

# *Locating Canadian Curriculum Studies in Global Traditions*

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*[I]nternationalizing curriculum inquiry might best be understood as a process of creating transnational “spaces” in which scholars from different localities collaborate in reframing and decentering their own knowledge traditions and negotiate trust in each other’s contributions to their collective work (Gough, 2003, p. 68).*

In keeping with the overall theme for the 2008 Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) Conference, “Thinking Beyond Borders: Global Ideas: Global Values,” the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (CACS) sought to highlight, through its annual pre-conference, scholarship which resists the potentially homogenizing effects of globalization. Like Noel Gough (2000), we wanted to examine “the ways in which diverse knowledge traditions can be sustained locally, and amplified transnationally, without being absorbed into an imperialist archive” (p. 329). The CACS Annual Pre-conference, held just prior to regularly scheduled CSSE sessions, invited papers that explored the complex patterns of global interconnectedness in ways that would further von Humboldt’s project of “linking the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained

interplay” (cited in Pinar, 2006, p. 4). The broad range of papers presented at the pre-conference provided insight into how Canadian curriculum scholars are actively exploring the significance of location in relation to knowledge traditions and offered inspiration for this issue of JCACS.

We begin this issue with Celia Haig-Brown’s pre-conference plenary address, “Taking Indigenous Thought Seriously: A rant on globalization with some cautionary notes.” In her provocative address, Haig-Brown begins as she always does, with an acknowledgement that the Canadian academic community conducts its business on indigenous land. She responds to Gough’s admonition, cited in the pre-conference call for papers, on “avoiding the imperial archive” by suggesting that this conference presents the ideal opportunity “to take up such a challenge...with theory arising from Indigenous contexts and developed by Indigenous scholars from knowledge built with and of this land.” Furthermore, she poses the question “What does such knowledge say to globalizing curriculum?” Haig-Brown aptly reminds us that rather than being a corrective to persistent colonial relations, globalization represents an economically imperialist move in which Indigenous peoples and nations are largely forgotten. She questions how many of us who travel the globe in the quest for data consider the “historical and contemporary relations between the governments who invite us or permit us in and the indigenous peoples of the place.” Citing Geertz (1983), Haig-Brown calls for a more reciprocal orientation—“a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure”(p. 69). We encourage readers to adopt Haig-Brown’s attention to the reciprocal relationship between local and global communities as they move through this issue of JCACS.

In “A Site of Struggle, A Site of Conflicting Pedagogical Proposals: The Debates Over Suitable Commemorative Form and Content for ESMA,” Mario DiPaolantonio examines the complexities of investing

pedagogical desires in memorializing sites of past atrocities. DiPaolantonio's research focuses on the public debate surrounding the establishment of a Museum of Memory at the notorious Navy School Mechanics complex in Buenos Aires (known by its Spanish acronym ESMA) where "an estimated 5,000 people were detained, tortured, and disappeared during the military's 'dirty war'." Commemorative spaces as sites of pedagogical address continue to hold the attention of curriculum scholars. Like Ellsworth (2005), who alerts readers to the "philosophical and pedagogical problems that challenge any attempt to teach or memorialize" (p. 99), DiPaolantonio compels us to consider the im/possibility of representing the unrepresentable. By engaging with the arguments of Argentine artists and critics, DiPaolantonio explores how art within ESMA can constitute a "*pedagogical act of memory*." He does so by situating the struggle for memory and justice against a politics of reconciliation.

Two articles in this issue of JCACS negotiate the contested borders within instructional contexts. In "Provoking and Being Provoked by Embodied Qualities of Learning: Listening, Speaking, Seeing, and Feeling (Through) Inquiry in Teacher Education," Hans Smits, Jo Towers, E. Lisa Panayotidis, and Darren E. Lund explore the problem of boundaries within a unique inquiry-based teacher education program—specifically "what those boundaries both offer and limit in terms of listening to students' experiences of becoming teachers." Through a series of focused individual reflections, the authors attempt to capture the inevitable tensions that result from trying to hold something "within boundaries" (Gadamer cited in Palmer, 2001, p. 68) and the absence of freedom necessary for genuine engagement in dialogue and learning. Drawing on Peperzak's (2006) "logos" of inquiry—*listening, speaking, seeing, and feeling*—these scholar-educators adopt an embodied perspective to narrate the necessary difficulties or *aporia* of teaching practices.

Danica Taylor's article "Border within Borders: Ontario's Canadian and World Studies Curriculum" also takes up the thematic of boundaries and employs current theories of border politics to deconstruct the implicit and explicit content of two courses within the Canadian and World Studies section of the Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum in the Senior Division. Taylor's critique is grounded in Goff's contention that "in the wake of globalisation, countries will open the border of the state while closing the borders of the nations." Here, Goff (2000) distinguishes between the state, which she defines as the economy and the politics of a particular country, and the nation, which is tied to a country's culture and identity. Like Goff, Taylor contends that while political and cultural borders persist, they are permeable and act much like a filter to determine which external influences are allowed in and how much of our Canadian identity goes out. Taylor extends Goff's theory to demonstrate how multicultural, multinational, and bi-national borders function in curriculum where schools are charged with creating an identity in imagined, legitimate, expressions of "nationalism, patriotism and economic activity" (Waters & Leblanc, 2005, p. 129).

Also examining these questions of location and identity in the making of knowledge, we are pleased to include in this issue of JCACS two important addresses made at the 2008 CACS President's Symposium. Appropriately, both addresses emphasize that any possibility of Canadian curriculum studies is contingent upon building an understanding of our relationship to place. Nevertheless, in "Is a Canadian Curriculum Studies Possible?" Hans Smits cautions that simply locating ourselves through identifications with place can prove problematic if such identifications are void of an "understanding of the deep impulses of exploitation of the land and the social relations of production that privilege certain people and certain things over others." Like Haig-Brown who demands we know something of the "historical and contemporary relations between the governments who invite us or

permit us in and the indigenous peoples of the place,” Smits argues, “[p]ostcolonial, indigenous and other counter narratives are critical for understanding possibilities for curriculum.” There are similar echoes in Cynthia Chambers’ “Where are we? Finding Common Ground in a Curriculum of Place.” Chambers has clearly taken up the challenge of avoiding the “imperialist archive” in her choice to articulate four dimensions of a curriculum of place from aboriginal perspectives. In addition to taking up this theoretical challenge, Chambers issues one of her own, insisting that while “there is a great deal of grief and sorrow about place in Canada, about land and who it belongs to, about whose stories get told and which stories are to be believed... A curriculum of place is no longer optional.” If we pay attention to “where we are,” she argues, “perhaps we can find the common ground necessary to survive.”

Finally, this issue paradoxically concludes with an introduction. William Pinar’s introduction to the 2008 Edition of George S. Tomkin’s *A Common Countenance* emerges from a desire to pay attention to where we are and, in doing so, to understand and intellectually advance the field of Canadian curriculum studies. Tomkin’s canonical text historically traces the conditions that make Canadian curriculum studies a possibility and we feel, as Pinar does, that the work should be required reading for students in Canadian curriculum and foundational studies and teacher education. If there is one key idea that clearly links Pinar’s “Introduction” to the other articles in this issue, it is that the advancement of Canadian curriculum studies and a knowledge of where we are now demands knowledge of the past. In their study of the relationships between location and knowledge, each of the articles in this issue insist on the imbrication of time and place. Pinar’s insistence on the significance of specific “historical knowledge” in understanding Canadian curriculum studies and the identity of the field, reiterates and further enriches Geertz’s (1983) demand for “a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of

global structure”(p. 69). We share Pinar’s hope that the reissue of *A Common Countenance* will serve as inspiration—a call to take up the “intellectual histories of Canadian curriculum studies and...of Canadian school curriculum after 1980, the date at which Tomkins concludes his study.”

The task before us, to pay attention to where we are in this time and this place, is no doubt a formidable one. As the newly installed editors, we are pleased to take up this challenge as the journal celebrates its sixth year of publication and we invite you to take up the challenge with us in the pages of the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*.

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