

Entangling Relationalities and Differing Differences

Forty Years of Bergamo and *JCT* Curriculum Theorizings and Practices

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Insofar as we retain the capacity for attachment, the energy of desire that draws us toward the world and makes us want to live within it, we're always returning.

Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*

Whenever a story appears unified or whole, something must have been suppressed in order to sustain the appearance of unity.

Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments*

Inheritance and indebtedness are not only the substance of any particular *autobiographical story*, but these also go to the core of the ontology (or rather ethico-epistem-ontology) of agential realism: phenomena do not occur at some particular moment in time; phenomena are specific ongoing reconfigurings of spacetime-mattering,...of co-existing multiplicities of *entangled relations* of past-present-future-here-there that...[generate] continual reopening and unsettling of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be.

Karen Barad, *Intra-Active Entanglements*

I am both honored and truly delighted to join in celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, officially sponsored since 1979 by *JCT: The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*¹

Having served from 1978 through 1998 as both the Managing Editor of *JCT* (founded in 1978) and as Director or Co-Director of the *Journal's* sponsored annual Conference (founded in 1979), I take great joy in knowing that these both, since their foundings, have continued to prosper via myriad and substantial contributions to the field of curriculum studies, writ large. For multiple

decades, numbers of classroom teachers, curriculum supervisors and directors as well as curriculum studies academics have participated in what has been generally referred to as “the Bergamo Conferences.” Concomitantly, myriad *JCT* publication submissions also have generated cutting-edge scholarship. All of these contributions have vigorously expanded *and* transmogrified varied points and modes of inquiry initiated by early versions of reconceptual thought.²

However, throughout four decades of work aimed toward contributing in multiple ways to both the U.S. and worldwide curriculum studies fields, I have been unable to offer any unitary, fully agreed upon, or glorified version of the “history” of *JCT* and its sponsorship of the “Bergamo” Conferences. Indeed, any and all of my varying and partial attempts to narrate “histories” of *JCT* and Bergamo are inflected and influenced by many others’ recountings of this conference and its journal as well as by more current reviews of extensions of such work.³

Did all who participated in those early reconceptualizing years—as well as all that transpired during the initial and subsequent years of efforts toward reconceptualizing curriculum studies—address and intensely engage with all possible issues within the field, including those of exclusions, notable absences? Absolutely not. Strenuous disagreements, divergent ideological perspectives, disparate theoretical framings *as well as* gaps and silences in both participation and theorizings abounded.

I believe that it is vital to acknowledge the specific temporalities and contexts of those early efforts as well as omissions precipitated by a U.S. curriculum studies field both founded and predominantly occupied by white males until mid-20th century or so. I thus offer this 40th Anniversary Keynote as means to not only acknowledge but also continue to work toward inclusive, diverse, and multifarious proliferations of important curriculum theorizing and practices. Simultaneously, I also point to reconceptual work that *did* splinter some particular boundaries as well as forge potentialities for expansive participations in all manner of heretofore unthought curriculum conceptions and theorizings.

For, from my vested and fractional perspectives, reconceptual thought—although *not* directly addressing many of the issues and situated perspectives that occupy our attention today—*did* generate a number of re-imaginings and re-configurings. These addressed not only what heretofore had functioned primarily as technical-rational conceptions of “curriculum,” but also what, for too long, had been its primarily closed, insulated, organizational configurations and workings. Indeed, prior to the Reconceptualization, “curriculum” as both conception and material entity (the textbook, the syllabus, teacher “guides”) was pre-determined and operationalized by a select few who deemed what was to be considered and taught as “the” knowledge of most worth. Such iterations of “curriculum” quickly became literally closed, closed down, irrefutable. These sealed versions of curriculum and its field of study also were evident in terms of those who were deemed “appropriate” (mostly white men lodged in technical-rational modes of inquiry) to participate in the field and its conferences (including AERA’s Division B, which in its formative years in the 1960s, was called “Curriculum Objectives”), or to hold faculty or administrative “curriculum” positions in schools, district offices, colleges, and universities.

Further, getting any scholarship published that employed modes of inquiry primarily associated with the humanities: literary criticism, philosophical perspectives emanating from critical theory, or phenomenology, or psychoanalytic theories, for example; or that incorporated all manner of performance; or that employed modes of ethnographically oriented research; or that addressed constructions as well as questions of subjectivity via autobiographical inquiries; or that—gasp!—employed theories generated by differing feminisms, for brief examples—*all* were

absent from the curriculum field and its studies from the time of its origins in the U.S. during the very earliest decades of the 20th century until the precluding years of the Reconceptualization.

Re-turnings

In this Keynote, I want to re-turn to “Bergamo” as both place and a series of ideas as well as one means of re-affirming my desires and capacities for attachment. I wish to honor this 40th Anniversary celebration by embracing these re-turnings as intra-acting, as a “multiplicity of processes” that refuse any single, fixed “story” of “Bergamo and *JCT*” and all that these particular names-concepts-places imply.

Therefore, I do *not* return in the sense of “reflecting on or going back to a past that *was*.” Rather, I engage in re-turning as processes of turning over and over again my 40-plus years of association with this Conference and *Journal*—reiteratively intra-acting, as feminist theoretical physicist and humanities scholar Karen Barad (2014) would say,

in the making of new temporalities...that *trouble* the very notion of dichotomy—cutting into two—as a singular act of absolute differentiation, fracturing this from that, now from then.... As such, there is no moving beyond, no leaving the ‘old,’ behind. There is no absolute boundary between here-now and there-then. There is nothing that is new; there is nothing that is not new. (p. 168)

My re-turnings too are similar to what feminist cultural geographer Sarah Whatmore (2006) describes as re-“turning seemingly familiar matters over and over, like the pebbles on a beach” (p. 601). Whatmore reminds me that oceanic flows and rhythms spew matter in multi-dimensional trajectories. Pebbles tumble, reshuffle, collide, polish—never settling into certainties of form or substance.

So, for me: Eva Hoffman’s (1990) energies of desire that draw us toward the world, Sarah Whatmore’s (2006) undulating pebbles, and Jane Flax’s (1990) non-linear, non-unitary “stories” entangle with Karen Barad’s (2014) images of reiterative re-turnings—that is, as those similar to how the earthworm aerates the soil. It is Barad who especially posits *aerating “scenes”* that clearly reject any presumptions of a linear process of “going back” as the only way to “re-turn.” Instead, for Barad (2014), “re-turning” assumes no absolute separations of past from present; no moving beyond and leaving “the old” behind; no “reflecting on or going back to a past that was” (p. 168). For Barad, then, there is no “‘turning away from’ or ‘moving beyond,’...[no] sense of getting on with it and leaving the past behind” (Barad, 2012, p. 12). Instead— “co-existing multiplicities of entangled relations of past-present-future-here-there that constitute...worldly phenomena” (Barad, 2010, p. 264).

In this 40th Anniversary year, I hence again have eagerly, apprehensively, embracingly, haltingly, journeyed to the Bergamo Center, “home” site for the Conference since 1983. I’ve returned, despite knowing that I’d again be encountering ghosts at every turn, glimpsing ephemeral wisps of “scenes”—of particular encounters, disparate stances, enthralling ideas, overwrought stand-offs, multiple connectings. I re-turn, via this Keynote, “going back” not to “a history” of Bergamo and *JCT*—but rather, only to a spectral past, with its never-at-rest scenes.

For indeed, curriculum conceptions, constructions, and theorizings—and the persons *and* lively as well as inert matter that generate such—never stand still or alone. I, therefore, take

curriculum, its varying definitions and theories, its worldwide field of study, its participants—which include students, teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and academics—and its “histories” *as tangles of relations* that generate “continual reopening[s] and unsettling[s] of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be” (Barad, 2014, p. 264). Such tanglings evidence both a “nonlinear, durational logic of differing...in constant transformation” (van der Tuin, 2015, p. xix) and the cutting-together-apart of past-present-future-here-there that shatter the very concept of an always steady, linear temporality. Such a temporality presumes an automatic progression that typically reinforces dominant assumptions of what counts as “development,” as “improvement,” as “better than,” as “the new.” Karen Barad (2012) has vigorously critiqued such automatic acceptance of “progress narratives” as supposedly requiring “supercessionary break[s] with the old” because of purportedly having “no debts and no past, a clean break of ideas” (p. 13).

On this 40th Anniversary occasion, I thus will continue to speak of “the multiple histories” of what has become known colloquially as “*JCT* and its Bergamo Conference.” I interpret these histories as tangles of relations that prevent any “leaving behind,” or turning away from, matters of inheritance and indebtedness in any configurings and reconfigurings of present, past, and futures of the curriculum field. Simultaneously, these entanglings also enable “ongoing openness of [any] narrative to future re-tellings,... [an openness that gestures toward] an inheriting [of] the future as well as the past” (Barad, 2012, p. 11). This kind of openness to future re-tellings of any narrative includes, of course, the ones named “Bergamo” and *JCT* and their myriad incantations, critiques, disagreements, resistances, rejections, performances, coalescences, bifurcations—all of these very unsettlingings and reopenings intra-acting and proliferating fresh theorizings.

Again and again and again, Barad indeed urges us to conceptualize particular aerating and re-turning “scenes”—“re-tellings”—in order that we might re-vision these as scenes that never rest, as scenes/phenomena that simultaneously diffract various temporalities and tangles of relations that generate “continual reopening[s] and unsettling[s] of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be” (Barad, 2010, p. 264). Consider these “scenes” as ghostly, intra-acting re-returnings, whereby, I work to push against any assumed genesis of “meanings” and “happenings” of Bergamo and *JCT*. I do so in order to explore other ways of thinking that may enable the consideration of both matter and discourse in their intra-active inseparability—those *entangled relations* of past-present-future-here-there—and their undividable enacting practices.

So—in the manner of Barad, I conjure two such “scenes,” fleeting re-turning glimpses of my particular versions of “what might yet (have) been:”

Scene 1

TimeSpace Coordinates/Phenomena: Spring, 1973, University of Rochester, NY—by way of Ralph Tyler’s 1949 book, *Basic Principles of Curriculum & Instruction*, derived from his University of Chicago course syllabus—diffracted via the 1960s and early 1970s U.S. Women’s, Black Panthers, and Civil Rights Movements; the protests against the Viet Nam war; the fall of Saigon *and* of Nixon; flower children; Janis Joplin’s version of Big Mama Thornton’s “Ball and Chain;” consciousness-raising groups; intra-cutting the first curriculum theory conference in the U.S., entitled “Toward Improved Curriculum Theory,” chaired by Virgil Herrick and Ralph Tyler, and held at University of Chicago in 1947; and diffracted via James Macdonald’s 1971 publication, “Curriculum Theory.”

I hug a back wall, staking out a spot just inches from the conference ballroom doors, ready to bolt if I'm finally done in by the next presenter's ideas. In this afternoon conference session, James Macdonald and Dwayne Huebner have presented their conference papers, but as a fairly beginning Master's student, I'm still fuzzy about what might comprise what Macdonald argued for as a "transcendental developmental ideology of education." And all I can connect to Huebner's desire for remaking curricular language are my own wishes for re-forming some of the behavioral oriented language that had been infiltrating my seven years of teaching English to high school juniors and seniors. I've listened to the parade of speakers thus far, and as far as I can tell, they generally agree only on one issue: the urgent need to expand not only the limited conception of "curriculum" as "the content, the course syllabus," but also the still dominant managerial and generally prescriptive nature of the curriculum field and its work. Most supplemented this one agreement with the contention that such hoped-for expansive work must include philosophical analyses and theorizing as integral components of this effort toward reconceptualizing the curriculum field and its work.

In support of this one agreed upon desire, various presenters have taken up issues of meaning, language, temporality, and the self, thus arguing for political, cultural, and personal analyses of these as aspects of curriculum. I've listened as some argued that such analyses could serve as compelling reexaminations of relationships among the school, curriculum, and society. But I've heard others posit a dichotomous choice—either the political or the personal was the orientation with which to engage in such reexaminations. I was happy to hear "the school" and its inhabitants as included in all of this...but I was unsure of the rest. Weren't there ways to engage in concurrent studies of "the self" who experiences and understands curriculum from "personal" perspectives and experiences as well as from historically, socio-culturally, and politically situated perspectives? From my high school English-teacher perspective, everything involved in educating pretty much seemed always both political and personal.

I slump against the wall, weary from my attempts to understand. I slide a half-step toward the door as Maxine Greene approaches the room's center. I've read a sliver of her work during the first semester of my Master's work here, as suggested by my advisor, William Pinar. Gripping the podium, dressed in her New York black, Greene sways slightly as she speaks, her gaze most often fixed on the ceiling, seemingly as means of divining her existential phenomenological stances on her paper's topic, "Cognition, Consciousness, and Curriculum." Perplexed, provoked, intrigued—I momentarily abandon my urge to exit this conference, entitled "Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory" by its organizer Bill Pinar. I stay in spite of my still-engulfing bewilderment.

Scene 2

Past-present-future-here-there TimeSpace Coordinates/Phenomena: Autumn, 1979, Airlie Conference Center, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C.—intra-cut with Frederick Taylor's scientific management; Paul Klohr's chairing of a conference entitled "Curriculum Theory Frontiers" at The Ohio State University, marking the 20th anniversary of the 1947 Chicago conference; diffracted through Franklin Bobbitt's 1918 book on behavioral objectives; via the 1965 Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development's commission meeting on curriculum theory, and the Tanners' (1979) scorchings of any and all parts of the Reconceptualization.

I'm fixating on the glory of some Virginia countryside tree branches that gently wave into new kaleidoscopes of color with every slight breeze. As conference-goers slowly gather in this small ballroom, I'm hoping that the refracted glow of autumn leaves framing these windows will calm my escalating fidgeting. This assembling marks our first official JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing-sponsored conference—Bill Pinar, as Editor, and I, as Managing Editor of this fledging journal, established just the previous year, with Paul Klohr. Paul has served first as Bill's and then, later, my mentor and Dissertation Chairs for our doctoral work at The Ohio State University, and we three believe that our new publishing venue and its actual sponsorship of an annual meeting could provide consistent contexts for the growing and varied work focused on the reconceptualizing of curriculum conceptions, studies, and practices in the U.S.

In the "introduction" to the Journal, Bill had articulated JCT's two-fold purpose: 1) to provide an open forum for all those engaged in all aspects of curriculum writ large to explore various cultural, political, and psychological dimensions of the field; and 2) to acknowledge the variety of perspectives that characterize these various dimensions by printing criticism of such work.

But we aren't sure about any of this, including the viability of keeping both a conference and an academic journal alive and growing.

I take refuge behind the large main ballroom podium at the Airlie Conference Center; this is the site that Bill had found in our search for a suitable conference location and for which I had to secure Greyhound buses to cart people from the Dulles Airport outside Washington, D.C. to this professional conference context. I glance side-ways at crimson and yellow leaves as antidote to my squirmy paper shuffling. I need to officially convene our conference and also to announce the various rooms assigned for each of the concurrent sessions during this first day of our conference. We had no resources to print out the conference program, and so, for each morning and afternoon conference segment, I will have to announce presenters' room assignments—that is, until we can locate some chart paper, magic markers, and tape so that we can jot down and then post the speakers' schedule and room designations on this room's walls.

I drum my fingers against the podium's sides. The leaves are not helping. I've attended, since 1973, all the yearly conferences devoted to reconceptualizing a U.S. curriculum field, which included those located at Xavier University in Cincinnati in 1974; the University of Virginia in 1975; in 1976 at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; 1977 at Kent State University; and in 1978, we held 2 conferences, one at Georgia State University and another at Rochester Institute of Technology.

I loosen my grip on my notes as I realize that I do recognize a substantial portion of those now meandering into the room. I assume that most wouldn't be here unless they were at least intrigued by, if not committed to, both elaborating and greatly complicating the reconceptualization. But I also already knew that some of the very efforts toward reconceptualization already were really contentious, filled with tensions generated by the artificially delineating binary of "the political and the personal" and by some who posited these as "separate" from one another, arguing for their chosen perspective as "the most needed" for reconceptualizing to continue.

But I can't think about this now. Responding to a quieting of rippling conversations, I remember that we're not at ALL sure about any of this—I fixate for a second on a crimson tree branch, take a breath, and begin my welcome and explanatory remarks.

Re-iterating: these modest smatters of aerating “scenes” are cuttingtogetherparts of spacetimeatterings in Baradian terms. Barad conceptualizes “scenes” of such reconfigurings as those that never rest, scenes/phenomena that simultaneously diffract various temporalities. Barad theorizes these as “hauntological multiplicities,” as ghostly disruptions of continuity—as *relations of inheritance* intra-cut with questions of dis/continuities and indeterminacies. These hauntological multiplicities generate “continual reopening[s] and unsettling[s] of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be” (Barad, 2010, p. 264). And these reopenings and unsettlingings are constantly generating what Barad (2010), in her workings to establish an ethical dimension to her theorizing, extrapolates as “irreducible relations of responsibility” (p. 265) to those relations of inheritance and indebtedness:

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that ‘we’ are, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to-come. (Barad, 2010, p. 264)

I constantly have to work to put my selves at risk, to be responsible, to open myself up to indeterminacies and the oftentimes contradictory perspectives these generate. For example, shavings from one of my aerating scenes *do* situate a linearity as undergirding the “Bergamo Conference 40th Anniversary celebration”—at least in terms of geographic contingences as well as within the confines of temporal conceptions of time that especially characterize predominantly Western narratives. This is the time with which many humans—but certainly not all—are most familiar: time expressed grammatically in the form of tenses—past, present, future—that assume “continuity and unidirectionality of causality from past to present” (Scott, 2011, p. 42).

And yet, such assumptions are extremely difficult to side-step, especially as we here celebrate via a chronological notion of a 40th Anniversary! So—in what follows here, I’ll immediately and ironically fall into some brief linear interpretations of various “histories” while simultaneously working to interrupt the linearity, the singularity. Throughout, I’ll attempt to practice the ethics of what Barad (2007) suggests: that is, accounting for our parts of the entangled webs that we all weave.

Accountings

My “Scene # 2” identifies that 1979 Airlie Center conference to which I’ve referred as the one that marks the inauguration of *JCT* as providing consistent sponsorship of those curriculum theory conferences that had heretofore been hosted by particular conference attenders’ universities. *This* is the actual Conference that our 40th Anniversary celebration commemorates.

That initial *JCT*-sponsored 1979 curriculum theorizing conference served as a sort of official declaration of reconceptual thought as not just “emerging,” but rather as an enlarging movement within the U.S. curriculum studies field. Meeting our signed contractual agreement with The Airlie Conference Center, we returned there in the autumns of 1980 through 1982. However,

even in our first year there, we quickly agreed to launch a search for a new site, not only because of what, for quite a few, were ideological conflicts posed by meeting alongside a large contingent of the CIA, but more profoundly, because of Airlie's history as a plantation that had housed myriad slave quarters, some of which had been turned into conference-goers' rooms.

Thus, the first time our conference actually was held *at* the Bergamo Conference Center was in 1983. This Bergamo Center had been suggested to Bill by Joseph Watrus, a faculty member here at The University of Dayton and an organizer, for years, of our Saturday evening programs populated by various local as well as University-affiliated orchestral, choir, and dance performers.

But even in some years following the first Bergamo Center-held conference in 1983, there were interruptions to our continuous Fall conference Bergamo location, in part because of necessary construction efforts on the Bergamo site. Thus, from 1995 through 1998, we met for two years at the DuBose Conference Center in Monteagle, Tennessee, and then another two years at Four Winds Conference Center, just outside Bloomington, Indiana. In 1994, we held the conference in Banff, Canada, in supportive recognition of the growing number of Canadian curriculum scholars who were attending our conference and sustaining *JCT* as well.

A note, then, about the pervasive identifier “Bergamo:” one reason for this naming condensation as well as now wide-spread recognition of this conference as the “Bergamo” was provided by Craig Kridel, who, as inaugurating Editor of a then-section of *JCT* called “Hermeneutical Portraits,” noted:

After considerable discussion on the matter of an appropriate “working title” for the *JCT* Conference on Curriculum Theorizing and Classroom Practice, I have decided to use the term “Bergamo” to represent all avant-garde curriculum theory conferences that have been held in the *autumn* since 1974. The term offers as much (and as little) clarity as such titles as “Baroque” and “Renaissance” offer their respective eras, and using a common term is easier than trying to distinguish the Airlie, Bergamo, DuBose, Four Winds, or Banff conferences. (Kridel, 1996, p. 4)

For almost 50 temporally configured years, then, I have “lived” in close relation with the multifarious scholarship and organizational proliferations generated by those of us initially associated with the U.S. curriculum field's efforts toward reconceptualization. And many curricularists, both aligned—or not—with reconceptualizing efforts, have spawned myriad and vital permutations, critiques, extensions, and creations of curriculum conceptions, theorizings, and enactments. The “Bergamo Conference,” in fact, supported new creations of some relatively recent organizations. For example, the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS), its U.S. affiliate, the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS), as well as numerous other affiliates around the globe were founded in the early 2000s as focused responses to the forces of global contingencies and urgencies that demand worldwide but not uniform fields of curriculum studies. As the elected inaugural President of AAACS, I attempted to elaborate my situated perspectives on “the necessary worldliness of curriculum studies” (Miller, 2005a). Overarchingly, the primary goal for all of these internationalizing endeavors remains, as Bill Pinar (2013) described, “ethical engagement with alterity, accenting the concept of ‘understanding’ [curriculum] with history, activism, and the forefronting of difference” (p. 12).

But here, I of course do not have the “time,” so to speak, to track all that has transpired during these many pasts-futures-presents of “Bergamo-related” curriculum theorizing—nor could

I *ever* possibly do so. Re-membering Barad: “Since there is no origin in this story, and no fixed narrative as such,” (Barad, 2012, p. 11), my detailings here are not any perfect-memory-telling of a past that is present. Rather, because of my lack of subjective unity and clarity, I want to position my “re-turnings” as primarily serving to highlight my inheritance and indebtedness, not only to the intra-acting future-past-present-here-theres of curriculum studies and its variegated “histories,” but also to persons with whom I’ve studied, organized, and worked alongside for decades.

As well, my contingent and multiply partial “Bergamo stories” stress co-existing multiplicities of *entangled relations* of the U.S. and worldwide curriculum field, and in particular, of the Bergamo Conference and *JCT* and all of its myriad participants and contributors. These of course entwine with “histories” of education in the United States, histories of co-existing multiplicities of *entangled relations* of past-present-future-here-there.

Past-Present-Future-Here-There Entanglings

Indeed, efforts toward reconceptualizing included work to expand, extend, and complexify a U.S. curriculum field that, from its beginnings in the early decades of the 20th century, had prioritized procedurally oriented practices. Many thus endeavored to broaden those chief assumptions about curriculum, the field, and its work as primarily those of designating, designing, and developing of subject matter content that teachers then would implement within their K-12 classroom contexts. Within those prevailing assumptions, the “curriculum”—the course of study, the syllabus—was conceptualized as requiring determinations of learning objectives, of appropriate learning experiences, and of assessments of students’ learnings of such.

By the mid-1960s, a portion of curriculum scholars *were* questioning what they perceived as limiting aspects of a firmly entrenched view of the U.S. curriculum studies field that chiefly concentrated on the determining and organizing of subject matter as well as the evaluation of students’ learnings of such. Adding to these general concerns, further influential phenomena inspiring reconceptual thought included 1960s wide-spread social and cultural upheavals. Calls abounded for actions to end the war, for guaranteeing all persons’ equal rights as well as respect for multiple iterations of difference, and for concerted attention to all students’ situated perspectives, needs, and educational aspirations.

Further, critiques in the 1960s and 70s were generated by those who bemoaned the a-historical and a-theoretical nature of the U.S. curriculum field, leading to declarations of the field as moribund (Huebner, 1976; Schwab, 1970). Such stances emphasized, in particular, concerns that the a-historical and a-theoretical character of traditional curriculum development disabled teachers, in particular, from understanding the histories of their present circumstances (Kliebard, 1986).

Thus inspired—although never fully abandoning those long-held assumptions and conceptions that held sway as the primary work of and within the curriculum studies field—those engaged in varied modes and emphases of reconceptual thought worked to generate an interdisciplinary academic field that could embrace expanded views of curriculum as both of and beyond schooling, *per se*. By the mid-1980s and beyond, reconceptual thought and its importance to the field were acknowledged by many, but certainly not all, as generating influential inter- and cross-textual studies that especially incorporate historically and philosophically informed perspectives and analyses (Schubert, 1986; Short, 1991).

The 1973 University of Rochester Curriculum Conference participants, as well as those who contributed to the curriculum theorizing conferences through the remainder of the 1970s and beyond, indeed did offer philosophically and historically framed analyses. For example, existential phenomenological, critical theory-oriented, and psychoanalytic perspectives were posited as possible modes of expanding and extending curriculum theorizing as vital work within the curriculum field and its studies. There was particular attention to expose the always circulating workings of power as well as to theorize other spaces of self/knowledge that shattered a singular reflection of “the same.” Thus, although both the 1947 and 1967 curriculum theory conferences had variously addressed social needs orientations, reconceptually oriented conference presenters specifically attended to theorizing in ways that James Macdonald (1971) suggested—that is, theorizing that intertwined the social, the cultural, the historical, and the personal.

Within this version—this temporally, chronologically ordered “story/history” of curriculum reconceptualizing efforts—it was during the early 1970s that I entered into a U.S. curriculum field that, from its inception, obviously had been and was white male-dominated. But, early in my doctoral studies, I was inspired by women who had worked and yet were not widely recognized in the curriculum field, including Alice Miel, Laura Zerbes, and Hilda Taba. I thus very quickly began my studies of various feminisms and their differing theoretical orientations, especially too encouraged by then-contemporary women curriculum theorists, including Louise Berman, Esther Zaret, and Bernice Wolfson, as well as by philosopher of education, Maxine Greene. Maxine did participate in several of the curriculum theorizing conferences prior to that held at the Airlie Conference Center; she was hugely influential in formative versions of reconceptualizing efforts but always refused to be cited as “part of” the Reconceptualization.

Both during and beyond those early 1970s and 1980s reconceptual years, I worked alongside many others in generating varying iterations of feminist curriculum inquiries, which quickly were becoming influential strands of reconceptual thought. Much of this voluminous scholarship focused on the work of reclamation and critique. These efforts included attention to women’s inequalities in educational access; to theorizing ideologies of domesticity and their relations to the feminization of teaching; to histories of women contributing in myriad ways to educative projects; and to power circulations and discourses that framed and constructed pervasive assumptions about conceptions of “gender” as well as of “curriculum.”⁴

Throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s, curriculum theorizing in relation to curriculum as gendered text continued to encompass as well as greatly expand via critical, queer, and poststructurally inflected critiques that grappled with the category, “Woman.” But in these most recent years, all identity categories have been significantly complexified via entanglings of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, indigeneity, sexual orientation, and effects of colonialisms and imperialisms, including forced migration, unemployment, homelessness, occupation, and conquest. The category “Woman,” for example, now is postulated as wildly differentiated, nonunitary, a Braidotti-inflected (2019) situated, embodied, and simultaneously nomadic posthuman, a multiple entity, functioning in nets of intra-connectedness, a socially and culturally differentiated subject—what Judith Butler (1992) describes as an “undesignatable field of differences,” wherein the very terms “woman” and “human,” for brief examples, become “sites of permanent openness and resignifiability” (p. 160).

By extension: in terms of “identity categories” and “namings” in general, it’s obviously been impossible to posit any single or unitary version of “reconceptual thought”—neither throughout early varieties, nor in any and all extensions, elaborations, modifications, reverberations, and critiques generated since those 1970s’ initial efforts. Instead, reconceptual

thought, per se, initially and into and beyond the early 2000s, typically signaled multi-discursively, socially, culturally, materially situated academic efforts to understand curriculum as “texts” that may be read from a variety of diverse and perspectives—rather than from one disembodied and transcendent “conquering gaze from nowhere” (Haraway, 1988, p. 581).

These “curriculum texts” included not only gender, but also historical, political, racial, autobiographical, biographical, aesthetic, theological, institutional, and international-inflected texts as well as analyses and interpretations informed by phenomenological, critical theory, and poststructural perspectives and discourses, for example (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman 1995). Tendrils springing from these thus continue to curl through current and often vastly expanded “texts” that further are complicated by intertextual, transdisciplinary, and hybridized foci as well as philosophical arenas of inquiry.

Thus, in more recent years, unique and widely expansive, discursive, *and* material intra-actings of these also involve curriculum scholars’ sustained attentions. Curriculum theorizing now includes intense examinations of historical and current influences on our thinking and being in relation to all lively as well as inert matter and to future possibilities for extensions of our curriculum theorizing conceptualizations and practices. Contemporary iterations of such include curriculum theorizing informed by critiques, interrogations, and concerted actions to challenge and change historical legacies in education as a colonizing and dehumanizing project, for example. These include interrogations of complicities in hegemonic systems as well as assumed epistemic and ontological privileges.

Concomitantly, then, curriculum scholars work from perspectives situated via critical race theories, indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and theories of change, black curriculum orientations, eco-curricular studies, “new” materialisms, affect theories, the posthuman, non-human, in-human, a-human, multiplicities of feminisms, including critical race feminism, and transgendered, pansexual, queer, nonbinary, transsexual, and genderqueer studies, for very brief and limited examples.

Simultaneously, contemporary curriculum studies participants continue to complicate the conversations that constitute the field, both in the U.S. and now worldwide. These conversations of course must address current issues affecting the daily lives and practices of all students, teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and curriculum specialists, especially given the continuing emphasis on audit culture practices that support codified, replicated, tested, and measured versions of educational accountability (Taubman, 2009). Curriculum studies’ participants continue to engage in and with intensive examinations of these current neo-liberal versions of what and who “counts” in education.

All of these vital interjections, extensions, critical assessments, and intra-actings continue to inspire me. But more importantly, these current iterations of curriculum theorizing *are* advancing the field of curriculum studies. This vibrant and always morphing field furthers works to enliven, inform, challenge, and expand conceptions and enactments of curriculum and its studies as complicated conversations (Pinar, 2012) that are multiply situated, felt, and referenced in order to take into consideration influences of history, of philosophically informed perspectives, and of past, future, present potentialities for all.

Ethical Entanglings

These theorizings, I believe, in particular point to ethics of relationalities that emphasize responsibilities to entanglings that can encourage the broadening and deepening of our curriculum theorizings and interrogations, especially in relation to all events, contexts, and acts that suppress, oppress, or impose both normative and literal violences against any and all deemed “Other.” Such openness to “co-existing multiplicities of *entangled relations* of past-present-future-here-there that...generate continual reopening[s] and unsettling[s] of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be” (Barad, 2010, p. 264) can expansively conduct vital examinations across worldwide geo-political contexts and situations, of ecological, economic, diasporic, refugee, and myriad other social and cultural iterations of difference, conflict, and crises, including the dangerous lure of social forms that promise totalities of any sort.

Indeed, I see the curriculum studies field as now necessarily engaged in examinations of volatile, unpredictable, and relentless upheavals and challenges to embodied conditions and contexts. Simultaneously, we must contend with indeterminacies accompanying a lively, agential, and more-than-human network of relationality (Braidotti & Hlavajova, 2018), incessantly reconfiguring the field’s entanglements as “complicated and complicating conversations” in the constant becomings of a worldwide but never analogous curriculum field.

In such a field, curriculum pulses as complex embodied intra-actions among myriad fluctuations and particularities, simultaneously contracting, loosening, ripping, interlacing, flickering into new semblances, evaporating, and re-forming. For me, these intensities intra-act with my long-time commitments to and involvements of working with a concept of “curriculum communities without consensus” (Miller, forthcoming, a) that constantly spin thought and body, abstract and concrete, local and global, individual and collective, national and international, self and other, human and non-human, community and exile as “hauntological multiplicities”—those ghostly disruptions of continuity—as relations of inheritance intra-cut with questions of dis/continuities and indeterminacies. *These* are the co-existing multiplicities and indeterminacies that demand, as Barad (2010) reminds us, “irreducible relations of responsibility” (p. 265).

So, this Keynote: my contingent, viscerally impelled, non-linear, non-transparent, non-unitarily autobiographically inflected “scenes” of past-future-present-there-here swirlings and returnings have offered obviously imperfect, disjointed, multiple, and perhaps disrupting versions of this Conference and *Journal* and its 40th Anniversary celebrating. NO originary “meanings” or fixed boundaries here.

Rather, I gesture toward Bergamo and *JCT*’s dis/continuities *and* multiplicities of relationalities and what I hope have been and will continue to be those attendant “irreducible relations of responsibility,” especially to open-ended affirmations of difference. What I want to assert—with no certainties, of course—are my wishes for ongoing re-imaginings and re-configurings of Bergamo and *JCT* that entangle past-future-present transforming versions of both inheritance *and* responsibility to curriculum theorizings and practices *as* relational thinkings and beings with alterity.

Indeed, this Keynote Lecture is dedicated to those who, throughout 40-plus years, have initiated, sustained, vitally enhanced, complexified, diversified, and enlivened *JCT* and the “Bergamo” Conference.

Thanks to All. Such a wonderful 40th Anniversary gift this is, has been, will be!

Notes

1. I offer many thanks to Tom Poetter, Editor of *JCT* and President of the Foundation of Curriculum Theory, and Associate Editors, Denise Taliaferro Baszile and Brian Schultz, for the invitation to serve as a Keynote presenter during the 40th Anniversary Bergamo Conference gathering. As well, I wish to recognize and thank Belinda Flick, Kelly Waldrop, and Cynthia Sanders for their support in bringing this Keynote to presentation fruition.
2. See Miller, J. L. (forthcoming, c). Reconceptual thought. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Education*.
3. See, for example: Miller, 2005a; “Prelude” and Chapters 1, 9, 13, and 16 in Miller, 2005b; Miller, 2010; and Miller, forthcoming a, b, and c; Pinar, 1974, 1975, 1988, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2012, and 2013. For surveys of recent expansions of reconceptual thought, see Malewski, 2010; Morris, 2016; Schubert, Lopez Schubert, Thomas, and Carroll, 2002.
4. For “early” iterations of feminist curriculum theorizing, see, for abbreviated example: Ellsworth, 1989; Grumet, 1988; Lather, 1991; Miller, 1979, 1983, 1990; Munro (Hendry), 1994; and Pagano, 1990.

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