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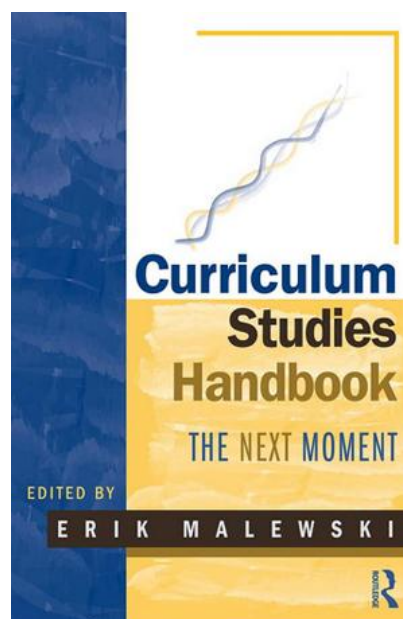
Malewski, Erik (Ed.) (2010). *Curriculum Studies Handbook: The Next Moment*. New York: Routledge

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The *Curriculum Studies Handbook* (CSH), edited by Erik Malewski (2010), is a thick tome and proved challenging to review due to its complexity in both breadth and depth of topic. In the introduction Malewski notes “For students who are new to the curriculum field this might seem like an unruly text, a chaotic collection that offers few guideposts by which to find one’s way” (p.xiv). I found myself searching for analogies to better understand the structure of the book and the relationships within and between the featured chapters and responses.



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The hybrid discourses and liminal spaces of post-reconceptual curriculum theory defy the stable and historical thematic categories of the past by which the reader can orient him/herself. Indeed, the reading of CSH is much like a gallery viewing of post-modern, post-structural installations. Given this analogy, I explore a set of recent post modern, post structural works by Valerie Hegarty which helped me to better understand how to read the CSH. And, in turn, the reading of the CSH assisted me to better grasp the artist's themes and the relationship between the individual works.

The CSH chapters are structured using an inter- and intra-generational exchange between the writing of a junior academic and the response of a more seasoned or senior academic, which highlights the course of curriculum studies across time, perspective, experience, and generation. The intended audience of the book is broad and noted to be curriculum scholars, academics in related fields, students, teachers, and others. However, one not fully immersed in the field of curriculum theory can feel overwhelmed by tension between the pieces, the complicated historical contexts from which they stem, and the overall complexity of the conversation in post-reconceptual curriculum theory.

Walking through an exhibition of works by Valerie Hegarty is much like navigating theory. One is confronted by transformational works which fluctuate along a continuum of generation and destruction and regeneration (Brooklyn Museum, 2009; Hegarty, 2008; Katz, 2010). The pieces are a disorienting display as Hegarty deterritorializes not only accepted notions of art but



Figure 1. Valerie Hegarty *Niagara Falls* 2007
Foam core, paper, paint, wood, glue, gel
medium 150 x 300 x 65 cm

challenges how art is embedded in time and nature. One may come upon a meticulously painted landscape which is burned and twisted, then set askew on top of a pile of old wood and building materials with charred bits and pieces strewn about the base. At first glance the array appears to be part archaeology dig, part construction site, even part museum fire. These works embrace the complex and simple, the disturbing and sublime, the bold and subliminal, and the apparent and cloaked. Like much of post modern visual art, Hegarty's pieces often defy clean categorization as she blends mediums and forms: a painting embedded in a sculpture which evolves into an installation. Hegarty notes that the making of the pieces is most important as each is built up and then destroyed to create yet another work of art (Katz, 2010). The artist's works are energetic unfoldings, moments of impermanence and transformation.

Like a gallery showing of Valerie Hegarty's pieces, the CSH has gathered together works from a contemporary yet transient moment in curriculum theory. While the chapters are all a part of a single exhibition regarding curriculum theory, the pieces of writing also each discharge a distinct energy and line of thought. This dynamic tension pushes the writings apart and away from the confines of historical reconceptualization of curriculum studies out into the liminal space of post-reconceptualization. As such, the CSH chapters are written "canvasses" depicting the unfolding transformation within and toward post-reconceptualization.

Given this, how does one read this work? Image the viewer-reader entering a fine gallery. She/he scans the exhibition and then moves from piece to piece. She/he examines, absorbs, feels, compares, contrasts and, in doing so, literally and figuratively walks lines or draws



Figure 2. Valerie Hegarty, *Bierstadt (Among the Sierra Nevada) with Holes*, 2007, mixed media

connections between the works. When one uses this Deleuzian or ontological approach to the experience of reading, the text invites flexible “nomadic inquiry” and the practice of drawing “lines of becoming” within and between the chapters (Semetsky, 2006, p. xxi, 7). Like Hegarty’s artwork, the chapters within CSH are *tracers* - an open way or loosely sketched map, which illuminate a passage to future discourses (Semetsky, 2006). The chapters are loosely arranged under headings and cover a dizzying array of topics: rural formations of queerness, intersubjective becoming, the post-human condition and the biomedical world, cultural aspects of social class, a historical analysis of eugenic ideology, suicide policy and education, the experience of despair and critical pedagogy, technological flow and spiritualism, critical geography, the role of black curriculum orientation and practitioners, the deintellectualization of teachers, the role of hospitality in curriculum studies, ecological ways of knowing and more. Engagement in an ontological and nomadic practice in reading this breadth of subject matter goes beyond the application of linear and logic based understanding. CSH embraces the artistic, affective, social, and ethical dimensions of thought and knowledge.

As well, an ontological approach allows the reader to gain a feel for the uneven folding and unfolding of curriculum theory discourse over time, clearly demonstrated by the wide and varied chapter topics. In both Hegarty’s artwork and the chapters within CSH, the experience of time is embedded in each piece or chapter as they appear to have been created, hauled through time, broken down, found, and regenerated to have new meanings. Thus, within each piece or chapter lies the seed for a whole other form *to become*, to regenerate again. In some works the anchor in historical reference is clear; in



Figure 3. Valerie Hegarty, *Untitled*, 314 x 400

others, degeneration has transformed the piece into a work without a clear reference. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 293) note:

[a] line of becoming [which] is not defined by points that it connects or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes between points, it comes up through the middle. . . . A line of becoming has only a middle. . . . A becoming is neither one nor two; . . . it is the in-between, the border or line of flight or descent running perpendicular to both. . . .

These “middles” are keenly examined in the CSH chapters addressing Technology, Nature, and the Body. For example in chapter 8, Understanding Curriculum Studies in the Space of Technological Flow, Karen Ferneding addresses the historical flow of technology, global mediascapes, and our human relationship to these. Using examples from science and the arts, Ferneding speaks to the seduction and spiritualism of technology, commodification of social imagination, and the resulting dehumanization and disenchantment in a posthuman world. Appropriately, she concludes that “the meaning of present *transepochal state* is not definitive” (p.182). The reader is left betwixt and between, not with a tidy list of questions to address in the future, but with a charge to examine human transcendence and imagination. Readers are asked to deeply understand our state of separation from nature, others and self, and to take the opportunity to scrutinize the educational landscape (see p. 183). With this, Ferneding leaves the reader in the unfolding middle in which she/he then takes away a *thought seed* for the next germination of writing in post-reconceptualization curriculum.

In chapter 10, (A) Troubling Curriculum: Public Pedagogies of Black Women Rappers by Nichole Guillory and Response to Nichole A. Guillory, The Politics of Patriarch Discourse: A Feminist Rap by Nathalia Jaramillo, there is an example of the tension between intra-generational scholars. Guillory positions Black female rappers as public pedagogues who disrupt dominant discourse and makes the case for rap as a

“principal language form and an integral part of the in school and out of school curriculum” (p. 209). In contrast, Jaramillo is “troubled” by her reaction to Guillory’s writing and wrestles with women’s role and agency in the broader, and often highly misogynistic and patriarchal, culture of the rap music industry (p. 223). As well, Jaramillo confronts the violent and exploitive lyrics which are deconstructed in Guillory’s essay and questions if these can be seen and used as self-actualizing and transformative pedagogy. Are these Black female rappers truly “talking back” to dominant discourse or merely recreating it through a female version of male objectification? The tension between the two pieces brings about “nomadic inquiry” (Semetsky, 2006) in the flipping of pages back and forth as the reader is drawn into comparing and contrasting persuasive oppositional perspectives.

Just as Hegarty’s art frames cannot go unnoticed, CSH’s varied writings have a robust and thick frame to hold together this “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2004, p. 9). This framing, which describes the flux and flow of post-reconceptualization, is provided by Malewski in the preface and introduction as well as by Block, Pinar, and Malewski in the epilogue. In addition to giving the reader an account of the rather contentious 2006 Purdue conference from which this volume originated, Malewski addresses the historical context for the rise of post-reconceptualization in relation to neoliberal/developmental discourses on teaching and learning. Additionally, Malewski provides seven interrelated “through lines” to represent the potential next moments in contemporary curriculum studies (p. 25). The *through lines* differ from the CSH sections and chapter titles and provide, yet another, equivocal frame for alternate reading and understanding: flux and change, hybrid spaces, reading differently, divergent

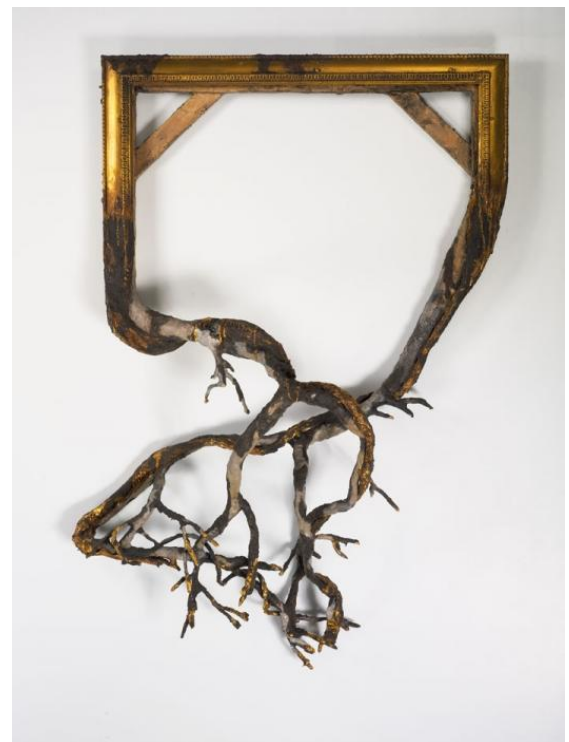


Figure 4. Valerie Hegarty, *Unearthed*, 2007, mixed media

perspectives, different contexts, status questions, and understudied histories.

In summarizing the nuanced position of the text, Malewski utilizes the term “proliferation,” meaning to grow or multiply (p. 23). Again, the term proliferation points to an ontological framework of understanding in which multiple unfolding perspectives and practices over time and space are embraced as a way of knowing. Within this frame, he positions the text as “an attempt to intervene on conceptual, academic terrain, not from the position of the teacher-insider, . . . Instead, self, subjectivity, and subjective positions must be addressed” (p. 9). Tied to this, Malewski calls upon new scholars to “trace their own course of study through crafting personal, conceptual montages at the crossroads of the scholarship they study and their personal experiences with it” (p. xiv).

Throughout his commentary and introduction, **Malewski** embraces not only the grounding of scholarship in personal experience but advocates for a curiously tight grasp on individual identity as the primary guide or impetus to advance theoretical scholarship. In contrast, in the epilogue Pinar concisely and eloquently balances this view through a portrayal of the dangers of rooting scholarship in identity. He describes the excess of identity politics as “self-indulgent indignation substituting for scholarship and dialogical encounter” (p. 529). Pinar warns readers how the practice of an ameliorative orientation, narcissistic and self-involved scholarship, and generalization without empirical verification or even scholarly reference reproduces the very conditions neoliberal and conservative critics use to attack and blame scholars, educators, and schools. As a third voice, Block calls for the salve of *consonance* or the harmony of many voices to resolve the stagnant tension in the field of curriculum theory “from which no resolution is possible; only conflict and destruction results” (p. 525). Instead of the tension that pushes and pulls scholarly exchange into oppositional and untenable positions, Block artfully urges the reader to consider how to use the energy generated by



the many voices in curriculum studies to create a common movement toward resolution, harmony, and power within the post-reconceptualization era.

Despite their varied views, Malewski, Block, and Pinar affirm that the collection of pieces in the CSH provides an important opportunity for scholarly engagement. Their framing of CSH gives support and structure to the core of the work and provides the reader vivid context to the ongoing contortions of present day curriculum studies. As well, an ontological or nomadic approach to the experience of reading allows the reader to fully immerse him/herself in the inter-relational 'lines of becoming' through and between each piece. In sum, the CSH offers a provocative installation of works, in which academics, students, and teachers alike can engage in the unfolding dialogic encounter that is curriculum theory.

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