urban societies, from the “living organism” as he characterizes the inhabitants of the former, to the “mechanical and artificial aggregate” of modernity (quoted phrases in Jonsson, 2000, p. 26). Tonnies appreciated that the shift was irreversible, and so he thought nostalgia futile. Most of his contemporaries and followers, Jonsson tells us, did not employ the same tone of neutrality; they saw the shift in terms of cultural decline. They insisted that these developments—often associated with Jews (Le Rider, 1993)—must be reversed so that Germans might return to their presumably authentic and harmonious past.

By World War I, Tonnies’s concept of community had become a popular slogan, and by the 1920s, few doubted that a profound cultural crisis plagued German society. Scholars and intellectuals attempted to contain the “crisis” by supporting educational, cultural, and political programs aimed at resurrecting the classical Bildung and thereby presumably reviving community. In 1925, Ulrich Peters, editor of the Zeitschrift für Deutsche Bildung, suggested that the “German soul” must
return to itself; William Stern and Eduard Spranger argued that the integral “I” and the “soul” should be reinstated as foundational psychological and philosophical concepts. (A professor of education and philosophy in Berlin, Spranger belittled John Dewey’s work as “merely” economic and technical [Tröhler, 2003, p. 765]). The educator Aloys Fischer asserted that these concepts should serve to “create the irrational bases and forces of communal life” (quoted phases in Jonsson, 2000, p. 27).

While taken out of context, these statements, Stefan Jonsson argues, were typical of a dominant discourse during the Weimar Republic. It was a discourse promoted by intellectuals committed to the restoration of a classic Bildung, the task of forging a cultural synthesis through the reeducation of the people, “to make them believe in an interior truth or communal essence” (Jonsson, 2000, p. 27). Presumably, it was only through such restoration that the German nation could be saved from its precipitous decline. These intellectuals—Jonsson lists Peters, Stern, Spranger and Fischer—dismissed modernity (e.g., science, specialization, and democracy) because they were convinced that modernity distanced the individual from the internal truth of Bildung, thereby blocking him or her from expressing the German national vitality. What was necessary, it seemed to them, was a return to a premodern, authentic interiority, and a restructuring of external reality, so that reconciliation could be achieved (see Jonsson, 2000, p. 41).

It was, presumably, a gendered reconciliation, at least in part. As Gerald Izenberg (2000) has shown, the feminine was appropriated by several early twentieth-century artists (he focuses on Frank Wedekind, Wassily Kandinsky, and Thomas Mann) to subjectively restructure their masculinity, then considered in crisis. Not only did these early twentieth-century European men summon the feminine within to face the perils of industrial society, they demanded that she be outside his psyche as well, en personne, at home, waiting for him to return, triumphant. Man’s victory (and self-fulfillment) was judged incomplete, Jonsson (see 2000, p. 42) observes, without recognition by the woman (his betrothed or, as Baker notes, his mother: it is, incidentally, his mother who rescues Young Torless from his gendered crisis at the school). Due to her nature presumably, this feminine figure retains a state of innocence, even naiveté, while the male hero has to suffer the knowledge of alienation and struggle before returning home, if now, allegedly, at a higher level of consciousness.

The gendered fantasy of Bildung is now realized: the male subject enjoys, and is vitalized by, an expressive-authentic relationship to his life-world and to the world as a totality; his individual self-realization then becomes compatible with socialization (see Jonsson, 2000, p. 53). And more than compatibility between inner
and outer is implied, at least for Baker (see 2001, p. 372); for her, this version of Bildung risks the exploitation of the individual by his society as s/he is enfolded into its totality.13

Contemporary theorists of Didaktik appear to appreciate the vexed relation between self-formation and society. Klafki (2000a, p. 94) acknowledges the “limitations” and “mistakes” of such “collective individualities” in German history—he refers to the “conquest, subjection, and extermination of other nations, cultures, peoples”—but these go unspecified. In an apparent reference to the rise of National Socialism in Germany, Klafki (2000a, p. 104) points out Bildung degenerated into a stabilizing factor of a class-based society in an authoritarian state; every possibility was also excluded of facing seriously that criticism—raised especially in Marx’s early works—as regards the realities of bourgeois society and the contradictions of its self-interpretation … including its understanding of education.

While disclaiming a “nationalistic” (2000a, p. 94) reading of Bildung, Klafki’s general point is that these “mistakes” and “limitations” constitute a “yardstick” for a “critical” perspective he characterizes as “universal-historical” (2000a, p. 94). At least in this passage, these adjectives seem simultaneously Hegelian and communitarian (see 2000a, p. 94).

This interpretation is implied in Klafki’s (see 2000a, p. 95) equation of the general or universal in Bildung with those “binding” problems that are “central for us all” and for “generations to come,” the “key problems of our social and individual existence,” insofar as these problems can be “foreseen.” Here the Hegelian elements of Klafki’s view are discernible, as the phenomenology of history seems to settle the matter (although the question of its teleology remains unclear). There is no acknowledgement of how contentious, how unsettled, the matter of “key problems” is, and not only politically. “Above all,” Klafki (2000a, p. 96) concludes, Bildung means “the awakening of self-determined moral responsibility, a readiness for moral action, and the capacity for moral action.” Understood critically, this includes political action, and Klafki (see 2000a, p. 98) refers specifically to the accelerating environmental crisis, a point, as Noel Gough (2003) has ably demonstrated, on which our internationalizing efforts might well be concentrated.

For Klafki, critical theory becomes the contemporary core of what he terms a critical-constructive Didaktik.14 In a Klafkian sense, Autio (see 2003, p. 323), suggests, Didaktik is a historical-hermeneutic conception oriented to the future. For Klafki, self-formation—he specifies “reasonableness, capacity for self-determination, and freedom of thought and action” (2000a, p. 88)—occurs “only”
through the study of the world: “humanity, humankind and humaneness, world, objectivity, the general” (2000a, p. 88). For Klafki, these elements of Humboldt’s formula remain intact today.

This “interplay” (von Humboldt, 2000 [1793–1794], p. 60) between self and world occurs subjectively. As noted earlier, Klafki (2000a, p. 87) posits “creative self-activity” as the “central form” through which the process of Bildung is conducted. Such self-activity must be focused and, perhaps, even restrained; von Humboldt (2000 [1793–1794], p. 60), suggests subjective “unity” enables “escape from dissipating and confusing diversity,” diversity here understood as an excess of the world. While Bildung occurs subjectively, Klafki (2000a, p. 88) emphasizes that it is not “subjectivism,” as “creative self-activity” occurs in-the-world.

Hegel stressed the “mediatory structure” of the subjective and the “objectively general” in the process of Bildung. Klafki emphasizes this point by quoting Hegel (see 2000a, p. 92), namely that the subject “comes” through the other (the “other” meaning the objective, the general) “to himself,” to “fundamental reasonableness, to concrete universality.” In the process of self-formation, the individual “has” to work off his “mere subjectivity” (Hegel, 1952, p. 269); he “has” to “form himself” according to the world already existing, “to make [himself] according to it” (Hegel, 1961, p. 272, cf. 312f.). This sounds close to conformity¹⁵ to me, but Klafki (2000a, p. 92) emphasizes not a politically conservative, but a socially progressive, reading of Hegel:

*Bildung* is possible only in the medium … of historical objectifications of humanity, of humanness and its conditions, with an orientation to the possibilities of, and obligations to, humanitarian progress.

In Klafki’s critical-constructive Didatik, the central concepts appear to be individuality, history, and community, particularized in self-formation through intellectual content.

In Bildung, the cultivation of personal uniqueness does not occur in isolation but, Klafki emphasizes, only in communication with others. The formation of individuality occurs in communication through processes of recognition (see Klafki, 2000a, p. 93). To this North American ear, Klafki’s emphasis upon communication recalls our conception of curriculum as “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9), an expansive definition of curriculum that includes dialogue and recognition, as well as incommunicability and misrecognition.
THE CENTRALITY OF TEACHING

In the trope of Bildung-as-education, Baker (2001, p. 413) tells us, the hero is also the teacher under whose tutelage the boy-child achieves knowledge of self and society, an educational process “determined more by the tutor’s activity than by any notion of organic, unfolding faculties.” The historically key role of the tutor might help explain the emphasis of Didaktik upon instruction and teaching, terms I position as subsidiary to the contemporary concept of curriculum in the U.S. (Pinar, 2006a; McClintock, 1971). The centrality of instruction and teaching in Bildung supports Autio’s (2003, pp. 322–323) characterization of Didaktik as the “constant and critical search for the mode of rationality best suited to contemporary challenges of each time.” Autio (2003) locates this search and the faith in reason it implies in the German Enlightenment and its twentieth-century expressions in German critical theory, but in contrast to critical theory, he (2006b) worries that Didaktik leaves open the question of who decides what constitutes “contemporary challenges” and what mode of rationality is “best suited” to address them.

Kafki’s “critical-constructive” Didaktik—as located within critical theory, and, specifically, within a Habermasian notion of communicative action—employs reason in the pursuit of egalitarian social practices. For Autio, this employment of reason contrasts with instrumental rationality, and helps explain why, he writes:

the Germans have never felt a burning urge for postmodern discourses which have resulted—as they might see it from their intellectual background—from the critical response to the comprehensive and absurd dominance of instrumental rationality. (Autio, 2003, p. 322)

From my perspective (see Pinar, 2006a, chapter 7), the employment of reason to produce future effects—whether social egalitarianism or social hierarchies—constitutes instrumentality.

In this tradition, Autio (2006b) points out, instrumentality is embedded within “the judgmental potentialities of communicative rationality.” In imagining that rationality can ascertain ends as well as means, it can co-opt “democratic conversation” concerning “goals” and “power” by self-interested appeals to rational, indeed “scientific” (in the sense of Geisteswissenschaften), and thereby “authoritative understanding of reality.” For Autio, this danger remains a problem with Didaktik, despite its claims to hermeneutics, humanism, and individuality.

As we have seen, Bildung functioned in conservative, even reactionary, ways during early decades of the twentieth century. Even with its critical-constructive cast, how does it fare under contemporary historical conditions? Autio (2003, p. 323) worries Bildung risks commodification under contemporary conditions
of postmodernity. No longer, he asserts, can we expect Bildung to be capable of realizing “edifying cultural potential” (2003, p. 323), given that culture itself has been thoroughly commercialized. Hiller’s (2000, p. 209) depiction of teacher education would seem to support Autio’s point:

The education industry has in recent years been publishing more handbooks for teachers, which evidently sell better if they are presented as series of well-designed lesson crib sheets, increasingly forcing teachers out of their role as instructional designers and claiming them as engineers for learning processes, schooled in communication psychology and motivation theory.

This commercialization and vulgarization of educational culture with its reductive instrumentalization of teaching to the management of learning constitutes a crisis shared by Didaktik and by U.S. curriculum studies alike.

Autio (2003, p. 326) describes the reconceptualized curriculum field in the U.S. as “as an up-dated—postmodern—theory of Bildung.” Certainly there is a resonance between our respective emphasis upon self-formation, in the U.S. through studies of autobiography and, in Europe, through Didaktik’s embrace of Bildung. Self-formation through the academic disciplines self-consciously situated in society at particular historical moments constitutes what I have called currere, the lived experience of curriculum. While I privilege study, not instruction, as the primary means of such self-formation, the structure of the educational process is not entirely dissimilar, as other scholars have observed.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Tero Autio (2003, p. 326) argues that our project—enabling the “complicated conversation” that is the internationalization of curriculum studies—consists not in making connections between our “own discipline and another discipline [and] seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary.” Instead, drawing upon Richard Rorty, Autio (2003, p. 326) calls for what he terms the “inverse” of hermeneutics, reinterpreting our own disciplinary surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of new disciplinary inventions. This is not a “constructive” activity, he suggests, in that it builds upon what we already know. Rather, such an inverted hermeneutics is “abnormal” and, as such, promises “to aid us in becoming new beings” (Rorty, 1980, p. 360; quoted in Autio, 2003, p. 326). Is this a postmodern reformulation of Bildung or the prerequisite to a post-Bildung, post-Didaktik conception of European curriculum studies (see Autio, 2006a)?

In his notion of an inverted hermeneutics, Autio names one aspiration of the internationalization of curriculum studies, at least as I have participated in it myself
and have imagined its potential for my colleagues in the U.S. In our encounter with those whose national cultures render their conceptions of curriculum paradigmatically incommensurate (Brown, 1988) with our own, what and how we know—including our very subjective structuration of knowledge—can be reconstructed. This is akin to what Hongyu Wang (2004; Pinar, 2006c) theorizes as the educational potential of “exile” and “estrangement.” For Wang, this potential resides in a “third space”—neither in China nor in the U.S. where she studied Foucault and Kristeva but somewhere between—that renders the familiar strange, the self as other. Such educational experience—without that centered and unified subject “whose individual Bildung was long assumed to be its telos”—leads, Martin Jay (2006, p. 260) suggests, to “songs of experience composed in a new and different key.” That last phrase reminds of us of the landmark contribution of the Canadian curriculum theorist Ted Aoki (2005 [1978]), whose performance of the auditory turn enabled us to hear curriculum inquiry in a new key, transporting us to a third space.

Such a space, neither in one’s homeland nor elsewhere—in Tampere perhaps, for those of us who traveled here for this historic conference (I thank Eero Ropo and Tero Autio for drawing us together in Finland)—affords us some distance from the everyday, that site and structure of disciplinary society in late modernity. Gathering together in Tampere may enable us to hear curriculum inquiry in an international key. Upon our return home, let us invite our colleagues, including our schoolteacher colleagues and university students, to join us in the internationalization of curriculum studies. As we participate in this present moment, let us recall our important inaugural meeting in 2003 in Shanghai, China (for which we owe thanks to Professors Zhang and Zhong and members of the Coordinating Committee) as well as look forward to our 2009 meeting in Stellenbosch, South Africa (for which we owe thanks to Professor Lesley Le Grange).

The constitution of community was, for Foucault, “an important, even a fundamental” stage “of the struggle to invent new forms of existence and to invent new styles of life” (Eribon, 2004, p. 328). Creating such culture was, for Foucault, aesthetic, yes. But it was clear from the interviews he gave toward the end of his life that for him such culture is characterized as well by emotional and political structures that enable us “to escape from the much more serious looming danger of the rigors of the norm and of the totality of a ‘disciplinary’ society” (Eribon, 2004, p. 328). Without escape from the social totality of our daily institutional lives, creating culture, a counter educational culture, cannot occur.

During our time together in Tampere, through our year-round virtual encounters with colleagues at, for instance, the IAACS website (my thanks to web-managers
Jacques Daignault and Renee Fountain), perhaps we can think of our own, and not only our students’, self-formation. Despite the corrosive effects of commercialization, despite the complicity of universities and schools in that degradation of character commodification compels, we can focus, for the moment, upon our own Bildung. Perhaps we can use our encounters with each other not only to report our own work, faithful to our own national cultures and theoretical programs, but also to allow ourselves to go into temporary exile, to undergo estrangement from what is familiar and everyday and enter a third space, neither home nor abroad, but in-between, a liminal or third space that, in von Humboldt’s (2000 [1793–1794], p. 60) words, “makes possible the interplay between his receptivity and his self-activity.” In this interplay can occur the internationalization of curriculum studies.

NOTES

1 This dialogue could be said to have been initiated by Professor Bjorg Gundem of the University of Oslo by convening a 1995 conference on North American curriculum studies and Didaktik: see Gundem & Hopmann 2002.

2 There are terminological differences as well: Peter Menck (see 2000, pp. 181–182) distinguishes among curriculum theory (Lehrplantheorie), subject-matter didactics, Didaktik analysis, and the lifeworld of children. The more inclusive definition of curriculum in the U.S. field—as “complicated conversation” (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 848)—might subsume Didaktik within it.

3 Ian Westbury (2000, p. 27) tells us that “Didaktik provides models of teacher thinking,” but in the Hopmann–Riquarts collection, these are implied only.

4 Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, p. 7) point to the “fragmentation” in U.S. curriculum studies, specifically the separation of curriculum from pedagogy; such a division is, they tell us, “fundamentally opposed” to the “holistic approach” of Didaktik. Due to this fragmentation, they continue, “content was lost in American curriculum studies.” While pedagogy is not separated from curriculum in the U.S. tradition (see Pinar et al., 1995, chapter 13), they are not, in my view, completely mistaken on this point, and I have, in recent years, offered one example (see Pinar, 2001; 2006a,b) of the reincorporation of “content” in curriculum studies. The example Hopmann and Riquarts cite—Shulman’s “pedagogical content” knowledge—does not, in my view, accomplish the reincorporation of content to curriculum studies but, instead, elides the binary. See footnote 8.

5 In reviewing a draft of this paper, Tero Autio (2006b) found the term “contribution” to be “ironical.” Didaktik’s “extraction” from general educational theory, he points out, coincided its being embedded in the “bureaucratic-administrative controls of the nation state, veiling its bureaucratic-administrative function by claims to disciplinary “legitimacy”. As for Herbartianism, Autio claims it reduced the complexity of education to “proceduralism” and instrumentality, rationalizing sequence that, in the U.S. context, became behaviorialized. In his 2006 Presidential Address to the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, Autio suggested that bureaucratic-administrative control became restated, in the U.S., as the prediction of behavior.

6 There is, of course, no one American curriculum tradition, a fact belied by the use of “the” in the Hopmann–Riquarts’ sentence. The only specific reference they make to “the” U.S. field is to “Mager or Bruner” (2000, p. 9), two quite different, even adversarial, intellectual traditions within U.S. curriculum studies. Curiously, we are told that certain German scholars thought the U.S. field
“far ahead” of the German one, and just as Schwab pronounced the U.S. field “moribund” (Pinar et al., 1995, chapter 4; see Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 8).

7 Künzli and Horton-Krüger (2000, p. 42) write that the consequences of the “affair” with U.S. curriculum studies was that “German Didaktik became ideologically suspect and considered outdated.”

8 The reference Hopmann and Riquarts make here (see 2000, p. 10) is to that work of two Americans (Lee Shulman and Walter Doyle) and of one Israeli scholar, Miriam Ben-Peretz. The distinctions among the works of these three seem stronger than their similarities: it is not obvious how they are “dealing with the same set of questions” (Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000, p. 10). There are no footnotes to the work of these three scholars, but in his 1992 handbook chapter, Walter Doyle focuses on the institutionalization of teaching in the U.S., specifically, how the construal of teaching as classroom management has eclipsed the curriculum as topic of public debate and educational research, rendering curriculum invisible. Shulman (1986), too, focused on the eclipse of curriculum by teaching; he is famous for his concept of “pedagogical content knowledge” (1987), which attends to the subject matter of teachers and, more specifically, to the knowledge teachers require to convey subject matter to students. It is, he suggests, that mix of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers. Teachers’ own particular form of professional understanding includes, he asserts, a) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and b) knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures, and c) knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. Shulman’s model focuses more on the first rather than the second modifier in his concept, except insofar as pedagogy is regarded as an order of content. Gudmundsdóttir, Reinsersten, and Nordomme (see 2000, p. 319) also link Klafki and Shulman as “working theoretically with concrete and practical issues.” That is a rather general link, indeed.

Of the three scholars Hopmann and Riquarts cite (see 2000, p. 10; Gudmundsdóttir, Reinsersten & Nordomme (see 2000, p. 320) reference her work as well), Miriam Ben-Peretz (1990, p. xv) affords teachers the most active role in the formulation of content: “To sum up [her view]: teachers are encouraged to see their major role in the partnership of curriculum development as that of informed and creative interpreters who are prepared to reflect on their curriculum and to reconstruct it.” Her subsequent work focused almost exclusively on teachers, including teachers’ memories of teaching (1995) and their experience of the teachers’ lounge (2000). From my experience at an Israeli National Curriculum Conference, chaired by Professor Saul Feinberg (and at which Professor Ben-Peretz spoke), held in Jerusalem in February 2005, I would venture to say that Miriam Ben-Peretz is regarded by many as the dean of Israeli curriculum studies.

9 I am referring to the autobiographical tradition in North American curriculum studies (Pinar et al., 1995, chapter 10). I choose “resonance” to emphasize the fact that there is no simple correspondence of the two traditions’ interest in self-formation through educational experience, a point amplified by Autio in his review of this manuscript.

Autio (2006b) begins by underlining Klafki’s use of Herbart’s “apperceptive mass” in the passage I have quoted, but in a “mechanical” way, in which he seems to assume that “content itself” has “organizing power,” implying that we know how consciousness works or, more probably (in Autio’s judgment), that consciousness is secondary in Klafki’s formulation. In Didaktik, Autio continues, the subjective suffers a subsidiary even “subjugated” position; what is important is outside subjectivity, the content, wherein characteristics of subjectivity are, presumably installed. He concludes that the emphasis upon content in Didaktik implies that the locus of determination resides outside the subjectively existing individual. Individuality is defined in “collectivist terms”—as “humanity”—that is to be realized in individual ways. Autio’s analysis is, in general,
shared by Daniel Tröhler (see 2003, p. 759), who notes that, especially in early twentieth-century conceptions of Bildung, “the individual person can perfect himself only in the framework of the typical characteristics of his Volk—the German Volk.” Especially in my conception of currere, the individual's study of his or her self-formation requires skepticism toward the national culture and character (see Pinar, 2004).

10 This phrase recalls William Heard Kilpatrick’s (1918) emphasis on the educational project as providing an opportunity for “creative self-activity.”

11 Klafki (see 2000a, p. 89) acknowledges the gendered dimension of the classical concept of Bildung.

12 Autio (2006b) underscores the nostalgia and detachment from, even aversion to, history implicit in such “reconciliation.” I have stressed the interiority of education (Pinar, 1994), and its relation to the external restructuring of reality (Pinar, 2004), but I conclude not with “reconciliation” but “reparation” (Pinar, 2006b). In the politically polarized America of George W. Bush, I inflect the “synthetical” moment of the method of currere as “self-mobilization.” This represents no “reconciliation” with an archaic past, of course. Rather, “synthesis” is the final (if recursive) moment or phase in an ongoing regressive-progressive-analytic-synthetic social and self-understanding enabling social reconstruction through study (Pinar, 2006a).

13 This is a crucial difference in emphasis from Klafki’s contemporary concept of “co-determination” (see also Autio, 2003, p. 322).

14 Klafki (see 2000b, p. 141) tells us that his study of the Frankfurt School (he lists Adorno, Horkheimer, and Habermas) as well as his ongoing dialogue with theorists committed to revising traditional German pedagogy led him, from the late 1960s onward, to theorize a “crucial constructive science of education” and, within this framework, a system of “critical-constructive Didaktik.” In this phrasing, “critical” is to be understood in the sense of “social criticism.” In terms of Didaktik, Klafki explains, this implies “constant reflection on the relations between school and instruction on the one hand (their goals, contents, forms of organization, and methods) and social conditions and processes on the other.” The concept of “constructive” indicates an emphasis on practice, and on “reform.”

Klafki is, of course, not alone in emphasizing the link between Didaktik and progressive democratic politics. For example, Karsten Schnack (see 2003, p. 272) understands Bildung as closely linked to democracy: “Democracy without Bildung is merely an empty shell,” he writes. Without democracy, Schnack continues, echoing the critique of aestheticism Jonsson summarizes, “democracy is reduced to what the leaders of the hour have defined as highbrow culture and good manners.”

15 Conformity implies non-thinking acceptance of the status quo, while its conscious “cousin”—solidarity—implies self-chosen, self-critical, and self-conscious participation in a common cause, an important distinction to be sure, but one that can fade in (especially political) practice. In his discussion of Klafki’s critical-constructive Didaktik and its commitment to egalitarian social practice, Autio (2003, p. 323) posits “solidarity as a precondition of egalitarian practice,” a notion, he tells us, based on “the moral conviction intrinsic to the very meaning of Bildung.” Such moral conviction recalls, Autio continues, the classic notion of “general Bildung for all, as the right of every person, without qualitative or quantitative gradations in status determined by social origins or future positions in society” (Klafki, 2000, p. 103), or as in Humboldt, “that each and every person, even the poorest, should receive a complete education” (ibid., p. 89; both passages quoted in Autio, 2003, p. 323). The slippery slide from solidarity to conformity can be demonstrated by reference to the key issues of academic or intellectual freedom.

U.S. teachers appreciate the constraints on their intellectual freedom installed by local—and federal—political interests, especially, politically conservative interests. In Germany, Weniger (2000 [1952], p. 119) allows that while there is a “danger” associated with an “omnipotent state
pedagogy,” the “freedom” of pedagogy is most strongly “guaranteed” by the state. Even a cursory historical review recommends qualification of that statement. Certainly one cannot trust the Administration of U.S. President George W. Bush to protect academic freedom; indeed, the legislated foreclosure of such freedom is nightmarishly evident (see Pinar, 2004).

Klafki (see 2000b, p. 142) makes this social definition explicit in his concept of instructional planning, wherein teaching and learning are understood as processes of interaction, that is, as processes in which relationships between people—between teachers and learners and between the learners themselves—play a central role. These processes must therefore be comprehended not only as processes of acquisition in which subject matter and problems are confronted, but also as social processes or processes of social learning. Certainly this is one sense of the U.S. concept of curriculum as “complicated conversation.”

Willem Wardekker and his colleagues see the apparent similarity. In fact, they suggest that this similarity is the reason Dutch scholars have had little interest in the reconceptualized U.S. field: “We end this section by noting that a reconceptualization of curriculum thinking, as advocated in the U.S. by Pinar, has not found many adherents in the Netherlands, probably because it is perceived in a way as too reminiscent of the outmoded paradigm of Bildungstheorie” (Wardekker, Volman & Terwel, 2003, p. 488). This is a mistaken reading, however, as the differences between (especially) autobiographical studies and Bildung tradition are several and striking. Most prominent among them, perhaps, is the politically assertive, even antagonistic, character of curriculum conceived as currere, in contrast to the tendency, at least historically, of Bildung to coincide with, not contest, politically conservative conceptions of German culture and nationhood. “Politicization of the German person,” Tröhler (2003, p. 760) writes, “had to take place in the context of Volksstaat, not in democracy. To be free meant the embedding of the individual into the harmonious beauty of the whole.”

Autio’s notion of an inverted hermeneutic resonates with Patrick Slattery’s (2003, p. 652) depiction of a postmodern hermeneutic, “grounded in aesthetic experience and poststructural subjectivity” while “attentive to the Aristotelian sense of applicato.” Slattery (2003, p. 652) continues:

> An educational experience which incorporates Bildung—without separating learning from its application to oneself as happens in technical, managerial, and behavioral models—encourages interpretation within lived world experiences and intersubjective contexts. It is here that forms of self-encounter emerge where various human communities are imaginatively engaged in individual and social transformation; where administrators and educators—management and labor—all recognize and act upon their mutual needs as well as the broader interests of the environment and marginalized global societies; where teachers and students are aesthetically present to subject matter rather than assuming they possess it and can manipulate it in decontextualized projects. (Slattery, 2003, p. 652)

This is Bildung with a Messianic—in Walter Benjamin’s sense (see Wolin 1982)—inflection.

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BILDUNG AND THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CURRICULUM STUDIES

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AFFILIATIONS

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CURRICULUM STUDIES AND TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS AND MOBILITIES: FEMINIST AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

ABSTRACT

I here consider possible effects of global flows, transnational connections, and transcultural interactions on attempts to construct a worldwide curriculum studies field. These flows and mobilities loosen local populations from geographically constrained communities, connecting people and places around the globe in new and complex ways. Thus, they dramatically alter not only processes of curriculum construction and theorizing but also ways in which a worldwide curriculum studies field might be conceptualized and enacted. I argue that these flows and mobilities point to a necessary conceptualization of a worldwide curriculum studies field as always in the making.

I briefly review perspectives on global flows and mobilities that currently circulate among a variety of academic disciplines. I then examine various feminists’ theorizing and practices in order to articulate tensions and possibilities for a worldwide curriculum studies field affected by transnational flows and mobilities. Particular feminist work especially draws attention to political, social, economic, and environmental biases and injustices that flows and mobilities have shaped and sustained. I argue that these feminists’ interrogations could contribute to curriculum scholars’ negotiations of cultural, geographical, linguistic, and theoretical differences across a worldwide curriculum studies field.

In particular, I autobiographically explore feminist examinations of transnational flows and mobilities as one possible means to hold varying perspectives on these phenomena in simultaneous yet often tension-filled relation to one another. Conceptions of transnational flows and mobilities become visceral through embodied autobiographical inquiries that take into account shifting and rapidly changing discursive and material effects of globalization. These effects include

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When we ask another for recognition for ourselves, we are not asking for that other to see us as we are, as we have always been, as we were prior to the encounter. Rather, in the asking, we are already becoming something new, since we are avowing a connection with the other, a need and desire for acknowledgment by the other, without which we could not be. This means that recognition does not freeze us in our place, our position, our various locations, but rather compels us to move beyond what we have been and to encounter a new possibility for collective exchange. (Judith Butler, “Transformative Encounters”)

I grapple here with what I view as some dilemmas as well as possibilities in working toward a worldwide—but not uniform—field of curriculum studies as well as in “building new transnational and transcultural solidarities in postcolonial curriculum inquiry” (Gough, 2004). I do so in light of the heterogeneity and rapid flux that characterize global flows of people, commodities, ideas, technology, culture, and capital through and across constantly changing borders, discourses, and identities. These flows and mobilities loosen local populations from geographically constrained communities, connecting people and places around the globe in new and complex ways. They thus dramatically alter not only the processes of curriculum construction and theorizing but also the ways in which curriculum studies as a field might be conceptualized and enacted.

Given these transnational flows and mobilities, what kinds of differing knowledges do divergent members of a worldwide curriculum studies field now need to construct in order to contribute to the intellectual advancement of a worldwide field?

I here consider possible effects of global flows, transnational connections, and transcultural interactions on attempts to construct a worldwide curriculum studies field. I do so by first briefly reviewing a variety of perspectives on global flows and mobilities that currently circulate among a variety of academic disciplines. I then examine various feminist perspectives that consider new and promising forms of diasporic, transnational, global and national cultures and identities spawned by flows and mobilities. Concurrently, these feminist viewpoints draw attention to political, social, economic, and environmental biases and injustices that those flows and mobilities have shaped and sustained.
In particular, I believe that such various feminist interrogations could contribute to ways in which curriculum scholars and workers negotiate cultural, geographical, linguistic, and theoretical differences across the curriculum studies field, writ large. Such differences appear to intensify with/in ever increasing and changing circumstances and contexts that have resulted from and through transnational flows and mobilities. Given that I support feminist assertions that social and cultural worlds are always expressed through relationships, I believe that such negotiations are crucial in order that a worldwide curriculum studies field might work toward “producing intercultural understanding and actively valuing cultural diversity” so that it “does not merely assimilate national (local) curriculum discourses-practices into an imperial (global) archive” (Gough, 2004).

To address these issues, in part work autobiographically here, greatly influenced by my work with doctoral students labeled by the University as “international” as well as “national” at Teachers College, Columbia University, in New York City. I autobiographically explore, in particular, feminist interrogations of transnational flows and mobilities as one possible means to hold varying perspectives on these phenomena in simultaneous yet often tension-filled relation to one another. Given my own multiple positionings as well as those of my students with/in such flows and mobilities, I in turn am persuaded to argue that such tensions will not necessarily be resolved. Rather, our direct encounters with those tensions, including discussions about transnational flows and mobilities, their influences on a potential worldwide field of curriculum studies, and their always changing effects on who and what gets constituted as “different” or “other,” for example, might lead us to generate a worldwide field with new versions of and possibilities for “collective exchange.”

Indeed, I believe that visions for that worldwide field of curriculum studies must avow “a connection with the other, a need and desire for acknowledgment by the other, without which we could not be.” At the same time, we need to remember that in our asking one another for recognition, “we enter the conversation as one kind of person but emerge as another kind” (Butler, 2001, p. 82). Working autobiographically enables me to examine how I might be constantly changed by collective exchange among members of a worldwide curriculum studies field, how I might act responsibly within the limits of my self—and other—knowing, and how to take seriously my opacity to myself in ethical deliberations (Butler, 2005) that should characterize the field’s collective exchange.

Here, I also engage in working autobiography as both genre and mode of inquiry. By working autobiography, I mean conceptualizing autobiographical practices as spaces of negotiation where I constantly am kneading categories and separations, “engaging with and responding to the fluidity and malleability of
identities and difference, ... refusing fixed and static categories of sameness or permanent otherness” (Ellsworth & Miller, 2005, p. 181). In particular, in working autobiography, I am disrupting autobiography’s humanist assumptions of rigid categorizations and binaries, such as insider/outsider, so as to disrupt any notion of a “self” (and by extension, a “worldwide field”) already known and made. Working autobiography enables me to engage with versions of feminism that yield a unitary self in favor of a provisional, mobile, and critically (albeit often partially) aware subject in process. Working autobiography thus opens possibilities for “syncretic, ‘immigrant,’ cross-cultural, and plural subjectivities, which can enable a politics through positions that are coalitions, intransigent, in process, contradictory” (Grewal, 1994, p. 234).

Already Becoming Something New

I fumble for my Metro card. Clutching both card and handrail, I join the swirl of people scrambling down the steps at the Grand Army Plaza subway stop in Brooklyn. I swipe my card, take note of its dwindling amount. Squinting against the updraft of air from the train that I just missed, I sidestep a clump of uniformed elementary school children. I’m stopped for a few seconds by a trio of young men belting out a Spanish rendition of Frank Sinatra’s “I Did It My Way.” I drop some loose change from my pocket into the troubadours’ guitar case and march to my routine waiting area, at the far front end of the platform. I plant myself—third in line for the first car. Most of the front-liners engage in the commuter wave—leaning over the tracks to see if the next train is coming and then swaying back into line, leaning over, swaying back…. Never makes it arrive any quicker. A #2 express train lumbers into the station. Our momentary order dissolves as we crowd into the subway car, avoiding one another’s eyes while the doors snap open and shut three times, accompanied by that incessant dinging bell.

During my twenty years of living in New York City, I’ve become somewhat attuned to the choreography in which I now have to engage in order to secure a seat for my hour-long subway trek from Brooklyn to the 116th Street/Columbia University stop in Manhattan. This journey includes a change to the local at 96th Street. Today, I need to sit so that I can read a student’s dissertation chapter before our meeting this afternoon. Some people can juggle all kinds of paper and jot notes while they stand, lurching to one side and then the other as the subway car screeches around bends—I can’t.

This morning, I’m lucky. I slip into a space on the shiny worn train bench, wrestle the bulky chapter from my backpack, try to sink into an academic reading
reverie. But in each of the moments that I disengage from the dissertation pages, I hear conversations conducted in languages I can’t identify. I watch the person next to me thumbing his Blackberry while ear-phoned I-Pod heads bob up and down all around us. I glance at a kid battling with his Game Boy, clutch my backpack closer to my body so that a gaggle of tourists can grab the seats next to me. As the subway hurtles beneath the streets of Manhattan, I’m streaming within a vortex of languages and transnational circulations and flows of people, goods and information. I am riding and working difference every day on that train as well as in the classrooms where I teach and research.

Unities elude us in these flows and circulations, even as we require acknowledgement from one another in order to become and to encounter possibilities for collective exchange. As the recent immigration rights protests around the United States have made vivid, the U.S. is infused, like many nations world-wide, with new, volatile, dynamic, and mobile transnational forms of citizenship, place, selves, and modes of communication.

Thus, I believe that the problems of and concurrent hopes for a “worldwide” but not “uniform” field of curriculum studies might be further theorized and enacted by considering differing points of view on transnational flows and mobilities of people, ideas, and communication and their effects on our abilities to engage in collective exchange. I argue that those now-unavoidable flows and mobilities point to a necessary conceptualization of a worldwide curriculum studies field as always in the making. As such, that potential worldwide field must refuse any version of difference as a static category, as undifferentiated. Rather, as participants in a field always in the making, those of us working toward and with/in that worldwide field must argue for difference along all relevant and relational axes of engagement, including various orientations to curriculum theorizing, arrays of perspectives toward relations among scholarship, theory and practice, as well as multiplicities and complexities of ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, class, gender, and geographic locations and identities. By focusing on transnational flows and mobilities that raise, interrupt, stall, enable, detour, multiply or reroute difference and the ways that constructions of difference influence curriculum conceptualizations and work, we might in fact be able to consider what it might take to move beyond where we have been so as to encounter a new possibility for collective exchange.

At the same time, tensions abound, especially in education, in general, and in curriculum studies, in particular, in trying to address what it might mean to “be global and local at once” (Butler, 2001, p. 96). I believe a worldwide curriculum field must attend to transnational “processes” that directly affect education, such as the globalizing of the economy, the rise of new rights, the diminishing power
of the nation state and national borders, the emergence and expansion of new communication and media technologies and representations. As well, a concurrent imperative is to understand the intersections, the stasis, and the flows and mobilities of these processes in non-static conceptualizations and enactments of entangled local and global educational cultures—and their embodied persons—who have their own complex histories.

Here, then, I draw, in particular, from a variety of feminists’ theorizing and practices in order to articulate tensions as well as possibilities that overspill a notion of curriculum studies inflected by transnational flows and mobilities. I will argue for attempts to conceive of a worldwide field that does not rest on a universal notion of a curriculum studies field within which all national fields much comply, for example. Such attempts, I posit, might help us to recognize transnational flows and mobilities as one incentive for imagining new configurations of people, knowledges and potentials for collective exchange. At the same time, engaging with such configurations also marks an active refusal to construct a universal notion of “selves” or of curriculum studies through which one global field and its participants could emerge. Thus, I autobiographically utilize feminist poststructuralist troublings of any essentialized notion of uniform, stable, always coherent “selves” in order to highlight local/global tensions that permeate persons’ diversely embodied realities. As Hongyu Wang (2006) notes, “working at the intersections between the autobiographical and the global [and local] is an essentially educational task.”

DISCIPLINARY VERSIONS OF TRANSNATIONAL “FLOWS AND MOBILITIES”

Currently, scholars from a variety of disciplines are grappling with limiting effects as well as potentials for collective exchange with/in the concept and the lived realities of transnational flows and mobilities.

For example, Manuel Castells (1996–1998; 2000), social and communications theorist and leading analyst of the information age, has proposed the idea that there is a new spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society: the space of flows. Castells argues that growing numbers of people increasingly live in a world that is characterized as a space of flows rather than a space of places. People still cluster in specific locales, but these clusterings take their shape from their involvement in global networks and in globalized information flows. According to Castells, “place” no longer can be defined as a locale, the form and meaning of which are contained within its boundaries.

Castells (2004) further asserts that flows of capital, information, technology, organizational interactions, images, sounds and symbols are the expression of processes dominating economic, political, and symbolic life, and that these flows
are facilitated by innovative technologies. These technologies reduce the friction of distance, and link people, money and places in ever-expanding patterns of impermanent connections.

Geographer Doreen Massey (1994; 2004) describes places as actually constituted by their variegated links to other near and distant locales, and contextualizes spatiality as a product of intersecting social relations. Thus, there are no formal spatial rules; it all depends, says Massay, on the power relations embedded in the spatial situation. As globalization has proceeded, what Massey calls the “power geometry of time-space compression”—the differential positioning of social groups vis-à-vis global flows—has become more transparent. The increasing density of transnational connections gives us a global sense of the local, she claims, and allows for greater flows and mobilities of communication and association across diverse terrains and social locations. In Massey’s politics of mobility, place becomes an event, marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence. At the same time, Massey draws attention to regional inequities as part of the politics of place.

Anthropologist Thomas Eriksen (2003) draws attention to ways in which some current ethnographic studies indicate that a single site in a complex society may be conceptualized as a multiple one. Since ‘spaces’ require agency and human interpretation in order to become ‘places’, it is clear that each ‘space’ may exist as various ‘places’ in so far as many agents invest it with different meanings. Even further, cultural geographer Tim Cresswell (2002, p. 25), in challenging the humanistic formulation of place as rooted and “authentic”—a location for identity—argues that

Place is constituted through reiterative social practice—place is made and remade on a daily basis. Place provides a template for practice—an unstable stage for performance. Thinking of place as performed and practiced can help us think of place in radically open and non-essentialized ways where place is constantly struggled over and reimagined in practical ways. Place is the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than as a-priori label of identity. Place provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice.

From another angle, sociologists Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2003) emphasize “global fluids” that enable dynamic, multiple mobilities of people, objects, information and images, especially as these move in powerfully fused or hybridized forms, each constantly shifting and being performed in rapid flashes within less anchored spaces. Global fluids, according to Sheller and Urry,
Global fluids, they argue, transform any notion of a “national” public, highlight everyday forms of dwelling in mobility, and point to a proliferation of multiple ‘mobile’ sites for potential democratization.

Directly examining pedagogical and curricular concerns in relation to transnational flows and mobilities, language theorist Karen Risager (2006) argues that purist and nationalistic approaches to culture typically reign supreme in the foreign language classroom, and she attempts to counter such limiting perspectives by theorizing how “discourses and languages flow across each other” (p. 140). Risager aims to challenge the purism and nationalism that she claims characteristically frames the teaching of language and culture by developing a notion of “language-culture nexus” that theorizes language flows, discourse flows, and culture flows as intersecting in the communicative event. She argues that the target for the teaching of culture “is not ‘the language area’ in a geographic sense but the worldwide network of the target language,” (p. 197). Her main argument derives from her conviction that “linguistic and cultural practices change and spread through social networks along partially different routes, principally on the basis of transnational patterns of migration and markets” (p. 2).

As a final abbreviated example, I note that a number of scholars, including James Clifford (1997), have conceptualized “travel” as metaphor working through transnational flows and mobilities as means of making connections and transgressing disciplinary boundaries, where “a location … is an itinerary rather than a bounded site—a series of encounters and translations” (Clifford, 1997, p. 11). Thus, “identities based on place are transformed through real and virtual travel and migration into hybridized, nomadic versions of traveling subjects” (McDowell, 2003, p. 11). Further, feminist literary theorist Susan Stanford Friedman (1999), using the terms “mapping,” “position,” “location,” and “axis” to create a spatial discourse to complement temporal models of narrative, conceptualizes “mappings” in particular as a gerund, a verbal noun that is plural, in process, and continually open. She thus argues for conceptualizing identity as hybrid, or syncretic rather than as stable; she also argues for understanding cultural “roots” in terms of their routes or points on a travel itinerary.
What implications for a worldwide curriculum studies field might these varying disciplinary conceptions of transnational flows and mobilities pose? How might the resultant reconceiving of such concepts as “space” and “place” affect the ways in which a worldwide curriculum studies field might be envisioned? How might we consider implications of differing trajectories and global flows of ideas, people, and knowledge constructions? And how might those differing trajectories and flows enable or not enable us to create and to occupy—for and in the moment—spaces together, where we might “ask for recognition”?

In other words, what might it take to engage in “collective exchange,” knowing that engagement with one another will require us to acknowledge that “recognition does not freeze us in our place, our position, our various locations, but rather compels us to move beyond what we have been.” That collective exchange also will require us, amidst rapidly changing circumstances both affected and effected by transnational flows and mobilities, to stay “… open to the tensions that beset the most fundamental categories we require, to know unknowingness at the core of what we know…” (Butler, 2001, p. 27). In considering possibilities of transnational and transcultural collective exchange within the contexts of a worldwide curriculum studies field inflected by flows and mobilities, such “unknowingness” might enable those of us attempting to create a worldwide field to avoid a scenario wherein the non-Western “other” is positioned to desire recognition only through assimilation or nativism, for example.

To examine these issues further, I now turn to some cautions as well as incentives raised by various feminists as they consider, from differing perspectives, both deleterious and beneficial possibilities generated by transnational flows and mobilities.

VARYING FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS AND MOBILITIES

A number of feminists who are committed to analyzing current effects of globalization, writ large, are considering issues of nation, globalization, postmodernity and postcoloniality while simultaneously rearticulating feminist theories in new forms. In so doing, those who identify as committed to transnational feminisms actively refuse to involve feminist discourse in the construction of a universal notion of patriarchy against which a global sisterhood could emerge. These transnational feminists also refuse to speak for or to offer solutions for women, especially “Third World,” subaltern women. I posit that those feminists who are struggling with effects of transnational flows and mobilities on current forms of feminist thought and action, while at the same time refusing essentialized
or universalized categories of identity, thought and action, might further inform the work of all who are attempting to conceive and enact a worldwide curriculum studies field.

Feminists take up the concept of “transnational” from differing philosophical and political commitments. In attempting to imagine and practice an ethics of feminist transnational encounter that is neither simply assimilationist nor conflictual, Shu-Mei Shih (2002) points to the fluidity and complexity of the transnational moment, where migration, diaspora, and travel can no longer be clearly distinguished by duration or intention, nor by national citizenship and belonging. For M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty, transnational feminism crucially involves “a way of thinking about women in similar contexts across the world, in different geographical spaces, rather than as all women across the world” (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, p. xix). Alena Heitlinger (1999) argues that transnational feminism builds on insights of postmodernism and postcoloniality as well as acknowledges ways in which “global economic restructuring and transnational cultural influences shape and link the material and cultural lives of women around the world” (p. 7). And Caren Kaplan (1992) argues that the term “transnational” expresses “possibilities for links and affiliations, as well as differences, among women who inhabit different locations” (p. 116).

Building on these conceptualizations, Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (1999) have conceptualized a transnational cultural studies perspective, which recognizes that “practices are always negotiated in both a connected and specific field of conflict and contradiction and that feminist agendas must be viewed as a formulation and reformulation that is contingent on historically specific conditions” (p. 358). Within that conceptualization, Kaplan and Grewal have analyzed how inequalities of class, gender, nationality, sexuality and ethnicity are created through movement over time and space in particular ways. They use the term transnational instead of international in order to destabilize rather than maintain boundaries of nation, race and gender, for example. Kaplan and Grewal note how race, gender, and class, among other categories, must now be conceived of as concepts that “travel”—that is, circulate and work in different and fluid ways in different places and times. Thus, “transnational” is a term that signals, for Kaplan and Grewal, attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits and flows of culture and capital, where mobility, for example, may at times signal reluctant or mandatory participation. By critically analyzing such circuits, flows, and mobilities, they argue, links between patriarchies, colonialisms, racisms and other forms of domination may become more apparent and available for critique.
Also choosing the term *transnational*, postcolonial cultural theorist and philosopher Gayatri Spivak has developed the idea of “transnational literacy” (1992; 1999; 2003), which in its broadest sense refers to a reshaping of colonial systems of education and institutional knowledge away from (European) nation-based formations. Spivak (1993) warns against universalizing postcoloniality by noting “others are many.” She argues that “transnational literacy” thus would involve a study of the multiplicity of languages and cultures in the world, and describes how reading can serve as one way of thinking with and through concepts of the nation that currently are being troubled by the cultural and economic effects of globalization. Here, reading refers not just to reading-based literacy, but literacy more generally, as an interpretive act. By paying attention to intersections of knowledge and power in pedagogical practices and curriculum constructions, for example, transnational literacy can be instrumental in linking literature and culture to global capital and other forces and flows that impinge on personal and collective autonomies.

Spivak (1996; 2000) also has challenged the idea that the new speed and flexibility of technology, in particular, enables the effective transnational circulation of people, money, and information. She claims that this dominant idea ignores the fact that the circulation of money and information is profitably regulated by rich, industrial “First World” nations, while the vast majority of the world’s population is living in a state of poverty and oppression. By highlighting monetary and political interests that are served by the economic text of globalization, Spivak exposes how the world is represented from the dominant perspective and geopolitical location of the “First World” to the exclusion of other disenfranchised groups. In particular, Spivak’s criticism of economic development policies that target women has highlighted the urgent need for a transnational perspective in feminist thought. Spivak’s critical endeavor is to situate women’s social locations in a transnational framework of political, economic and social relationships.

Feminist theorist Cindi Katz (2001) argues that such political, economic and social relationships might best be investigated by defining the local as a “critical topography,” thus making it possible to excavate the layers of process that produce particular places and to see their intersections with material social practices. Katz conceptualizes the local not as a well-bordered space defined either by exclusion from or inclusion in global practices, but rather as a “cross-roads” where the post-national, the post-colonial and the emergence of a need for a new kind of community often meet under or even against the pressures of global flows and imperatives.

Even as some of these various notions of *transnational* gesture toward generative possibilities, Grewal and Kaplan (2000) also point out that it is impossible to advocate a transnational feminism as an improved or better or cleaned up kind of
international or global feminism—transnational feminism is not to be celebrated as free of oppressive conditions. Rather, they argue, transnational feminist practices refer to the interdisciplinary study of the relationships among diverse women in diverse parts of the world. These relationships are uneven, often unequal, and complex. They emerge from women’s varied needs and agendas in many cultures and societies, and involve forms of alliance, subversion, and complicity within which asymmetries and inequalities can be critiqued.

Given these varying feminist perspectives on transnational flows and mobilities and their worldwide effects, possibilities, and complexities, how would a worldwide field of curriculum studies grapple with the implications and complications of such views? Given a very heterogeneous, multi-faceted, nation-based and yet mobile educational world, how might we understand curriculum studies as a worldwide field? How might perspectives offered by feminists who identify their work and goals as “transnational” in one way or another inform the “…emergence of a worldwide—transnational—curriculum studies field with a vocabulary and intellectual agenda that expresses and addresses both national and international curriculum questions” (Pinar, 2006)?

For example, how might Kaplan and Grewal’s (1999) focus on the travels of feminist discourses, as they are produced and disseminated through cultural divides that mark global inequities, inform our studies of curriculum discourses and their production and dissemination? How might we attend to their simultaneous caution that a notion of travel oftentimes marks asymmetries of power rather than a global cosmopolitanism (p. 358)? For, the metaphoric spaces of movement, linkages, crossings, explorations, travel, “so important in [many feminists’] construction[s] of different concepts of the self, of community, of [becoming], [are] set against the material reality that pleasurable mobility is only for the affluent; the poor are immobile or subject to enforced movement and migration” (Eagleton, 2003, pp. 2–3). It’s the contradiction to which the politics of mobility points, to which Rosi Braidotti (1994) refers to when she questions the “paradox of proximity, indifference, and cultural differences between the nomadic intellectual and the migrant woman” (p. 255).

Further, Linzi Manicom (1999), following Spivak, notes that “blind travel that does not check its baggage—or have its baggage checked—can only serve to reproduce those transnational relations of feminist hierarchy in which Third World women and national feminisms are subsumed to Western interpretive schema” (p. 56). Grewal and Kaplan (1994), for example, consider the tracings and mappings of debates around production and reception of feminist cultural and intellectual production to be crucial aspects of transnational feminist practices. Manicom argues
that such tracings and mappings should help to “translate concepts across cultural venues, to mediate between discordant discourses, and usefully recast issues and debates that have become conventionalized, both locally and globally” (p. 56).

In addition, M. Jacqui Alexander (2005) argues that the metaphors of travel, links, maps, charts, journeys, bridges and borders are neither idle nor incidental … as we come to terms with the different cartographies of feminist struggle in different parts of world; our different histories; where they change course and how they diverge. It seems crucial that we come to terms with, and engage, that confluence of the local and the global in order not to view the transnational as merely a theoretical option. (p. 264)

In fact, many curriculum scholars already have begun to study effects of various iterations of transnational flows and mobilities, knowing at the same time that “the local now transacts directly with the global—the global installs itself in locals, and the global itself is constituted through a multiplicity of locals” (Sassen, 2000, p. 259). At the same time, a worldwide curriculum studies field needs to wrestle with the dilemma that “local can connote the supposed particularism, provincialism, and primordialism of the Third World while global may connote the breadth and universality that is often associated with Western feminism” (Basu, 2003, pp. 68–69).

Thus, I think one reason for grappling with tensions involved in conceiving of a world-wide field of curriculum studies in relation to transnational flows and mobilities is that we might address what Judith Butler (2001, p. 96) describes as

… the concrete dilemmas of what it is to be local and global at once, to be caught in the necessity of constant translation …. Such an inquiry neither moves us too quickly to assert our commonality, thus effacing our difference, nor seeks to return us to our parochial locations, our ethnic singularities, without showing how the most local struggles are implicated in the processes of globalization. What this also means is that the usual binary oppositions do not hold, and that we must learn to work with one another in our irreducible complexity, bound to one another in many ways, implicated in a process of globalization which works differentially and relentlessly, at the same time that we are irreducible to a collective condition.

How then might we work together, in our irreducible complexity, with and in a worldwide curriculum field? I agree with Butler that those of us who work toward a worldwide field would be unable to be simplified to a collective condition. And yet, I believe that many of us are hoping to move beyond what we have been, both
as separate nationally based fields and as a fledging world-wide field, in order to encounter new possibilities for collective exchange. Those exchanges, however, will always be predicated on acknowledging one another as in the making, always caught up differently in flows and mobilities of becoming in the instantaneous mutualities of the local and the global.

Recognition Does Not Freeze Us in Our Place

I join in the clump of students, teachers, child-care workers hoisting strollers as we all jostle for position in order to ascend the steps of the 116th Street station. We spill out onto Broadway, identifiable to walkers nearby as the most recent group disgorged from the #1 local uptown line. But our momentary unity as subway riders headed in the same direction immediately splays and disperses. I hurry down Broadway, cross 120th Street and turn right. I flash my faculty ID card to the Teachers College security person posted inside a kiosk at the intersection of Thompson and Main Halls—this one knows me, waves me on. And as I settle into my office chair and click on my Mac, possibilities for constructions of curriculum and its field as well as potentials for teaching and research implied by current everyday forms of dwelling in mobility, in the temporaries and flows of plurality—in difference—begin to get codified and regulated into static, circumscribed, U.S.-centric versions of academic identities and knowledges.

Sitting at my office desk in front of my computer, I enter my password, wince at the emails that stream down the screen. Immediately, I am connected to multiple worlds of students, colleagues, family, friends, and yes, to the world of curriculum studies, to the flows and mobilities that hold out possibilities for new kinds of identities and collective exchanges. Those possibilities posit that I can ask for recognition from the other without being frozen in my place, my subject positions. For, in the asking, Butler argues, I already am becoming something new. But at the same time, sitting at that desk—responding in various email lengths and modes of address to students, faculty members, administrators—possibilities for my multiply and always newly becoming selves drain from my consciousness, and I most often get reified and reify myself as a white, U.S.-born, middle class female professor. I do so through my particularly and habitually positioned participation in local/global academic events of teaching, researching and writing. Although I live and work with and in sexual orientation difference, and with and in what some especially would still gesture toward as the oxymoronic gendered status of “woman academic” in the U.S., I worry that most often I still am seen, and most often habitually view my “professional selves,” as situated within normalized versions of what it “means”
to be a “woman” working in a gendered U.S. institution of higher learning, a U.S. field of curriculum studies, and in and with U.S.-centric versions of curricular and pedagogical theories, policies and practices.

A number of the doctoral students with whom I work at Teachers College, Columbia University, are classified as “international”—students from Nigeria, Taiwan, the Caribbean, Japan, South Korea, Italy, Colombia, Lebanon, Zimbabwe—who have come to the U.S. to study—some, to stay, others to leave when they complete their doctoral work. Some of my international students “become variously decentered from their cultural bearings and, in the United States, seek different forms of identity as a politics rather than as an inheritance” (Ong, 1995, p. 351) of familial and cultural connections or of particular ethnic, class, or gender groups or geographic locations. A clip of writing from one of my doctoral students illustrates this decentering shift:

My autobiographical inquiry is being done without resting on a fixed identity. But a shifting identity is not really a place where I want to repose. I want to do and write research with differences that have so many names, but at the same time, no names. I am a woman, but I am not that name. I am a Japanese but I am not that name. I am a daughter but I am not that name. And so on. I am a nomadic inquirer. I want to ride and work differences and move in the thought that, unsure of where I am going, I am moving somewhere different from where I am now. (Naoko Akai, 2006)

But by the very classification of “international student” on her official records at Teachers College, my student’s desire to destablize any fixed versions of her identities get caught up in “the discourses of ‘international’ or ‘global’ [that] rely on political and economic as well as cultural concepts of discrete nations who can be placed into comparative or relational status, always maintaining the West [in our case here, the U.S.] as the center” (Alarcon, Kaplan & Moallem, 1999, p. 12).

One part of my discussion about potentials and difficulties of conceiving of a worldwide field of curriculum studies in relation to transnational flows and mobilities thus calls into question curricular and institutional discourses that result in a naturalization, essentialization, or compartmentalization of identities. As well, I question any version of a worldwide field of curriculum studies that renders ordinary, natural, and even compulsory the relationship between reified conceptions of national and international. Further, my particular and situated work with those students classified as “international” in the U.S. has compelled me to challenge any discourse that “recuperates the originary narrative of diversity without questioning the ‘very processes by which ‘othering’ is fabricated in American society” (Alarcon, Kaplan & Moallem, 1999, p. 14).
Janet L. Miller

Some of my “international” students talk about feeling “international” when they return to their home countries after extended stays of study in the U.S. “You don’t speak real Taiwanese anymore—you speak it with an American accent,” En-Shu’s grandmother tells her. In relaying her grandmother’s remarks to me, En-Shu throws up her hands: “So now I speak my mother tongue with an American accent and English with a Taiwanese accent. Where and who am I in all this?” I have no answer, nor do I think that there is one answer to be had here. But I worry about my obligations to my students in light of the stances that I take—those of a faculty person who teaches, researches, writes, and promotes study about and with/in “difference,” and who argues for a politics that is responsive to rather than repressive of difference. Should I have an answer?

En-Shu confides in me that she is worried about her visa situation that may force her to return to Taiwan; she would rather stay in the U.S. to pursue an academic career. But even if she doesn’t go “home” to work following the completion of her doctoral degree, she says that she feels she is still considered “other” in the U.S., although she has lived and worked in the U.S. for over ten years now. And now, based on her grandmother’s reactions to her during her recent visit “home,” she thinks that she would be considered “other” in Taiwan as well.

Such paradoxical and embodied global/local tensions convince me that examination of multiple sites and configurations of “othering” processes could be yet another focus of any version of a worldwide curriculum studies field. Given that any “other” is a particularity as well as situated within broader social/cultural/historical contexts (Ahmed, 1998), what varying investigative practices might we differently need to employ in order to address issues and relations of power related to constructions of “other,” both in our individual educational contexts as well as in relation to a worldwide curriculum studies field?

Of course, I have learned from poststructuralist, transnational, and postcolonial feminist projects, in particular, that there is no “pure” space from which to speak and challenge originary narratives of diversity, no spaces outside of language and configurations of power. According to Kaplan and Grewal, there are only links, flows, and mobilities among thoroughly unequal social forces (1999, p. 356). Those very flows and mobilities certainly can point to transnationally inflected versions of identities and knowledge in the making, capable of new possibilities for collective exchange—an exchange not based on sameness. But those flows and mobilities, moving through unequal social forces, also can contribute, simultaneously, to “the very processes by which othering is fabricated.”

For example, although my descriptions of my doctoral students’ administratively categorized “international identities” are intended as critique, in fact my very
interpretations may maintain static configurations of those students’ subject positions as Other, still subject to my interpretation and implementation of university regulations that reinforce imperialistic U.S. inscription of who and what counts—and how—in U.S. educational contexts and knowledge production. And, of course, the often “othering” binary of professor/student potentially is working in tandem with other “othering” processes here.

These are troubling scenarios for me. For example, in my poststructuralist feminist work over the years, I’ve attempted to trouble the category of “woman” and especially of “woman academic” in order to examine ways in which those very identity categories have been historically, socially and culturally constituted as “Other,” especially in the U.S. academy and particularly in the field of U.S. curriculum studies (Miller, 1981; 1983; 1992; 1993). As one born and educated in the United States, and as one who has participated for over thirty years in the field of curriculum studies, during and post- reconceptualization (Miller, 1978; 1996a; 1996b; 1999), I am interested in how current social, cultural, and economic global flows and mobilities might influence not only constructions of the category “woman” but also any other assigned identity category, including those attached to my international doctoral students or to any one working toward a world-wide field of curriculum studies. I support Butler’s claim that any identity category need be viewed as “an undesignatable field of differences” and as “site[s] of permanent openness and resignifiability” (Butler, 1992, p. 160).

Thus, to unintentionally reinscribe my students’ “international” identities as fixed and static versions of “other” would be the antithesis of what I believe in and have worked for as a major emphasis of curriculum theorizing in the U.S. field. I agree that difference cannot be conceived as a static concept in and of itself, cannot be detached from its embeddedness in social, epistemological, and power relations. But there is always the danger that I have positioned myself, in relation to my international students, as normative and unmarked and as such, have concealed the mark of privilege (Ahmed, 1998). Thus, as part of a network of relationality, a notion of difference to which I am committed requires me to acknowledge that I am living in simultaneous and contradictory subject positions/locations that are always in flux, always becoming. Such acknowledgement thus implies framing difference as the continuous potential for the world’s and people’s movements and connections to be made otherwise. … When difference is thought through [flows and mobilities] and emergence and becoming otherwise, negative social situations are seen to arise not out of difference itself, but rather when the potential for difference to emerge and come into play is captured and narrowly directed. Social change and cultural variation becomes the problem of how
to imagine else, move else, experience else, and experiment with how else we might associate with each other and enter into exchanges with each other. Here, political action entails practices that multiply and augment the variety of thinkable and doable responses we might perform to what is already and always emerging as the potential to become else. (Ellsworth, 2006)

I argue, then, that we all are living in and through contradictory subject positions and locations, intensified by volatile worldly events, technological change and structural and material inequities that often are based on fixed notions of ethnicity, race, gender, national and religious identities in an age of globalization. Clearly, we are in the midst of a momentous shift in how we might think about social and cultural difference in relation to transnational flows and mobilities that influence constructions of identities, subjectivities, and conceptions of a worldwide field of curriculum studies. I am arguing here that such a shift moves us from speaking about fixed binaries or even multiple social/cultural positions to notions of *trans-*—flows of bodies, cultures, and identities as assemblages of relationalities, including economic, institutional, governmental, immigration forces—that may create new choices, new possibilities for becoming else through impermanent convergences and irreducible differences among families, coalitions, subjectivities, and histories across uneven playing fields.

I watch and I feel too the embodied tensions, the struggles with displacement, with translation of both identities and languages, with assigned homogeneous identity constructions and knowledge productions that some of my international students encounter as they attempt to re-work their “selves” across the flows and mobilities of new relationalities in their graduate student lives:

*My research develops from my personal and professional experiences, both as a high school English teacher and student in Los Angeles and as an immigrant woman from Colombia. As a teacher, my literature anthologies and set curricula, designed by the state, the district and the school, established and maintained the literature canon. U.S. Latino authors seemed to be sprinkled in the literature selections to represent THE Latino experience. ... This created a limited and often erroneous account of what it means to be Latino not only for non Latino students but also for those who identified as Latino themselves.* (Mary Alexandra Rojas, 2006)

*My doctoral student’s challenging of homogeneous labels that in turn constitute a portion of the literary canon in the U.S. makes me think that engaging in the constant translation of irreducible differences could be another point of our work as a world-wide but not unitary field of curriculum studies. It’s certainly the labor*
that I see Mary and others—some who consider themselves immigrants to the U.S., others who call themselves “temporary” exiles or emigrants who intend to return to their countries of origin at the completion of their doctoral studies, and still others of us who were born in the U.S but who battle the reified versions of “otherness” of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability—engaged in every day.

For, clearly, it is no longer possible to claim any static notion of either knowledge or identity—everyone and everything in a certain sense now is unlocate-able, in flux. If the circumstances of knowledge and identity constructions and exchanges are flows and mobilities—then what can and will we make of a world-wide field of curriculum studies, in the moment and in-the-making and especially across dualistic boundaries of “national” and “international?” Or within persistent unitary constructions of national and ethnic identities? What potentials might we tap into when people’s movements and actions, including their constructions of identities and curriculum, take place in spaces between categories and boundaries and knowledges and identities already made (Ellsworth, 2006)?

I obviously believe that “transnational flows and mobilities” more readily describes the relational and dynamic character of a worldwide field rather than a notion of individual fields participating in a world-wide field as “representatives” of various regions of the world. At the same time, tensions arise if we contemplate the effects of the denationalization of curriculum studies and the formation of new claims for the field centered in transnational actors, for this in turn might raise the question, “whose field is it and where is it?” Or perhaps I assume the raising of such questions, given my experiences with current circumstances within the U.S. curriculum field, where assorted contingencies appear to stake claim to “the state of the field” in ways that ignore a variety of perspectives on the field’s work. Or perhaps I am anticipating conflict, given the variety of curricularists’ responses to governmental mandates contained with No Child Left Behind, with its press for curriculum standardization, high-stakes testing and student and teacher accountability. Or perhaps I am reacting defensively to these and other current factors and conditions, including a re-emphasis on faculty being lodged in specific and often traditional disciplinary fields of study, that are threatening U.S. curriculum studies from standing alone as a primary field of vital scholarly study and inquiry.

THE U.S. DRIVE TO “IDENTIFY AND OWN”

In fact, one of the current responses of the U.S. curriculum studies field to mounting pressures to substantiate its existence in schools and colleges of education around the country appears to be a drive to constantly assess and to ironically “fix” the
“state”—the identity, the ownership, and the condition, if you will—of that field. Although echoing earlier concerns about the field in terms of its “moribund” condition (Huebner, 1976; Schwab, 1969), current questions about the state of U.S. curriculum studies also are impelled by conditions of intellectual peril for U.S. schools of education, public school teachers, and curriculum scholars (Pinar, 2004) as well as by material conditions of peril, both inside and outside the United States.

But that drive to sum up and to stabilize what the field “is” often reduces and reifies such assessments to static and isolated versions, separated not only from other educational fields of study but also from issues and concerns of global/local versions of curriculum studies and projects. I have participated in at least three of the now five or six recent “state of the U.S. field” sessions at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS). I have argued that, especially in the wake of current national and international world-altering events, those of us in the U.S. can no longer afford to maintain that our curriculum work should focus on our various narrow and sometimes even separatist stances about the purposes, forms or states of our field. Nor can we ignore the ways that such stances often posit ourselves as well as our curriculum studies field as existing apart from the regulatory norms that much of the field’s work supposedly opposes.

For, to “move beyond what we have been and to encounter a new possibility for collective exchange” requires that we acknowledge our “… fundamental dependency on the other, the fact that we cannot exist without addressing the other, without in some ways being addressed by the other, and that there is no wishing away our fundamental sociality” (Butler, 2001, p. 93). At the same time, “no matter how much we each desire recognition and require it, we are not therefore precisely the same as the other—there is an irreducibility to our being, one which becomes clear in the distinct stories we have to tell, which means that we are never fully identified with any collective ‘we.’” (Butler, 2001, p. 93)

Trust me, there is no collective “we” in the U.S. field of curriculum studies. In fact, I’ve been asking for a while now if still recurring static and divisive debates about purposes and forms of the U.S. academic curriculum field might shift in productive ways, were we to consider our field as always in-the-making, as always needing to respond in the moment to multiple and differing local/global events and contexts (Miller, 1999; 2000; 2005a; 2005b). To be always in the making requires that what some call the bifurcated, balkanized, and insulated American curriculum field create fresh ways to engage in collective exchange. Those of us in the U.S. certainly need to re-make the field every day, in relation to particular transnational as well as situated local events, issues, people and in tension with our desires for
recognition and our simultaneous irreducibility to a collective local and/or global “we.” And yet, some in the U.S. field do not appear to “accept the array of sometimes incommensurable epistemological and political beliefs and modes and means of agency that bring us into activism” (Butler, 2004, p. 48). And so some members of the U.S. field continue to stake out their versions of the field—versions that often emphasize the field as situated only in relation to static and pre-determined versions of curriculum design, development, and evaluation in K-12 educational settings, for example, or accounts that totally reject all aspects and implications of the U.S. field reconceptualized, or forms that resist any recognition of transnational flows and mobilities that now unavoidably influence constructions, not only of a U.S., but also of a worldwide field.

TO MOVE BEYOND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN

I here briefly have utilized feminist poststructuralist and postcolonial perspectives on autobiographical work in order to interrogate various notions and effects of transnational flows and mobilities as well as to theorize and to situate a notion of a worldwide curriculum studies field as always in the making. I obviously do so in response to my particular shifting and partial understandings and experiences of the U.S. field and of my “selves” working within that field. By extension, I am compelled to envision not only a U.S. but also a worldwide field as response-able to the multiple influences of and transmutations that can result from transnational flows and mobilities.

The autobiographical work to which I am committed theorizes memory, identity, embodiment, experience and agency as the constitutive processes of autobiographical subjectivity, and that attempts to attend to the fluidity of identities “in movement through time and across political and geographic spaces” (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 37). In particular, poststructuralist feminist versions of autobiographical inquiry claim no coherent “self” that predates stories about identities, about “who” one is; nor do they claim any possibility of a unified, stable immutable self who can remember everything that has happened in the past. Thus, feminist poststructuralist autobiographical curriculum theorizing wrestles with any version of autobiography that simply attempts to include or re-include unitary versions of subjects or “voices” in local/global social/cultural curriculum narratives or constructs from which they previously have been excluded.

I thus attempt to work tensions of feminist poststructuralist autobiographical practices in U.S. education, which as a field, writ large, is still caught up in humanist discourses, by conceiving of “selves” as mobile and negotiable spaces where complexities can be explored in and through confrontations with memory
and social/culturally inflected identity constructions, constructions already made and fixed in place and time. In such spaces, autobiographical inquiry involves acts “of interpretation by subjects inescapably in historical time, and in their relation to their own ever-moving pasts” (Smith & Watson, 2001, p. 24). What is remembered and what is forgotten, and why, change over time and across contexts and flows of time, geography, generation.

From these perspectives, autobiographical inquiry thus can be used to activate, situate, and/or interrogate conceptions, memories, fantasies, idealizations, or normalizations, for example, of how subjects know themselves as subjects of particular kinds of experiences attached to and interpreted through their social/cultural statuses, locations and identities, constructed in and through the discourses available to them. It can draw attention to Butler’s (1999) notion of how gendered identities, for example, get produced as we repeat regulatory regimes and how our repetitions also make categories vulnerable to change. Autobiographical inquiry can highlight what Butler conceptualizes as the iterative processes of taking up, repeating, or subverting certain subject positions. Thus, I believe that feminist poststructuralist autobiographical work especially can contribute to processes of coming to grips with conceptions of curriculum studies in relation to transnational flows and mobilities. For such work suggests, in constructing narratives of self and of curriculum fields, both the mobility and the potential agency of the subject as always in the making.

Conceptions of transnational flows and mobilities become visceral through embodied autobiographical inquiries that take into account shifting and rapidly changing discourses and material effects of globalization, including knowledges and identities produced at everyday educational sites as well as within a worldwide field of curriculum studies. Such autobiographical inquiries might highlight how participants in that world-wide field now must move across, between, and with/in spatial and temporal as well as historical, social and cultural difference so as to “encounter a new possibility for collective exchange”—but exchange not contingent on sameness. Instead, such a collective transnational exchange, sprung amidst a stream of flows and mobilities, dislocates all of us from our positions, denies any version of an essentialized “self” or place, rejects possibilities of identifying with any collective “we.” Yet, there can be exchange, where asymmetries and inequalities in constructions of knowledge and identities might be acknowledged, or simply sustained, or called into question, or even subverted. And therein lies hope for a worldwide field constructed in and through difference—a field and its participants always in the making.
I slip into the stream of staff and colleagues leaving my building. I don’t teach tonight, so I’m headed home during the height of New York City’s rush hours. I trudge up Broadway, jostle for position on the subway stairs. I merge with a commuter cluster, and together we shuffle onto the #1 local. I don’t join the rush for seats. I have to change in three stops to the #2 express, where I’ll be more assertive in claiming sitting space. I grab onto the metal pole stabbing the center of the subway car as the train rides a curve in the tracks.

In that southbound train, I am re-tracing the lines of my early morning journey, but I am not the same as I was during that commute. As the subway lurches toward Brooklyn, I am transporting new versions of my self as well as of those with whom I’ve engaged in collective exchange. Tomorrow will bring different fluxes and encounters and identities and provisional spaces that most likely will get claimed and coded almost in the moment that they are imagined. I will have to begin again.

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NOTES

1 The three AERA “state of the field” sessions, all sponsored by Division B (Curriculum Studies), in which I participated include:

- the 2006 Annual Meeting, April 7–11, San Francisco, where I was a participant in an Invited Plenary Colloquium entitled “Projects of Influence, Architects of the Arena: The Status of Curriculum Studies”;
- the 2005 Annual Meeting, April 11–15, Montreal, where I was a participant in a symposium entitled “Whatever Happened to the Curriculum Field”;

65
• and the 2003 Annual Meeting, April 21–25, Chicago, where I was a participant in a symposium entitled “Whither Curriculum: Thinking Through the Present of Curriculum Studies.”

REFERENCES


CURRICULUM STUDIES AND TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS AND MOBILITIES


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