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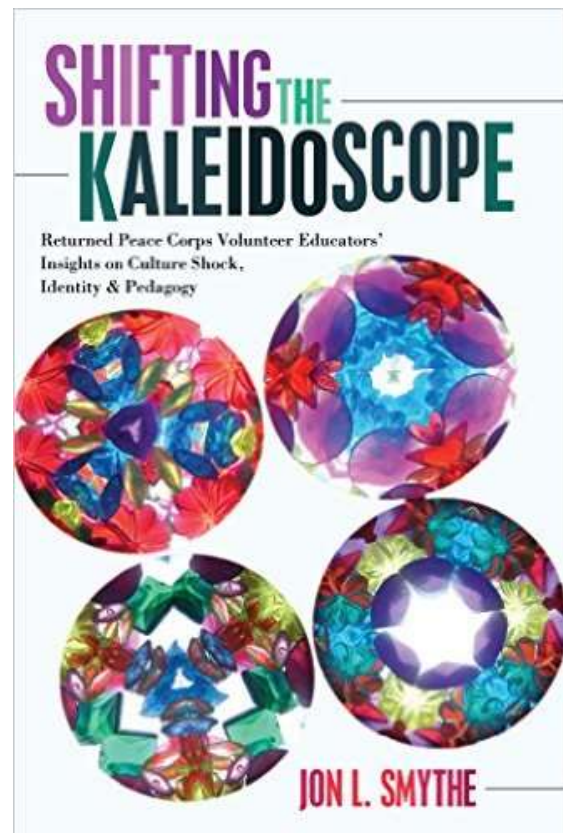
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Globalization and its consequences have been a popular topic in a variety of fields and academic disciplines. Within the discourse of globalization the notion of *cultural difference* stands out as one of the significant themes related to human experience and also one of the most debated among social science and humanities scholars. Within cultural studies, for example, Homi Bhabha (1990, 2004) made a distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference. He argued that cultural diversity is celebrated in Western societies as part of growing civilizations, but by incorporating minor cultures into the mainstream culture, the differences between cultures under control. In *Shifting the kaleidoscope* Jon L. Smythe provides sufficient evidence that American educators who have lived and taught in a foreign country not only support cultural difference but also implement what they have learned in their classrooms.

In thinking about cultural difference as a curriculum practice, Smythe explains that being a cultural outsider “creates the



condition for deeper understanding of the self and one's own culture" (p. 3). Thus, cultures and meanings gain greater depth through the engagement of cultural differences. For Smythe the task of educating students from diverse backgrounds can provoke anxiety for educators who have little experience with teaching diverse populations and who may not have ever been cultural outsiders themselves. Therefore, by highlighting the consequences of actively engaging with cultural difference and by analyzing the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers' [RPCV] narrated stories about their culture shock, identity shift, and pedagogical practices while living and teaching in a foreign country Smythe hopes to provide openings for other educators to reflect on their own experiences with cultural differences inside and outside the classroom.

The purpose of this book is to gain insight into issues related to teaching and learning in intercultural contexts by examining RPCV educators' experiences with culture shock and reverse culture shock. Specifically, Smythe is interested in the question of how the self/Other relationship is perceived and acted out personally, culturally, and pedagogically through RPCV educators' experiences. By understanding how educators navigate both the positive and negative aspects of culture shock, the author does not aim to alleviate the anxiety that educators may experience in the face of cultural differences. Rather, he aims to recognize the different ways in which culture shock and reverse culture shock may influence teaching in an age of globalization. Smythe's method and approach involved conducting open-ended interviews with four RPCV educators and looking through a post-structural hermeneutic lens. The author was transparent about his use of this particular lens: it challenges the centered hierarchical structure of self and Other; it argues that meaning is ever-changing; it examines the ways in which social institutions engage in the process of othering;

and lastly, it recognizes the difference between self and Other.

The book is composed of seven chapters excluding the introductory chapter. Smythe develops the context for the study in four different sections. The first section includes the discussion about the current movement toward the internationalization of curriculum studies encouraged by marketplace globalization, some concerns being raised by educators and researchers about the way such movement affects the public education and curriculum, how this internationalization shapes educators' identities, and some of the ways in which educational institutions are promoting this internationalization. The second section offers information about the Peace Corps' past, present, its functions, and the critiques leveled against it. Also, the author presents some research related to RPCV educators' perceptions about Peace Corps. The third section outlines the ways in which culture shock has been defined and conceptualized psychologically and metaphorically, with particular attention paid to aspects related to self-awareness, identity, learning, and growth. A fourth section similarly considers the ways in which reverse culture shock has been defined as well as some of the reasons why it remains relatively less explored than culture shock.

The stories of RPCV educators represent four broad categories: culture shock stories, reverse culture stories, identity shift stories, and pedagogical stories. The RPCV educators types of experiences they had based on their gender, age, ethnicity, and geographical locations in which they served as Peace Corps volunteers. Chapter 2 chronicled the experiences of a 58-year-old Hispanic male who taught English as a foreign language at a university in an urban city in the Eastern European country of Moldova from 2006 to 2008. Chapter 3 recounted the experiences of a 33-year-old Filipino-American woman who taught English at the primary and secondary levels in Kazakhstan from 1999 to 2001. Chapter 4 traced 46-year-old white male who

taught English in forms 1-4 [ninth-twelfth grade] at a rural boarding secondary school in Kenya from 1987 to 1990. Chapter 5 centered around the experiences of a 52-year-old white female who taught English in a secondary school in a small town in the central highlands of Kenya. As an RPCV educator himself in Cameroon, Africa, from 1996-1998, Smythe inserted some of his own stories between the other chapters, which he has labeled as *interplay* stories.

Next, Smythe elaborates on the similarities, contrasts, and shades of meaning that occurred within and between RPCV educators' stories. The emerged themes include gender-based inequalities, different ways of negotiating the issues of power, the culturally structured concept of time, creating intercultural meanings through metaphors to describe one's intercultural experiences, the concept of home serving as a point of departure for one's intercultural experiences, and lastly the connotations of used words about intercultural experiences to mean other words, concepts, and meanings.

In his concluding chapter, the author envisions a kaleidoscopic curriculum based on his own observations and experiences in conjunction with those of the other RPCV educators. Smythe focuses on five areas to discuss such kaleidoscopic curriculum: multiplicity, movement, juxtaposition, ambiguity, and surprise. First, the multiplicity of the kaleidoscopic curriculum recognizes and questions the dualistic hierarchies that form the substructure of Western culture, which was also questioned by Bhabha (1990, 2004). In order to shift the power dynamic of such dualisms Smythe suggests to learn a new language and "to 'decenter' one's self...through inner reorganization process" (p. 215). Second, through dialogic and conversational movement the author suggests shifting the emphasis from a focus on the product of knowledge to the process of knowing and the ways in which meaning develops through experience and interaction, a perspective that is well aligned with

Deweyan (1974) philosophy. Third, the juxtaposition of kaleidoscopic curriculum utilizes comparative approach and attempts to reveal the hidden layers of diversity by contrasting the self and Other in non-prescribed categories. Fourth, the ambiguity of kaleidoscopic curriculum allows educators help students develop their own voice by convincing them to get out of their safety nets and embrace ambiguity. The last area of Smythe's envisioned kaleidoscopic curriculum is about learning from a moment of surprise as such moment leaves the most lasting impression. The author suggests incorporating the outcomes of shocks and surprises rather than simplistic and stereotypical categories into the curriculum.

The book clearly met all the author's stated goals. Using narrative inquiry Smythe made sense of how participants constructed and negotiated their perceptions of self and their social relationships. He delivered the gained insights into issues related to teaching and learning in intercultural contexts by capturing each participant's culture shock, reverse culture shock, identity shift, and pedagogical stories in an individualized chapter emphasizing each participant's idiosyncratic stories. Using a post-structural hermeneutic framework to guide his analysis, Smythe used two different readings to paint various images of one particular story. In his first reading, the author focused more on the interpretive nature of the meaning as a shared understanding whereas the second reading was more deconstructive in nature. The second reading was particularly appealing because the author purposefully shifted the focus of the story in order to destabilize the internal meanings of certain themes as a way of making a space for other potential meanings and such re-reading generated comprehensive analytical discussion.

I want to note only a few minor concerns about Smythe's book *Shifting the kaleidoscope*. At the start of the book, the author prepares the reader for the participants' stories by thoroughly reviewing

the literature on four important and relevant topics that are revisited in the following chapters. These reviewed bodies of literature are neatly interwoven with the emerged categories of participants' stories, except for the identity shift category. Readers may have benefited from more conceptualization about what identity means in the first place, as the concept of identity itself remains something of an enigma. For example, Deaux (1993) argued that there are multiple identities such as *personal* and *social* identities. Also, this reader would have appreciated greater clarification and discussion about the difference between the concepts of *identity* and *self*. Scholars like Côté and Levine (2002) and Hoffman (1998) make a distinction between *self* and *identity* by asserting that identity reflects self's situatedness in social roles.

In conclusion, Smythe's engaging stories about his own experiences in Cameroon are the highlight of the book as he

elaborates on his own self-understandings and on how much he has impacted others. At one time I was at the receiving end of such Peace Corps service myself and since then I have grown from a young schoolgirl who believed that "America" existed only in the movies to a young scholar who now believes that only "the sky is the limit" because one Peace Corps volunteer taught her so. With that in mind I conclude by emphasizing that *Shifting the kaleidoscope* is an excellent addition to the scholarship in curriculum studies as Smythe's envisioned kaleidoscopic curriculum can serve as an invaluable tool for educators who have never been cultural outsiders themselves but work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. I highly recommend this book as a guidebook to anyone who is interested in crossing cultural, geographical, and psychological borders.


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About the Reviewer

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