

Forewordⁱ

In this important new collection, several key concerns – summarized in Cynthia Chambers’ (2003) invaluable survey of the field - continue to characterize Canadian curriculum studies. Prominent among these are questions of the indigenous peoples. In this collection these are not confined to the indigenous peoples themselves, but are “exported” to the mainstream Canadian curriculum (see, for instance, the Battiste and Bell chapters). In part due to the ecological crisis, in part due to the calamities of economism, in part due to the indigenous character of Canada (Saul 2008), these questions reverberate not only in environmental education but in science as well as in literature, the arts, politics, and history, as these chapters testify. The concept of *decolonization* – not only of indigenous peoples but of Canadians of European descent as well - seems to summarize this pressing curricular concern. Clearly, contemporary scholars have responded to Chambers’ (2003, 223) complaint that indigenous education was “underrepresented.” As this invaluable collection testifies, on this key concern the field’s progress has been dramatic.

Also evident in this collection is progress on the other (often intersecting) concerns and concepts that Chambers construed as central to the Canadian field. Prominent among these are 1) *politics* (see Chambers 2003, 223), evident in the Balzer, Iannacci, Phelan, and Smith chapters; 2) *wisdom* (Chambers 2003, 225), evident in the Riley and Rich as well as Smith chapters; 3) *subjectivity* (Chambers 2003, 229), resounding in the Jardine, Luce-Kapler, and Ng-A-Fook chapters; 4) *place* (Chambers 2003, 233), discernible in the Alsop and Fawcett, the Sumara,

Davis, and Laidlaw, and the Kulniek, Longboat, and Young chapters; and 5) *arts-based inquiry* (Chambers 2003, 235), evident in Luce-Kapler's close writing and Smits' invocation of fugue and nocturne in his chapter. In advancing our understanding of these key curricular concerns and adding others (like queer questions of sex education in the Cavanagh chapter and the curricular significance of complexity theory in the Stanley chapter), the essays collected here extend the "third way" that Chambers (2003, 246) identified as distinctively Canadian. Neither European nor American (as in the U.S) but incorporating each in its decolonizing indigenous emphasis, contemporary Canadian scholarship recalibrates the curriculum in a new key (Aoki 2005 [1978]).

Despite these achievements, there remains disciplinary work to do. In this outsider's view, one next step is the updating and revision of George Tomkins' (2008) canonical study of Canadian curriculum history. Key pieces of this reconfigured puzzle are already on the table in this collection. What remains to be done is the integration of this work with scholarship on "new" immigrants as well as curriculum studies in Québec (which Chambers [2003, 236-237] references) and, of course, continuing historical research (see, for instance, Christou 2009). Supplementing such revision and updating of Tomkins' history of the Canadian curriculum and the updating of Chambers' insightful survey of the contemporary field should be, I suggest, a more specific stream of scholarship on the intellectual history of Canadian curriculum studies, resembling, perhaps, work underway in other countries (see, for instance, Pinar 2011). Working from and through these histories will enable that continuing intellectual advancement prerequisite for the field to address the daunting challenges Canadians have inherited from the past and face in the future.

References

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ⁱ To *Contemporary Studies in Canadian Curriculum* (2011), edited by Darren Stanley and Kelly Young (7-9). Detselig.