Foreword[1]

William F. Pinar

"There are still texts to be written,"[2] Silvia Morelli writes, concluding her breakthrough study of *Curriculum in Latin America: Didactics, Bildung and US Hegemony*. There remain, she emphasizes, "stories to be redeemed, colleagues to be met in the young and resilient field of the Latin American curriculum." Redemption and resilience are definitely dynamics of this important book that represents another founding moment in the Latin American field.[3] Not only Argentina, but Brazil and Mexico are among those American nations whose curriculum studies scholarship are represented here, but her engagement is not confined to these admittedly key countries in curriculum studies worldwide. "What about curriculum studies in the Caribbean, Cuba and Panama," Morelli asks, a crucial question calling scholars there to contribute to the ongoing formation of an authentic – even decolonized - Latin American field. What about Bolivia, Colombia, Uruguay, she also asks, adding: "What about Afro-American and Indigenous peoples?" From the national Morelli moves to the biocultural, asking: "how is gender represented in Latin American curriculum studies." These – and other - "questions can go on in an attempt to demarcate an ambiguous and complex object, riddled with minimal experiences and hidden histories that have not yet been written." For Morelli as for me: specificity spells solidarity: "every time a Latin American tells an intellectual history or a present circumstance about the curriculum … he or she will be doing so for the field of curriculum in (Latin) America."

As I welcome Silvina Morelli to the select set of scholars who have contributed to Routledge's Series in Curriculum Theory, I want as well to express my gratitude to her for composing the book in English. (I trust it will also appear in Spanish, Portuguese, and French so that readers across the Americas can read what Morelli has achieved.) It is imperative that North American scholars keep abreast with developments in Central and South America, in Latin America overall. And "abreast" we learn this book is, as Morelli approaches Latin American curriculum studies "from post-critical theories, especially post-structuralism and post-modernism." But not only - Morelli will also "enhance the concept of *Bildung* and analyze the field of curriculum in Latin America in its hegemonic relationship with the United States,"[4] her "poststructuralism from Derrida's translation theory, from Laclau's discourse analysis, and Mouffe's political theory." She focuses on "the formation of a subject whose distinction and difference come from non-hegemonic logics, silenced by modern discourse," a subject whose intellectual identity needs to be defined from a perspective unrelated to the Enlightenment, one that involves their identity and sense of meaning as a Latin American." Morelli, it is "the conceptual ambiguity of *Bildung*, [that] allows [me] to recover the so-called *Bildung-centred Didaktik* for the field of school instruction and in it its relationship with the curriculum."[5]

Morelli writes to us from Argentina, "the country where my grandparents arrived trying to leave the European chaos between the wars, carrying in their trunks objects that accompanied me all my childhood and that I later found in the one-way trips that the curriculum granted me." It was Argentina, she reminds, "that in 1884 sanctioned its first public, free and secular Education Act, which managed to educate not only the children of immigrants who attended school, but also their foreign parents." It was Argentina, she reminds, "that used to be the beacon of Latin America achieving access to culture, education, health and social mobility," but also, she laments, the country "that the wear and tear of dictatorships and the last 40 years of uninterrupted democracy changed notoriously," as now the once prosperous Argentina[6] is "a country exploded by poverty, corruption, delinquency, social exclusion and educational crisis," now a "country of multiple types of violence that merge with the other kinds of violence of the continent." "It is the curriculum studies," Morelli confides, "that allowed me to transform the pain and worry that this causes me."

Not curriculum studies *tout court*, but a constellation her own situatedness enables her to see, constellation an idea Morelli extracts from a 2016 Museum of Modern Art exhibition, *A Japanese Constellation: Toyo Ito, SANAA, and Beyond*, curated by Pedro Gadanho,[7] the concept of constellation decoded as a network of luminaries at work, emphasizing "network" as a "sensibility" that is passed through individual artists or, in this case Latin American curriculum studies, theorists. Morelli writes:

> I am interested in recovering the constellation as a metaphor to identify the configuration of curriculum studies in Latin America. These are consolidated through events that foster intellectual conversations and creations that account for the growth of this field. Likewise, I recognize those who train others in topics specific to our region and influence those already trained or those at the beginning of their careers. To this end, I approach the constellations considering two key instances: one of them is the influence exerted by some academics, who stand out in the plot, and the other is training as a pedagogical process of knowledge transmission.

Structured, then, by categories such as "influence" and "training", the constellations Morelli identifies – especially in Mexico and Brazil – are those that "develop post-critical curriculum studies and, in my opinion, are two groups that articulate training in the rest of the Latin continent."

“The constellations are integrated by academic generations,” Morelli continues, “by collaborations between other generations from other countries” as well as “by non-Latin influences and formations and by the institutions in which the groups are nucleated.” These constellations have been “built with both foreign and local influences,” and there are also “links between them.” Morelli emphasizes “in these two groups the passage from critical Marxist theory to post-Marxist and post-structuralist theories in the construction of categories of analysis for curriculum theory.” In Brazil, for example, she identifies two theorists who have been especially influential, Antonio Flavio Moreira of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and Tomaz Tadeu da Silva of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, both of whom carved a “passage from critical curriculum theory to postmodern perspectives.” Having studied at the University of London and influenced by Michael Young, enabling him to bring “critical English curricular notions to the Brazilian context,” Moreira “made contributions to the theory and history of curriculum and multiculturalism, establishing the relationship between curriculum, culture and difference.” He has had “a direct influence on [Alice] Casimiro Lopes and [Elizabeth] Macedo,” both on the faculty of the State University of Rio de Janeiro. Tomaz Tadeu da Silva also moved from Marxism, but unlike Moreira, da Silva emphasized “the subject and identity as the two problems of modernity, although he poses them as small narratives, resisting the large narratives.” The “passage to postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives is complemented by what was initiated by Moreira and Silva, although it should be noted that it is consolidated with the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe,” evident in the “use of the categories of discourse, articulation and difference, as well as in political categories such as hegemony, democracy and conflict.” This “Laclau-Mouffe binomial is enhanced when the Brazilian constellation enters poststructuralism by taking Derrida's translation and deconstruction as a language to understand the curriculum politically," characterizing curriculum policies "as a discursive and undecidable construction, lacking fixed rules and unpredictable."

"The density of the Mexican constellation," Morelli reports, "has been growing steadily since the early 1970s." She cites Raquel Glazman and María de Ibarrola who "made the curriculum visible through *Design of Study Plan*," then Ángel Díaz Barriga, Alicia de Alba, Concepción Barrón Tirado, Frida Díaz Barriga Arceo and José María García Garduño, scholars whose interventions "materialize the constellations," the Brazilian constellation with "delimited borders and is profound, while the Mexican constellation has permeable borders (inside and outside the country) and comprises a wider range of topics." The two constellations "maintain a dialogue," characterized "by common theories and shared categories, but also by assumed differences." In December 2023, this dialogue – extended to Argentina and Chile – resulted in the establishment of the Latin American Network of Curriculum Studies.

Morelli identifies four concepts characterizing the field today: "hybridism, culture, difference and technological change." Hybridism, Morelli reports, "is recovered by José María García Garduño, associating the concept with *mestizaje*, and so it's also "an anthropological category," of which "Latin America is a living example." "A hybrid construction can be uncomfortable and uncommon" - García Garduño offers *Spanglish* as instance of hybridization of speech developed by Latinos in the United States and Canada – and Morelli adds "*Portuñol*, which is the mixture of Portuguese and Spanish languages (originated in the triple border between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay)." Casimiro Lopes "refers to hybridity as the loss of a common language and the accumulation of knowledge," even "considering it through the metaphor of libraries," also as a "category to rethink the stability with which history is constructed." Morelli thinks of hybridity in "epistemological terms," evident in Brazilian curriculum studies in “the relationship between disciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in the study of subjects.” Morelli invokes Hongyu Wang’s emphasis upon the “third space” or the space of the “in-between,” for Wang also “an autobiographical journey in which the subject has to deal with himself and with otherness.” And there is García Canclini’s sense of hybridity as a “bridge that cushions the passage from the modern to the postmodern, that can be identified as a cultural reconciliation.” Hybridity, Morelli concludes, “allows Latin American post-pandemic curricula to build other perspectives from which to approach the school class, micro-political decisions, the identity of subjects and all that, unforeseen, that relates to new cultural systems, deterritorialization and impure genres.”

“New cultural systems” and “impure genres” intermingle in the concept of “mestizos,” in the omnipresence of which “racism is disguised” and “native peoples and Afro-Americans” underemphasized. Morelli is here citing Gallardo Gutiérrez, who points out that “the flow of migrations, throughout the history of America, creates new interculturalities that deserve to be considered in the curricula.” Also in play is Alicia de Alba’s notion of “cultural contact,” which “makes it possible to recognize, know and value diversity,” but which can create intercultural relationships characterized by “inequality, conflict and the production of new identities,” resulting in defensive “self-segregation” and “marginalization of native Mexican cultures.”

The concept of “difference” constitutes “one of the categories around which the Brazilian constellation is organized,” Morelli notes, a concept that “not only institutes particular identity, but also assumes the non-predictability of events, the argument that all difference is political and the lack of a center of domination.” There is concern “that ‘difference’ is being suffocated by the specter of equality and diverse identities.” Morelli cites Macedo’s suggestion that “equality and difference have their own political dynamics that cannot be analyzed in a generic way," that "contingency is always involved."

"Technological change" is another key concept in Latin American curriculum studies. Schools' preoccupations with technological change – here Morelli is citing de Alba – can mean the "exclusion" of other subjects. Certainly, that's the case in the United States, where technologies companies have lobbied to replace, in the secondary school curriculum, the study of foreign language with coding.[8] "New social spaces, with different materialities, [are] created by technological change," encouraging life "online." In 2019, U.S. teenagers spent over seven hours each day online,[9] a number likely to have increased in the five years since – and not only in the United States.

"It is already known that no text is spared from being translated," Morelli reminds, and when translation takes place, it's "never linear, not even from one document to another." Region matters, including in Argentina, where "24 different translations" take place, translations "that correspond to the jurisdictions in which the curriculum is organized (23 provinces and the autonomous city of Buenos Aires)." When "perceiving translation as a micropolitical practice, the teacher becomes the translator and the author of the curriculum." The death-of-the-author[10] be damned, I, too, proclaim.[11] The same fate for the death-of-the-subject,[12] and "when Argentina and Brazil choose concepts such as 'school trajectories' and 'life project' they awaken the reader's imagination towards biographical, subjective, self-reflective processes that make visible the student and his or her formation process within the school." Within neoliberal curriculum policy, it is a specific formation politicians prefer, namely the "entrepreneur," a subject position presumably achievable through school "success," individual achievement, "far from proposing collective activities," and leaving nothing to chance, "no room for contingency, always seeking indispensable conditions of necessity and the idea of a foreseeable future."

"Without as much centrality as the 'life project' of Brazil's curriculum or the 'school trajectories' of Argentina's," Morelli explains, "Mexico's design mentions a 'personal project' as the interaction between each student's learning and the content offered by the teacher." So how "personal" can such a "project" be? Like so-called helicopter parents, politicians want teachers to monitor minutia, accomplish what parents can't, namely the formation of the child in ""spiritual, ethical, moral, affective, intellectual, artistic and physical dimensions, through the transmission and cultivation of values, knowledge and skills," a dazzling array Morelli quotes from Chile's "Curricular Bases for Secondary Education" of 2015. While upholding "freedom of education and the right to education as core concepts," Chile's policy – "almost in line with Brazil's design" – "encourages students to elaborate 'the first definitions' of a life project that allows them to assume commitments and responsibilities." Freedom through commitment and responsibility? Orwellian doublethink.[13]

"As a politically impossible task," Morelli points out, "Latin American curricular policies focus on 'the common' pretending to achieve inclusion of all diversities (cultural, social, racial, gender, etc.)," but "decided in the heat of hegemony, this concept only encourages exclusion." Morelli knows: "Nothing is more impersonal than the common to all, nothing more misguided than the illusion of believing in the common as a condition for everyone to be represented in the curriculum," and "this," she suggests, "is the most important problem afflicting Latin American curriculum policies," as "creating a condition of the common that does no more than confirm that there is knowledge more valuable than other and that the denomination of common presents a partiality granted by power relations." So, the "great challenge for Latin American curricula" is “includ[ing] everyone without homogenizing the subjects that are included.” In any case, recall that “it is in the translation made by teachers as authors of the curriculum in each school, where this discourse acquires materiality and meaning.”

And speaking of meaning, Morelli returns to *Bildung*, wondering if it “makes sense in Latin America,” for her “a propitious question that enables me to study its meaning and its relationship with society and school in the unstable and convulsed present times,” adding: “I admit the fascination that the concept of *Bildung* provokes in me when I think of formation associated with the relationship between curriculum and *Didakitk*,” as the two “can be understood as a single field.” She reminds that “post-critical theories distrust the idea of the subject because of the centrality it has taken in modernity,” noting that “revising it implies inscribing it in the relationship with the environment, multiculturalism, language, accepting that each case will be a small, minimal and particular narrative.” Such postmodern “subjects emerge from silences and invisibility, manifesting themselves through feminisms, disabilities, sexual identities, blackness and anything that highlights difference.” And so “a challenge presented by an idea of post-*Bildung* is to rethink the subject in the tension between itself and theories such as that proposed by post-humanism, which includes not only human beings, but extends its consideration to other living beings,” moving Morelli to position “the subject in an intermediate space between humanism, questioning the arrogance with which man has occupied the center of history, and post-humanism.”

In “rescuing the ambiguity of the concept of *Bildung*,” Morelli reasons, “it is not only the relationship of the subject with society that deserves to be analyzed, but, above all, the relationship of the subjects with themselves, with their inwardness and with what they wish to be.” So, she returns to “the nodal questions of the formation process, contained in *Bildung* and continued in post-*Bildung*: Who am I and what do I want to become, who am I as a (Latin)American and what do I want to become in order to continue being (Latin)American?" To the primacy of the political in many efforts to contextualize curriculum Morelli adds 'another more personal, interior, subjective question with which the subject continues to grapple with itself in the thick journey of their formation." Nowadays, however, "the construction of the *self* is installed in times in which the principle of reality has been abandoned, … times of selfies with which the subject presents himself in society, changing their own image, fabricating another one that deceives the viewer of the image. This distortion is part of the subject that pretends to be self-determined in the eyes of others." Rather than profilicity[14] – self-determination in the eyes of others – Morelli invokes Klafki's "three moments of *Bildung*," in its relation to his "critical-constructive didactics" … composed of self-determination, co-determination and solidarity." In the constellation created by their interrelatedness incubates what Fanon - a man of Martinique - wanted half-a-century ago: "[F]or humanity, comrades, … we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man."[15]

"New concepts" are born from old ones. Morelli narrates the history of curriculum studies in Latin America, the "first event" being "the translation into Spanish and distribution of works inscribed in the *Curriculum Development* movement," this event orchestrated by the *Alliance for Progress* between 1961 and 1970. The "second event" was the "standardization of curricular discourses," that enforced by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank during the 1990s. Such "reforms construct a notion of curriculum as a technological device that directs educational improvement towards social and economic growth," and, "as a neo-technicist event," it "reissues evaluation as educational accreditation and elaborates a taxonomy of contents that organize educational competencies." Invoking Badiou, Morelli decodes "event" as both “rupture and possibility,” and so she sees “the possibility of constructing the history and epistemology of the Latin American curriculum with another approach, with other subjects, recognizing other circumstances,” recognizing, “as if it were an interactive puzzle, [that] all of America is assembled by colonizations, migrations, violence of all kinds that silence voices, erase cultures, neutralize languages, discriminate races, annihilate lives,” requiring curriculum scholars “to place ourselves in the rupture as an intermediate space to question the hegemony with which the history of the curriculum is recognized, with its technical, rational and efficient perspective that guarantees social control and annuls the differences of practices.” From such questioning ruptures appear in the scarred surface of the palimpsest that is the present of the Americas: North, Central, South - one America Morelli reminds.

“All of America is a conquered continent that bears in its name the mark of that conquest,” Morelli knows. “Our languages are imposed, as a result of the negation of other languages, the objects of cultural subjugation.” While feeling “familiar” and indeed “like our own,” these “ways of naming … are alien.” An “impossible act,” Morelli suggests that “translation” positions “the reader at the crossroads of having to choose between oblivion or negation.” Only “the naive reader denies the translation and ignores the linguistic filter of the culture that plays all the time with signifiers and meanings.” No naïve reader, Morelli knows that the “ambiguity of Latin America in curriculum studies” derives from the fact that the field “oscillates between the tradition of U.S. technicism, with which it enters the world of curriculum, and the critical sociological proposals that understands education as a political act and the curriculum as its point of resistance.” It is the continent’s history of “dictatorships, revolutions, oppression, repression, exclusion, injustice, [and] inequality [that] allowed critical theory to flourish as a safeguard for curriculum studies.” Here she cites “Paulo Freire's emancipatory educational ideas" that "have inscribed social praxis in the curriculum, turning it into a construction that acquires the forms and categories of politics." "This is," Morelli concludes, the "identity" of Latin America: "Resistance is the defense mechanism that allows the continent to maintain its identity."

"Latin America is always," it seems to Morelli, "in an intermediate space between revolution and progress, belonging and exclusion, subjugation and negation," and in "these interstices are the germs of the identity of the Latin American curriculum studies." A "territory born of hegemony in 1492," Latin America "oscillates between the Modernity that gave it structure and the postmodernity that warns it of the cracking of the idea of people, school and common curriculum; between the critical theory that provides it with categories for liberation and the post-critical theories that highlight minorities and their differences, allowing everything to be possible; between the globalization to which it was obligatorily invited to participate and the internationalization that allows it to hold complicated conversations with others that are just as different." Insofar as it imposes standardization, globalization could be considered a form of neocolonialism. For Morelli, "the inquisitorial sentence of the multilateral credit organizations on Latin American education confirms the subjugation controlled by the standardization that does not fit the measures of the continent. Nothing could be more inappropriate than reports and recommendations on the state of education based on foreign criteria and unattainable objectives."

In contrast - insofar as internationalization denotes dialogical encounters across difference, it denotes decolonization, as an ideal unattainable but as a pedagogical practice obligatory. In curriculum studies – as in other fields grappling with its conceptual occupation by concepts estranged from the specificity of the local – that means attending to intellectual history of the field. For Latin American curriculum studies, Morelli writes, "the first task is to define the relations with the United States and European countries as providers of theories and perspectives of analysis that have affected the field," admittedly a "difficult task of questioning the theories with which we have been formed," but one "that uproots colonialism," those "naturalized relations of subalternity that condition curriculum theory and school practices." So, "the construction of Post-*Bildung* for the process of formation of a post-pandemic Latin American subject calls for solidarity as the third moment of the *Didaktik* centered on *Bildung*," but "also to attend to the metaphorical fiction of literature and its characters, who carry the problems of femininities, négritudes and disabilities, narrated in first person, in Latin American territories." Such solidarity supports "characters who resist the circumstances of their formation processes, characters that reflect on their identity and what they want to become." Such a concept of "Post-*Bildung* will make sense if it takes up again the debate of the subject configured by multiple literacies in which the force of the moving image is greater than that of writing," ours an ocularcentric age wherein the "screen" becomes a "*black mirror* returns the density of a distorted identity, filtered, modified by the aesthetics of consumption." Now "it is more profitable to show happiness than intelligence, it is more profitable the capacity of consumption than the formation of the subject."

"Without wishing to be apocalyptic," Morelli winks, "or to suggest that the concept of (Post) *Bildung* will be the salvation of the subject through its formation, I consider it pertinent to attend to the pedagogical core, of relationship with others and of reflection with oneself that it proposes in order to rethink the subject of postmodernity." However, besieged by technology, consumer capitalism, cultural fragmentation and political polarization, "relationship" is surely "the pedagogical core." That insight is embedded in Morelli's reactivation of *Bildung*; she knows that the celebrated (and critiqued) concept "has the articulatory capacity to find a place between curriculum theory and the *Didaktik* tradition (*Didaktik Tradiciton*).” Solidarity through specificity can support the challenge, that is, “to face the decisions of the silenced Latin American voices so that the process of formation makes the subject visible and vice versa.” Morelli has indeed made the “subject visible.”

In making her subject – Latin American curriculum studies – visible, Morelli has translated a dynamic centrifugal field into a constellation at which we readers can gaze, knowing that its light has taken time to reach us. Not the hundreds of thousands of years distant stars’ light can take, but time nonetheless, and so we know that the constellation we see here – lighting up our sky – contains concepts we cannot yet see. Silvina points the way, not only in her stunning sense of “constellation” – what a brilliant choice of metaphors for the field - but also in Morelli’s mapping of its specific intellectual histories and present circumstances, histories marked by movements from Marxism to post-structuralism, structured by European concepts made almost native by Latin American theorists and scholars, no endpoint of course, but instead a series of (inter)stellar conceptual events rupturing the present as they point to future possibilities, including, perhaps, a Latin theory of *Post-Bildung*. These are among the many promising possibilities of this “young and resilient field” – as Morelli so perfectly puts it - the light of which burns bright, the field of Latin American curriculum studies that curriculum scholars worldwide will want to watch. Our collective thanks go to Silvina Morelli for serving as our astronomer.

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Endnotes

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[1] To *Curriculum in Latin America: Didactics, Bildung and US Hegemony* by Silvia Morelli. Routledge.

[2] Unless otherwise indicated, all quoted passages come from Curriculum in Latin America.

[3] Surely the first was Mardones 2018.

[4] *Bildung* is a term I juxtapose – even blend with – *currere*: Pinar 2011a. Mexican scholars too attend to their field's invasion from the United States, specifically the enforcement of the so-called Tyler Rationale: Pinar 2011b.

[5] In her study of nineteenth British culture, Amanda Anderson (2001, 4) *Bildung* as "the self-reflexive cultivation of character, which animated much of Victorian ethics and aesthetics, from John Stuart Mill to Matthew Arnold and beyond." As Morelli's project emphasizes, *Bildung* is a concept that was – is - hardly confined to Germany – or to Europe.

[6] https://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-357#acrefore-9780199366439-e-357-div1-3

[7] https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/person/pedro-gadanho/

[8] https://www.highereddive.com/news/should-coding-replace-foreign-language-requirements/590435/

[9] https://abcnews.go.com/US/teens-spend-hours-screens-entertainment-day-report/story?id=66607555#:~:text=Teens%20spend%20an%20average%20of%20seven%20hours%20and,that%20promotes%20safe%20technology%20and%20media%20for%20children

[10] Associated with Barthes of course: https://literariness.org/2016/03/20/roland-barthes-concept-of-death-of-the-author/

[11] Pinar 2023, 87-105.

[12] https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/en/heartfield-james.htm

[13] https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/07/1984-george-orwell/590638/

[14] Pinar 2023, 212ff.

[15] Fanon 1968, 316.