

## Bridging a response within the watercoursings of empty places

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If we want to sustain a vital and meaningful educational life that we share, we as educators have to find openings for the watercourse of cross-cultural interplay to erode the constraining line of the official boundary (Wang, 2009).

It is from the empty space on the map that extreme possibilities emerge in the process of becoming and happening (Yu, 2009).

We three authors have been brought together to bridge and provoke our international experiences as an aesthetic narrative performance of curriculum theorizing. And standing on this narrative bridge, “we are in no hurry to cross over” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 316). Instead we linger, contemplating the curricular complexities of living a cross-cultural curriculum as both friends and strangers. In a sense our individual and collective theorizing calls forth our capacity to imagine the unexpected watercoursings of cross-cultural flows and transnational mobilities. To a large extent, the narrative coursings we offer readers and each other have become visceral and perplexing through our embodied autobiographical accounts of what Miller (2006) aptly calls the “shifting and rapidly changing discursive and material effects of globalization” (p. 31). At one point in time our biographical and intellectual histories, their respective narrative em-plot-ments, crisscrossed each other as international graduate students studying within the empty spaces of the *Curriculum Theory Project* at Louisiana State University. Consequently, the absent presences of its curricular ghosts, their discursive genealogies, haunt the materiality our writings. And yet each us remain unfaithfully faithful toward studying (bridging) the verticality and horizontality of such curricular ghosts.

Now some time later, within the “official boundary” of my office walls, at this Canadian *capital* institution, protected from the bone chilling dampness of today’s northern wind, I sit here mapping out a reader response. Here, its respective *currere* inhabits the hyphenated spaces between alienation and appropriation, becoming and happening, and East and West. In a sense, such a response always experiences a certain amount of life and death, of who we were yesterday as public intellectuals and as writers. And yet it is here within the silence of this meditative space, I/eye wonder, “who will each

*My father has always divided maps into two kinds, dead and living: if one follows every marker on the map, this is a dead map for the traveller; if one can find exciting unmarked and empty places besides those marked ones on the map, that is living map. Of course my father always boasts that he only uses living maps. I wonder, are there also dead and living maps in the area of curriculum? (Yu, 2009).*



TO CITE THIS ARTICLE PLEASE INCLUDE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Nicholas Ng-A-Fook (2009). Bridging a response within the watercoursings of empty places.

*Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 6 (2) <http://nitinat.library.ubc.ca/ojs/index.php/tci> <access date>

of us live to be tomorrow?” How will each of our intellectual works live for others as “action in thought and thought in action?” Wang (2009) and Yu (2009) have helped me to re/conceptualize the thoughtful and playful spaces between cross-cultural hyph-e-nations, of curricular doublings, taking place within the intellectual theorizing of our works. Lingering within the poetics of these hyphenated spaces is where the hyphen, both binds and divides (Wah, 2000). But even when it is notated, Wah (2004) reminds us, the hyphen “is often silent and transparent” (p. 73). Therefore, in our work within such cross-cultural hyph-e-nations, we attune ourselves toward curricular possibilities that break through such silences toward a new key. Much like the bio-texts of Wah (2000, 2004), our auto/biographical writings make the interstices at the margins of the hyphen more audible and their cross-cultural pigmentations more visible. Here the transparency of the hyphen itself becomes a thorn—an aporia, a perpetual deferral of signs, signifiers, and signified—in the side of “predetermined” colonial configurations (Aoki, 1996/2005; Hall, 1997; Stanley, 2009; Wah, 2000). And within this hybrid borderland of infinite discursive possibilities we in turn bring to life our collective genealogical (or vertical) and inter-textual (or horizontal) mappings of the international topography we call curriculum studies.

In a sense, we collectively surf the interstitial constellations of hyph-e-nations. We migrate auto/biographically in-between and a/cross the backslashes of our individual cross-cultural inquiries. And surfing the hyphen a/cross the backslashes of such conjunctive spaces, we perform the aesthetics of curriculum theorizing. For example, surfing the empty places in-between East and West Wang (2009) offers a

*With the variety of thoughts present both within faculty and students, the clash between traditional Chinese culture and Western culture was evident at all levels, and the efforts to mediate between the two gave birth to new intellectual and cultural movements (Wang, 2009).*

generous discursive cross-cultural rereading of Yulang and Watts’ life histories with Eastern thought. Pinar (2007) refers to such genealogical work as the verticality of intellectual study.

During her Zen journey, Yu deconstructs the dead and living maps of curricular terrains like power, disciplinary policy objectives, myths of political neutrality, technocratic rationality, and curricularists as rude surveyors, in relation to walking the watercoursings of vulnerability, cultivating a curriculum of peace, playing with stringless uncertainty, and wandering as a troubadour painting meaning at the margins of empty space. At the edges of these empty places, Wang asks us to attune our cross-cultural narrative em-plot-ments to a new key that plays a/cross and beyond the backslashes of our respective conceptual boundaries. In turn, such creative dwellings and crossings can disrupt the televised national narrative images teachers and students have of East-West and North-South.

Drawing on the generative possibilities of such discursive disruptions, Wang and Yu complicate the dynamic relationships among place, cultural production, life narratives, and concomitantly the curricular chronotopes we as public intellectuals now put forth within the aesthetics of our curriculum theorizing. Moreover, attuning ourselves to alter/native approaches to personhood, personal transformation in relation to global transformation, and organic forms of curriculum study, pushes us to reconsider how inter-national dynamics inform our experiential and intellectual processes for cross-cultural meaning making. Such meditative attuning to the cross-cultural curricular and pedagogical processes of meaning making provides an empty place where we can perhaps midwife and give birth to the limitless educational possibilities of curriculum theorizing.

However, during our nomadic cross-cultural inquiries toward and within the international and interdisciplinary languages of the other, Wang (2009) cautions us, not to fall into the trap of romanticizing our conceptualizations of alienation and *Without crossing into another world (and coming back), an inter-space does not embody what exists on the other side; without dwelling on the bridge, crossing pushes away the interactive potentiality of an in-between space. To allow newness to emerge, both crossing and dwelling are necessary...In today's mobile society in which migration, immigration, and globalization continue to disrupt the homogenous picture of locality, crossing can be imminent within the border, and dwelling gestures to what is beyond the landscape (Wang, 2009).*

appropriation as yet again another ethnographic and/or definitive bureaucratic prescription for curing our individual curricular and pedagogical problems. The processes of cultural meaning making, as Yu (2009) makes clear, would then be reduced to the instrumental mode of producing dead curricular maps. Instead, how might we dwell within and a/cross the slippery signifiers of such hyphenated spaces, between appropriation and alienation, East and West, the dead and living curriculum? And as curriculum theorists, how might we continue to criticize the rude surveyors, producers, and consumers of cross-cultural meanings? Like Wang and Yu, I wonder how we might advocate our provocations of cross-cultural watercoursings, which flow into and beyond the not yet openings of the living map we all call curriculum studies.

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