The Chronotopes of Encounter and Emergence

HONGYU WANG
Oklahoma State University

AT THE TIME of the 30th anniversary of *JCT,* which has created an important intellectual tradition for educators, perhaps it is a good occasion to discuss the notion of chronotope (time-space) as we open the first issue of this year. According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), the chronotope of "novels with emergence" must connect the hero's individual becoming with historical becoming so that both the person and the world can emerge anew. So is the case with the field of curriculum studies in transforming the present through encounter (historical and intercultural) and emergence (temporal, spatial, and inter/subjective) so that the transition of today's world and subjective becoming mutually influence each other to enable creativity of both.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) defines the chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that is artistically expressed in literature" (p. 84). Bakhtin uses the chronotope to discuss the different ways in which literature—from the Greek romance to the European novel—has used various temporal and spatial features to express a wide variety of world views. In each chronotope, a different image of a person, contextualized in a different sense of history, society, and culture, is presented. Therefore, "the chronotope in culture could be defined as a 'field of historical, biographical, and social relations'" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 371). The chronotope of curriculum studies can be so defined as well.

While Bakhtin's (1981) study of the historical evolution of the literary chronotopes demonstrates the coexistence of multiple and various modes, he suggests that some genres come closer to presenting real historical time and space with actual biographical persons whose responsibility and creativity participate in defining the world. Bakhtin first analyzes three novelistic chronotopes in ancient times, including the Greek romance, the adventure novel of everyday life, and the ancient biography. He finds that these novels either lack historical change or biographical emergence. By contrast, change becomes essential to the modern realistic novel of emergence. Bakhtin (1986) specifically devotes his attention to the most significant type—Goethe's works as a great example—in which neither the hero nor the world is ready-made but must *become*:

> He [sic] emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other. This transition is accomplished in him and through him. He is forced to become a new, unprecedented type of human being. What is

happening here is precisely the emergence of a new man. The organizing force held by the future is therefore extremely great here—and this is not, of course, the private biographical future, but the historical future. It is as though the very foundations of the world are changing, and man must change along with them.... The image of the emerging man begins to surmount its private nature (within certain limits, of course) and enter into a completely new, *spatial* sphere of historical existence. (pp. 23–24).

For Bakhtin, the chronotope of novels with emergence has the following three elements: 1. Individual becoming with the capacity to surprise; 2. Historical becoming with both continuity and creativity; 3. Individual and historical becoming as irreducible to each other but closely linked (Morson & Emerson, 1990, pp. 405–406). This chronotope presents a new image of a person with an organic sense of creativity, creativity embedded in the inner linkages with temporality and locality and in the interplay between individual and social changes. Here the past cannot be closed off to itself or simply the "remembrances" from the present but is productive in its effects on the present (and the future). In other words, creative potentiality lies in the interconnectedness between and among the past, the present, and the future, while at the same time, something new emerges from concrete, specific contexts and demands of current daily life which cannot be confined by the past. Thus individual becoming is not fully determined by historical becoming but must co-emerge *with* the world and surprise the world as the world changes as well.

It is this sense of emergence characterizing the modern novel that speaks to the field of curriculum studies, which needs to be open to its own becoming, historically, bio-graphically, and in social space. We and our students are all heroes or heroines in the novel—the text—of curriculum studies, traveling on the road, encountering the surprising potentiality of the world and the self. We are also authors who write ourselves into the text, allowing the hero or the heroine to speak back to the author. A sense of surprise is essential to this polyphonic dialogue between educators and texts, educators and students, educators and themselves so that becoming remains unfinalized, influenced by the past, but always gives birth to what has not yet existed.

Bakhtin speaks of Goethe's time, but it echoes the existential condition of today's time even though today's society is dramatically different. Today the nation is in transition, the world is changing, and the future is uncertain. Different epochs co-exist in different places due to both the globalizing tide and divergent locality. I would argue that the chronotope of emergence in today's global society is made possible by encounters in which historical encounters—including both life history and social history—intersect with, or on some occasions are intensified by, intercultural encounters. These encounters, with the potential for bringing something new into existence, have brought the motif of meeting—to use Aoki's (2005) metaphor, a bridge which is not a bridge—to a different level. While Bakhtin does discuss encounters in ancient times, those encounters, however, were not temporally meaningful as either the world or the hero or both stayed static and non-changing. However, transnational, crosscultural, and intercultural encounters in our time are much more significant in influencing both historical and individual changes. Time usually takes on a primary role in Bakhtin's chronotope analysis while encounter implies more of spatial interactions. Perhaps in no other time has the coming together of time and space—not necessarily in harmony—become more significant than in our own technological, global society.

While it is clear that the chronotopes of curriculum and curriculum studies are infinitely multiple and that the plurality of time/space is present, understanding and cultivating transformative chronotopes are important for the field. The parallel between the unchanging chronotope of the

Greek adventure-time and the official standardized curriculum (not only school curriculum but teacher education curriculum as well), which closes the door to anything different from itself, particularly asks our attention to alternative modes, modes that support the emergence of new pathways and new rela-tionality.

Here I highlight, briefly, the temporal and spatial dynamics of *currere* and the third space as examples of a transformative chronotope—which I have experienced in teaching. When I use *currere* as a semester-long project in which four steps (Pinar, 1975) are followed, what is most intriguing for me is my students' ability to surprise, to surprise me, and to surprise themselves. Although students go through different processes and reach new understandings in different steps, they often have unexpected discoveries about themselves. While both sudden insights and gradual awareness happen in the process, one pulls oneself together in a new position achieving a different relationship with the past and the future and thus mobilizes the creative potential of the present. The aspiration for *currere* is "release from the past, release from arrest, release into movement" (Pinar, 1994, p. 45). When the effects of the past on the present are understood, release becomes possible. I see this release at work in many students' engagement to a different degree. Certainly in *currere*, movement is not merely temporal but also spatial as it is related to individual's life history situated in particular geo-graphical and social places. The synthetical moments reconfigure the spatial context of one's knowledge.

The interaction among external time, internal time, and pedagogical time in *currere* (Wang, in press) sets into motion a dynamic of *freeing* the present from its unquestioned assumptions and unaware stuck points in the past and of destablizing the future beyond the fixed destination. The flow of time within the past or within the envisioned future is nonlinear as the blending of different time periods in memory and vision often occurs, leading to internal *connections*. The motion of *currere* is enabled by clearing the ground, cracking openings, and connecting frag-mentation. Moments of pause are also built in *currere* to suspend judgment and bracket common sense assumptions, so motion and pause are interdependent with each other. Releasing into movement is a hard work but necessary for transforming the present.

The post-colonial and post-structural notion of the third space articulated first by Homi Bhabha (1990) connects memory and place for improvised movement between different cultures and different spaces. This notion embodies both the generative tensionality of an in-between space and the necessity of crossing boundaries. In today's global context in which intercultural encounters (in person or in virtual reality) become a part of many people's daily lives, how to transform the tensionality of an in-between space into a generative site for the mutual transfor-mation of all participants and for cross-cultural creativity becomes imperative.

After years of trying to teach in a third space in teacher education, I realize that the third is far more than a position of negotiating with tensioned difference and with the multiple. The third *is* the flow in space. Holding on to the openings of the third and following its move, I reach a point where I can respond to the specificity of different teaching situations more freely than before. Here Ted Aoki's (2005) play with language is helpful as words in "a third space" become alive: With a *third* space (in which one struggles to deal with the tension) becoming a third *space* (in which one moves), a shift from being stuck in difficulty to being playful with difficulty also happens. Here tensionality and difficulty do not disappear but become a part of movement. Without the necessity of occupying more external places, the third space expands the internal room for new possibilities.

At the time of the 30th anniversary of *JCT*, I pause to wonder about the meanings of time-space. If the past is creative with multiple potentialities, then the past cannot be objectified into

either a "golden age" to worship or a "dark age" to break away from. If the future is unfinalized and is filled with open possibilities, then the future cannot been seen as a predetermined blissful (or hopeless) destination to reach. Perhaps only in seeing both the past and the future as creative can the present become truly creative. There was neither Golden Age in the past and there will be no Utopia in the future, so we cannot escape from the responsibility of the present. Despite the current difficulty of the present, we need to dwell in lived time and search for lived space, in this time and place, here and now, to enable multiple routes of encounter and emergence. We cannot demand others to follow our own paths, however, as we also need to leave each other room to cultivate the inner space for moving, testing limits, and working from within. The key is to *live* time and space. With such an understanding, we can move forward with light baggage, try out new pathways, and open to what emerges during the process, enriched by the past, aspiring for the future.

For this issue, special thanks go to Marla Morris's timely, inspiring, and heartfelt memoriam of Joe Kincheloe. We are saddened by Joe's early departure, but his remarkable works and teachings will stay with us as an inspirational beacon. Thanks also go to our previous section editors' work: Yatta Kanu for her editing of Hong's article, Mary Aswell Doll for her recent work with the article co-written by Hatt, Quach, Brown, and Anderson, and William Reynolds for his earlier acceptance of Gallagher-Geurtsen's and Hewson's articles. The Bergamo Conference in 2008 established the Distinguished Graduate Student Paper Award. It is an annual award and the selected paper is published at *JCT* in the following year's April issue. The award selection committee members in 2008 were Bruce Parker (Chair), Aliya Rahman, Sean Buckreis, Jackie Bach, and Nina Asher. The committee did outstanding work. Heartfelt thanks from the editorial team also go to Lori Sirtosky, our webmaster, for her marvelous job in setting up the online system for the journal. Now authors can go online to submit their manuscripts.

The chronotopes of encounter and emergence encourage a sense of flow, a flow in time and place, a flow that connects as it moves through different landscapes, a flow that also springs from pause and dwelling, a flow that carries us out of where we are stuck to new views. By "accident," the articles in this issue—including previously accepted and newly accepted manuscripts—although divergent in their topics, styles, and methodologies, come together in paving multiple pathways for temporal, spatial, or (inter)subjective movement. Although the complexity of their writings is not limited by my editorial chronotopic readings, all these essays invite movement and emergence. Ann Hewson's "Changing Habits: Deconstructing One Convent School Song" poetically and deconstructively works through her memory block to release freedom of movement, a freedom that is enabled by embodiment, and a freedom not doing violence to others or the self. Jane Dawson's elaboration on "Endurance: Intellectual Work Meets the Academic Institution" starts with a sense of besetness that many academics are all too familiar with, takes flight in Said's intellectual exile, but comes back to reaffirm the significance of the ordinary, everyday educational work we do to enable motion in stuck places. Tricia Gallagher-Geurtsen also discusses the possibilities and limits of estrangement in "Dangerously Knowable: A Paradoxical Case of Constructing Radical Hybrid Literacy Practices," but she takes us onto the stage of ethnographical play to not only question institutional power but engage self-critique, and her call is to create hybrid, liminal spaces to destabilize any confining power.

"Coffee Talk: Negotiating/Disrupting the Hidden Curriculum of Graduate School," staging a performance of collaborative efforts to uncover the hidden curriculum of graduate education in the university setting, co-authored by Beth Hatt, Lan Quach, Sydney Brown, and Amy Anderson, is a great example of searching for a lived space beyond the confinement of the academia.

William Gaudelli stretches our space to the international in the context of social studies educa-tion and discusses major discourses on global citizenship in "Heuristics of Global Citizenship Discourses towards Curriculum Enhancement." At the same time, Won-Pyo Hong's "Reading School Textbooks as a Cultural and Political Text: Representations of Asia in Geography Text-books Used in the United States" reminds us that an international space is also within the nation-al context. The final piece in Features Articles, "*Currere* and *The Hours*: Rebirth of My Female Self," is Jill Martin's poetic rendering of subjective movement following the current of *currere,* which demonstrates a blending of time and place to cultivate a sense of fluidity. Jenna Min Shim's award paper, "*Violent Turbulence* in Curriculum Theory and Practice," privileges the role of violent turbulence in stirring up the forces of questioning the social and cultural constructions of subjectivity for critical self-reflexive movement in a multicultural and global society.

The particular pathways these authors undertake are different, however, and they provide in-triguing landscapes and soundscapes for readers' eyes and ears. Let us immerse ourselves in reading these pieces and open to where they lead us in the moment…

REFERENCES

Aoki, Ted T. (2005). *Curriculum in a new key* (William F. Pinar & Rita L. Irwin, Eds.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bakhtin, Mikhail (1981). *The dialogic imagination* (Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, Trans.; Michael Holquist Ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (Vern W. McGee Trans.; Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, Eds.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. (1990). The third space. In Jonathan Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (pp. 207–221). London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Morson, Gary S., & Emerson, Caryl (1990). *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a prosaics.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Pinar, William F. (1975). The method of *currere*. In Pinar (1994), *Autobiography, politics, and sexuality* (pp. 19–27). New York: Peter Lang.

Pinar, William F. (1994). *Autobiography, politics, and sexuality.* New York: Peter Lang.

Wang, Hongyu (in press). The temporality of *currere*, change, and teacher education. *Pedago-gies: An International Journal.*