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Bildung and the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies*

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I wish to participate in the dialogue¹ proposed by Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts in their edited collection on Didaktik, “generally defined as the art or study of teaching” (2000, 3), a definition drawn, perhaps, from Eric Weniger (2000 [1952], 112), who defines Didaktik as “primarily, and certainly in everyday terms, the study of teaching and learning, the study of instruction.” If instruction and teaching are subsidiary concepts in U.S. curriculum studies, it appears we are creating a dialogue between differently positioned, as well as historically and culturally distinctive, concepts. Given these “fundamental” (2000, 3) differences², Hopmann and Riquarts acknowledge that such a dialogue will be difficult. Despite the difficulty, I want to share their conviction that (2000, 4) each tradition can offer the other “substantial insights” and “knowledge.”

Acknowledging (see 2000, 4) that curriculum theory has “taught” the Didaktik tradition “important” lessons concerning the relationship between school and society, on the nature and scope of educational planning, and on the socially constructed character of schooling, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 4) assert that the Didaktik tradition can, in turn, support curriculum theory’s interest in reflective teaching, curriculum enactment, and teacher thinking.³ As well, Didaktik’s emphasis upon content as the “core” of teaching intersects, they suggest,

with the “recent awareness” of curriculum theorists that “subject matters” (2000, 4).⁴

Drawing upon Comenius, Hopmann and Riquarts (see 2000, 4) list three elements of Didaktik. Teaching, they tell us, requires knowing 1) the content of instruction, 2) from where that content comes, and 3) how content is used. This third element is not a matter of “application” as North Americans might understand that concept, but, rather, “a crucial factor *induced* in any level of educational reasoning” (2000, 5). What does this mean? Drawing upon Herbart, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 6) describe instruction as “developing” the student’s knowledge of his or her “obligations, opportunities, and choices.” In Herbart’s view, they summarize, “*instruction is education by content*” (Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 6; emphasis in original). This notion, we are told, constitutes the “core” of German Didaktik onto the present day (Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 6).

The most important contribution of Herbartianism, Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 6) stress, was its extraction of Didaktik from general educational theory, rendering it a discipline of its own, focused on instruction “under the conditions of schooling” as distinct from other instructional settings like self-education or education in the family.⁵ Indeed, the “overwhelming success” of Didaktik, they suggest, had to do with being embedded in “certain institutional environments” (Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 7). The centralization of schools in Prussia required a theory regulating the interplay of these organizational domains (e.g. the state curriculum, centralized teacher education, and local schooling).

Certainly here is one historical difference, as in the United States, there has been (until four decades ago) a reluctance to centralize curriculum making and to align it with teacher education and local schooling. Despite this historical difference, in the 1960s there were German scholars who imagined that “the”⁶ American curriculum tradition seemed to be “far ahead, and much more appropriate, for

meeting the needs of a rapidly changing society” (Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 8). In Germany, the curriculum “fever,” as Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 9) characterize it, “did not burn very long.” The difference in “institutional structure” (2000, 9) – namely that difference between state and federal curriculum control, mentioned earlier – coupled with the strength of the Didaktik tradition within teacher education and school administration meant (Hopmann and Riquarts tell us) that the German appropriation of the American curriculum tradition was brief, a kind of “first love” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 9) describe it, “hot and fierce, but short.”

Didaktik did not emerge from these “wonder years” of “curriculum love” completely “unchanged,” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 9) continue.⁷ The changes Hopmann and Riquarts identify bear no resemblance to Mager or to Bruner (the names they associate with “the” American curriculum tradition with which Germans had become infected), but more to the critical tradition that would surface after Schwab’s famous 1969 pronouncement, during the decade of reconceptualization (see Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 4).

First, and “foremost,” Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 9) explain, “there is a consensus ... today ... that Didaktik has to be critical, and even resistant,” especially when state requirements do not coincide with Didaktik’s conception of the “good” of students. (Who determines the “good” of students, asks Tero Autio [2006b], and by what criteria? Do issues of class, gender, and power disappear in such a formulation?) Second, and “no less important,” they continue, Didaktik had reclaimed its “old strength” as a “mediator” between the content and the teacher by a “radical turn” toward “content” (2000, 9).

This is, however, no reconceptualization of the synoptic textbook for teachers, as I have proposed (Pinar 2006a). Instead, Hopmann and Riquarts are referring to the substitution of general by specific subject-matter Didaktik, that is the “Didaktik produced and delivered inside the

boundaries of the school subjects” (2000, 9). Just as general curriculum development was replaced by school subject specific areas in the United States (especially after World War II), it appears that in Germany, too, subject-matter Didaktik has replaced the previous, more generalized, versions.⁸ This fact both fields face.

In order to clarify differences as well as hint at resonances between the two traditions, today I will concentrate on the key concept of *Bildung*, as presented in the Westbury-Hoppman-Riquarts volume. I underscore two aspects of the concept: the first its historically variable meaning and the second its gendered structure. I conclude with the suggestion that the concept may help us focus our labor of internationalization, including the work we undertake during our time together – at this Second World Curriculum Studies Conference - in Tampere.

Bildung

Humanity can be realized only in an individual
way!

Wolfgang Klafki (2000a, 93)

Key to Didaktik is the notion of *Bildung*, defined by Ian Westbury (2000, 24, n. 3) as “being educated, [or] educatedness.” He notes that it also conveys the connotation of the German word *bilden*, “to form, to shape.” He continues:

Bildung is thus best translated as “formation,” implying both the forming of the personality into a unity as well as the product of this formation and the particular “formedness” that is represented by the person. The “formation” in the idea of “spiritual formation” perfectly captures the German sense.

During the Weimar Republic, as we will see, “spiritual” meant “reactionary” (see Jonsson 2000, 24).

The major figure in contemporary *Didaktik* is, we are told, Wolfgang Klafki, a figure whose ideas, we are told, are still “very much alive” in German teacher education (Gudmundsdottir, Reinersten, and Nordtomme 2000, 332). Klafki (2000b, 144) describes the “first step” in preparing to teach as understanding the *contents of education*, a phrase acknowledging *Bildung* as a “basic” term of pedagogy (2000b, 146). The content of education is not, Klafki (2000b, 147) cautions, an “externally given matter,” but

rather, an organic power contained in the content itself, which has a determining influence on the conceptions and thoughts during assimilation by the mind, bringing them into conformity with itself, and thus effecting internal organization. (Willmann 1957, 324; quoted in Klafki 2000b, 147).

If the site of that “internal organization” is the subjective, we may have found one point of resonance between *Didaktik* and North American curriculum studies, even if we differ over the educational significance of that fact.⁹

Historically, Klafki (see 2000a, 85) tells us, theories of *Bildung* developed (during the period 1770-1830) in response to the “dangers” and the “possibilities” of the bourgeois subject. The association of *Bildung* with the bourgeoisie is shared by German-born U.S. historian George Mosse (1996, 35), who defines *Bildung* as that “middle-class urge to self-education and character building that in central Europe was meant to create good citizens.” For Klafki (2000a, 87), the primary elements of *Bildung* include: self-determination, freedom, emancipation, autonomy, responsibility, reason, and independence.

Given these characterological aspirations for education, “creative self-activity”¹⁰ becomes the “central” form of *Bildung*. Klafki (2000a, 88) is quick to point out that the self-determination central to *Bildung* bears no resemblance to what he terms subjectivism, a disavowal designed, I

suppose, to underscore subjectivity's inextricable bond with the social. Self-determination and freedom of thought and action can only be achieved through the study of what is "outside" subjectivity: humanity, culture, the world.

We sense in this view von Humboldt's emphasis on the "richness of the other" (Humboldt 1792, vol. I, pp. 64-65; quoted in Lüth 2000, 75). Despite the complexity of the concept, the question determining the content of *Bildung* remains, Klafki says, the same (see Klafki 2000a, 90): "What objectifications of human history seem best suited to open a person who is engaged in his or her own *Bildung* to the possibilities and duties of an existence in humanity?" I am reminded of the basic curriculum question in the U.S. tradition, namely: what knowledge is of most worth? The American question is, the I believe, the more political one, especially given the rejection of political, and specifically democratic, concerns in earlier versions of *Bildung* (see Tröhler 2003, 760, 773).

To emphasize the inextricable link between subjectivity and objectivity in *Bildung*, Klafki (2000a, 91) quotes Humboldt's fragment, *Theory of the Bildung of Man* (1793): "[Education] can be fulfilled only by the linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay." In this sentence, self-formation occurs through that engagement with the world that promises animation. This order of engagement came to imply that the particular dimensions of the world that are potentially the most educational are aesthetic in nature.

Indeed, since Schiller (1759-1805), *Bildung* has been associated with aesthetic education. Schiller regarded aesthetic experience as primarily a "means," not an end-in-itself, Klafki (2000a, 100) tells us, a "tool" employed in the "formation of humanity's capacity for moral-political reason." In the *Letters on Aesthetic Education*, however, Schiller

suggests aesthetic education has value in itself. That value has to do with (in Klafki's words)

the experience of happiness, human fulfillment, of a fulfilled present in which an expectation always emerges that goes beyond that present moment, a hope, a future possibility of the not-yet-realized "good life" of human existence. (Klafki 2000a, 100)

The meaning of *Bildung* has not remain unchanged. At the end of the nineteenth century, its political-moral potential faded as many embraced an exclusively aesthetic conception of *Bildung*. This development underscores the concept's historicity.

The Historicity of *Bildung*

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century aesthetes withdrew from political struggle in the public sphere to private worlds where they might cultivate perfection (Janik and Tolman 1973; Le Rider 1993). This is one critique of Robert Musil's (1955 [1906]) character Torless, who watches but fails to intervene in the rape of a schoolmate (see Rogowski 1994). Musil was an Austrian who denied the uniqueness and autonomy of Austrian culture, regarding it as an extension of German culture. Like George Mosse, Musil emphasized, Stefan Jonsson (2000, 41) tells us, the "intimate" relationship between the bourgeois subject and *Bildung*, especially within the literary genre of the *Bildungsroman*, the novel of apprenticeship. The *Bildungsroman* – Jonsson cites Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1796-1796) and its "great" precedent, Rousseau's *Emile* - introduces its reader to a role model who represents an imaginary solution to the contradictions of modernity, namely the conflict between the unique subjectively-existing individual and the faceless automaton demanded by mass society.

In his inward moment, the modern individual is constituted as an autonomous male agent¹¹ in the pursuit of personal happiness; in his

outward moment, he is forced to assume the position assigned to him by society. It is this gendered contradiction – between agency and passivity, assertion and penetration – the *Bildungsroman* tries to transcend. Musil, Jonsson (2000, 27) reports, had “little patience with the jargon of soul, personality, culture, and community.” *Young Torless* and – later – *The Man Without Qualities* portrayed Musil’s impatience.

As the social totality exceeded the everyday horizon of ordinary men and women (as, over the course of the nineteenth century, the rural was eclipsed by the urban: see below), the notion of an individual’s self-realization as occurring through harmonious participation in the social was no longer a realistic aspiration of education (Jonsson 2000). Just as capitalism could not accommodate (except through commodification) the aesthetic education of the individual, the aesthetic education of the individual could not, by Musil’s time, accommodate capitalism. For Jonsson, it is the *Bildungsroman*, a literary genre wherein the social totality translates directly into the self-realization of the individual, that lost its rationale.

In those difficult decades before the cataclysm that was World War I, not all educators could be confident that Europe was a world in which their subjectivity-existing students could harmoniously participate. The “progress” of capitalism was unrelenting (despite the political challenges posed by communism and socialism). Today we live in a very different historical moment than did von Humbolt, when he (2000 [1793-1794], 58) could call for the “linking of the self to the world to achieve the most general, most animated, and most unrestrained interplay.” Indeed, as Tero Autio (2003, 323) has observed,

[M]any features of personality we used to advocate as worthwhile in terms of *Bildung* and education have been badly depreciated by the political subordination to the sheer interests of commodification and economy.

In addition to the depreciation of subjectivity (see Jay 2005, 328), the political and natural world itself is deeply degraded, a point Klafki (see 2000a, 98, 101) himself acknowledges.

On the Gendered Structure of *Bildung*

Bernadette Baker (2001, 369) characterizes the gendered structure of *Bildung* as “building up from, and then away from, and then back to, Woman-as-Mother.” This is the basic movement of boys’ coming-of-age rituals worldwide (Gilmore 1990), also narrated in psychoanalytic object-relations theory (see Chodorow 1978). In aesthetic education and the tradition of the *Bildungsroman*, Jonsson (2000, 40) suggests, the feminine – as well as nature and community – enticed the estranged male subject. Art came to evoke and represent these three and thereby harmonized the two sides of subjectivity: the (male) public self, subject to the laws of the world as it *is*, and the (feminine, natural or authentic) inner self, yearning for the world as it *ought to be* (Yack 1986). By the end of the nineteenth century, such yearning was often directed aesthetically, not politically (see Jonsson 2000, 41).

Soon it would be, however. The “upheavals” structuring Europe one hundred years ago – culminating in World War I – produced a steady stream of conservative reactions. Jonsson (see 2000, 24) summarizes:

Worried that the intellectual spirit of modernity was too rationalistic and that the emergent social forms were too individualistic, or, even worse, too democratic, German and Austrian intellectuals sought to redress the powers of instrumental reason by asserting the spiritual powers of German culture, and to hedge the leveling impact of the masses by propagating the ideal of personal *Bildung*.

During this historical moment, *Bildung* would seem to be a politically reactionary notion, far from the “critical-constructivist” potential Klafki would later elaborate.

The work that best codified this reactionary response to modernity, Jonsson suggests, was that of the German sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies. In *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887, *Community and Society*), Tonnies distinguished between “natural” and “rational” will, the former grounded in the body. This means, as Jonsson (2000, 26) puts it, “the identity of the individual subject and of the collective is grounded in an intrinsic essence, which conditions those manifestations, utterances, and ways of behavior through which this identity is externalized or expressed.” Jonsson (2000, 7) characterizes this subjective and aesthetic structure as “expressivist.”

Tonnies made no normative judgments regarding the historical shift from agrarian communities to mass urban societies, from the “living organism” as he characterizes the inhabitants of the former, to the “mechanical and artificial aggregate” of modernity (quoted phrases in Jonsson 2000, 26). Tonnies appreciated that the shift was irreversible, and so he thought nostalgia futile. Most of his contemporaries and followers, Jonsson tells us, did not employ the same tone of neutrality; they saw the shift in terms of cultural decline. They insisted that these developments – often associated with Jews (Le Rider 1993) - must be reversed so that Germans might return to their presumably authentic and harmonious past.

By World War I, Tonnies’s concept of community had become a popular slogan, and by the 1920s, few doubted that a profound cultural crisis plagued German society. Scholars and intellectuals attempted to contain the “crisis” by supporting educational, cultural, and political programs aimed at resurrecting the classical *Bildung* and thereby presumably reviving community. In 1925, Ulrich Peters, editor of the

Zeitschrift für Deutsche Bildung, suggested that the “German soul” must return to itself; William Stern and Eduard Spranger argued that the integral “I” and the “soul” should be reinstated as foundational psychological and philosophical concepts. (A professor of education and philosophy in Berlin, Spranger belittled John Dewey’s work as “merely” economic and technical [Tröhler 2003, 765]). The educator Aloys Fischer asserted that these concepts should serve to “create the irrational bases and forces of communal life” (quoted phrases in Jonsson 2000, 27).

While taken out of context, these statements, Stefan Jonsson argues, were typical of a dominant discourse during the Weimar Republic. It was a discourse promoted by intellectuals committed to the restoration of a classic *Bildung*, the task of forging a cultural synthesis through the reeducation of the people, “to make them believe in an interior truth or communal essence” (Jonsson 2000, 27). Presumably, it was only through such restoration that the German nation could be saved from its precipitous decline. These intellectuals – Jonsson lists Peters, Stern, Spranger and Fischer - dismissed modernity (e.g., science, specialization, and democracy) because they were convinced that modernity distanced the individual from the internal truth of *Bildung*, thereby blocking him or her from expressing the German national vitality. What was necessary, it seemed to them, was a return to a premodern, authentic interiority, and a restructuring of external reality, so that reconciliation¹² could be achieved (see Jonsson 2000, 41).

It was, presumably, a gendered reconciliation, at least in part. As Gerald Izenberg (2000) has shown, the feminine was appropriated by several early twentieth-century artists (he focuses on Frank Wedekind, Wassily Kandinsky, and Thomas Mann) to subjectively restructure their masculinity, then considered in crisis. Not only did these early twentieth-century European men summon the feminine within to face the perils of industrial society, they demanded that she be outside his psyche as well, *en personne*, at home, waiting for him to return, triumphant. Man’s

victory (and self-fulfillment) was judged incomplete, Jonsson (see 2000, 42) observes, without recognition by the woman (his betrothed or, as Baker notes, his mother: it is, incidentally, his mother who rescues Young Torless from his gendered crisis at the school). Due to her nature presumably, this feminine figure retains a state of innocence, even naiveté, while the male hero has to suffer the knowledge of alienation and struggle before returning home, if now, allegedly, at a higher level of consciousness.

The gendered fantasy of *Bildung* is now realized: the male subject enjoys, and is vitalized by, an expressive-authentic relationship to his life-world and to the world as a totality; his individual self-realization then becomes compatible with socialization (see Jonsson 2000, 53). And more than compatibility between inner and outer is implied, at least for Baker (see 2001, 372); for her, this version of *Bildung* risks the exploitation of the individual by his society as s/he is enfolded into its totality.¹³

Contemporary theorists of Didaktik appear to appreciate the vexed relation between self-formation and society. Klafki (2000a, 94) acknowledges the “limitations” and “mistakes” of such “collective individualities” in German history – he refers to the “conquest, subjection, and extermination of other nations, cultures, peoples” - but these go unspecified. In an apparent reference to the rise of National Socialism in Germany, Klafki (2000a, 104) points out

Bildung degenerated into a stabilizing factor of a class-based society in an authoritarian state; every possibility was also excluded of facing seriously that criticism – raised especially in Marx’s early works – as regards the realities of bourgeois society and the contradictions of its self-interpretation ... including its understanding of education.

While disclaiming a “nationalistic” (2000a, 94) reading of *Bildung*, Klafki’s general point is that these “mistakes” and “limitations” constitute a

“yardstick” for a “critical” perspective he characterizes as “universal-historical” (2000a, 94). At least in this passage, these adjectives seem simultaneously Hegelian and communitarian (see 2000a, 94).

This interpretation is implied in Klafki’s (see 2000a, 95) equation of the general or universal in *Bildung* with those “binding” problems that are “central for us all” and for “generations to come,” the “key problems of our social and individual existence,” insofar as these problems can be “foreseen.” Here the Hegelian elements of Klafki’s view are discernible, as the phenomenology of history seems to settle the matter (although the question of its teleology remains unclear). There is no acknowledgement of how contentious, how unsettled, the matter of “key problems” is, and not only politically. “Above all,” Klafki (2000a, 96) concludes, *Bildung* means “the awakening of self-determined *moral responsibility*, a *readiness for moral action*, and the *capacity for moral action*.” Understood critically, this includes political action, and Klafki (see 2000a, 98) refers specifically to the accelerating environmental crisis, a point, as Noel Gough (2003) has ably demonstrated, on which our internationalizing efforts might well be concentrated.

For Klafki, critical theory becomes the contemporary core of what he terms a critical-constructive Didaktik.¹⁴ In a Klafkian sense, Autio (see 2003, 323), suggests, Didaktik is a historical-hermeneutic conception oriented to the future. For Klafki, self-formation – he specifies “reasonableness, capacity for self-determination, and freedom of thought and action” (2000a, 88) – occurs “*only*” through the study of the world: “*humanity, humankind and humaneness, world, objectivity, the general*” (2000a, 88). For Klafki, these elements of Humboldt’s formula remain intact today.

This “interplay” (von Humbolt 2000 [1793-1794], 60) between self and world occurs subjectively. As noted earlier, Klafki (2000a, 87) posits “creative self-activity” as the “central form” through which the process of

Bildung is conducted. Such self-activity must be focused and, perhaps, even restrained; von Humbolt (2000 [1793-1794], 60), suggests subjective “unity” enables “escape from dissipating and confusing diversity,” diversity here understood as an excess of the world. While *Bildung* occurs subjectively, Klafki (2000a, 88) emphasizes that it is not “subjectivism,” as “creative self-activity” occurs in-the-world.

Hegel stressed the “mediatory structure” of the subjective and the “objectively general” in the process of *Bildung*. Klafki emphasizes this point by quoting Hegel (see 2000a, 92), namely that the subject “comes” through the other (the “other” meaning the objective, the general) “to himself,” to “fundamental reasonableness, to concrete *universality*.” In the process of self-formation, the individual “has” to work off his “mere subjectivity” (Hegel 1952, 269); he “has” to “form himself” according to the world already existing, “to make [himself] according to it” (Hegel 1961, 272, cf. 312f.). This sounds close to conformity¹⁵ to me, but Klafki (2000a, 92) emphasizes not a politically conservative, but a socially progressive, reading of Hegel:

Bildung is possible only in the medium ... of historical objectifications of humanity, of humanness and its conditions, with an orientation to the possibilities of, and obligations to, humanitarian progress.

In Klafki’s critical-constructive Didaktik, the central concepts appear to be individuality, history, and community, particularized in self-formation through intellectual content.

In *Bildung*, the cultivation of personal uniqueness does not occur in isolation but, Klafki emphasizes, only in communication with others. The formation of individuality occurs in communication through processes of recognition (see Klafki 2000a, 93). To this North American ear, Klafki’s emphasis upon communication recalls our conception of curriculum as “complicated conversation” (Pinar 2004, 9), an expansive

definition of curriculum that includes dialogue and recognition, as well as incommunicability and misrecognition.

The Centrality of Teaching

In the trope of *Bildung*-as-education, Baker (2001, 413) tells us, the hero is also the teacher under whose tutelage the boy-child achieves knowledge of self and society, an educational process “determined more by the tutor’s activity than by any notion of organic, unfolding faculties.” The historically key role of the tutor might help explain the emphasis of Didaktik upon instruction and teaching, terms I position as subsidiary to the contemporary concept of curriculum in the U.S. (Pinar 2006a; McClintock 1971). The centrality of instruction and teaching in *Bildung* supports Autio’s (2003, 322-323) characterization of Didaktik as the “constant and critical search for the mode of rationality best suited to contemporary challenges of each time.” Autio (2003) locates this search and the faith in reason it implies in the German Enlightenment and its twentieth-century expressions in German critical theory, but in contrast to the critical theory, he (2006b) worries that Didaktik leaves open the question of who decides what constitutes “contemporary challenges” and what mode of rationality is “best suited” to address them.

Kafki’s “critical-constructive” Didaktik - as located within critical theory, and, specifically, within a Habermasian notion of communicative action - employs reason in the pursuit of egalitarian social practices. For Autio, this employment of reason contrasts with instrumental rationality, and helps explain why, he writes:

the Germans have never felt a burning urge for postmodern discourses which have resulted - as they might see it from their intellectual background - from the critical response to the comprehensive and absurd dominance of instrumental rationality. (Autio 2003, 322)

From my perspective (see Pinar 2006a, chapter 7), the employment of reason to produce future effects – whether social egalitarianism or social hierarchies – constitutes instrumentality.

In this tradition, Autio (2006b) points out, instrumentality is embedded within “the judgmental potentialities of communicative rationality.” In imagining that rationality can ascertain ends as well as means, it can co-opt “democratic conversation” concerning “goals” and “power” by self-interested appeals to rational, indeed “scientific” (in the sense of *Geisteswissenschaften*), and thereby “authoritative understanding of reality.” For Autio, this danger remains a problem with Didaktik, despite its claims to hermeneutics, humanism, and individuality.

As we have seen, *Bildung* functioned in conservative, even reactionary, ways during early decades of the twentieth century. Even with its critical-constructive cast, how does it fare under contemporary historical conditions? Autio (2003, 323) worries *Bildung* risks commodification under contemporary conditions of postmodernity. No longer, he asserts, can we expect *Bildung* to be capable of realizing “edifying cultural potential” (2003, 323), given that culture itself has been thoroughly commercialized. Hiller’s (2000, 209) depiction of teacher education would seem to support Autio’s point:

The education industry has in recent years been publishing more handbooks for teachers, which evidently sell better if they are presented as series of well-designed lesson crib sheets, increasingly forcing teachers out of their role as instructional designers and claiming them as engineers for learning processes, schooled in communication psychology and motivation theory. This commercialization and vulgarization of educational culture with its reductive instrumentalization of teaching to the management of learning constitutes a crisis shared by Didaktik and by U.S. curriculum studies alike.

Autio (2003, 326) describes the reconceptualized curriculum field in the U.S. as “as an up-dated - postmodern - theory of *Bildung*.” Certainly there is a resonance between our respective emphasis upon self-formation, in the U.S. through studies of autobiography and, in Europe, through Didaktik’s embrace of *Bildung*. Self-formation through the academic disciplines self-consciously situated in society at particular historical moments constitutes what I have called *currere*, the lived experience of curriculum. While I privilege study, not instruction, as the primary means of such self-formation, the structure of the educational process is not entirely dissimilar, as other scholars have observed.¹⁶

Internationalization

Tero Autio (2003, 326) argues that our project – enabling the “complicated conversation” that is the internationalization of curriculum studies – consists not in making connections between our “own discipline and another discipline [and] seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary.” Instead, drawing upon Richard Rorty, Autio (2003, 326) calls for what he terms the “inverse” of hermeneutics, reinterpreting our own disciplinary surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of new disciplinary inventions.¹⁷ This is not a “constructive” activity, he suggests, in that it builds upon what we already know. Rather, such an inverted hermeneutics is “abnormal” and, as such, promises “to aid us in becoming new beings” (Rorty, 1980, p. 360; quoted in Autio 2003, 326). Is this a postmodern reformulation of *Bildung* or the prerequisite to a post-*Bildung*, post-Didaktik conception of European curriculum studies (see Autio 2006a)?

In his notion of an inverted hermeneutics, Autio names one aspiration of the internationalization of curriculum studies, at least as I have participated in it myself and have imagined its potential for my colleagues in the U.S. In our encounter with those whose national cultures render their conceptions of curriculum paradigmatically

incommensurate (Brown 1988) with our own, what and how we know – including our very subjective structuration of knowledge – can be reconstructed. This is akin to what Hongyu Wang (2004; Pinar 2006c) theorizes as the educational potential of “exile” and “estrangement.” For Wang, this potential resides in a “third space” – neither in China nor in the U.S. where she studied Foucault and Kristeva but somewhere between – that renders the familiar strange, the self as other. Such educational experience – without that centered and unified subject “whose individual *Bildung* was long assumed to be its telos” – leads, Martin Jay (2006, 260) suggests, to “songs of experience composed in a new and different key.” That last phrase reminds of us of the landmark contribution of the Canadian curriculum theorist Ted Aoki (2005 [1978]), whose performance of the auditory turn enabled us to hear curriculum inquiry in a new key, transporting us to a third space.

Such a space, neither in one’s homeland nor elsewhere – in Tampere perhaps, for those of us who traveled here for this historic conference (I thank Eero Ropo and Tero Autio for drawing us together in Finland) – affords us some distance from the everyday, that site and structure of disciplinary society in late modernity. Gathering together in Tampere may enable us to hear curriculum inquiry in an international key. Upon our return home, let us invite our colleagues, including our schoolteacher colleagues and university students, to join us in the internationalization of curriculum studies. As we participate in this present moment, let us recall our important inaugural meeting in 2003 in Shanghai, China (for which we owe thanks to Professors Zhang and Zhong and members of the Coordinating Committee) as well as look forward to our 2009 meeting in Pretoria, South Africa (for which we owe thanks to Professor and Dean Jonathon Jansen).

The constitution of community was, for Foucault, “an important, even a fundamental” stage “of the struggle to invent new forms of existence and to invent new styles of life” (Eribon 2004, 328). Creating

such culture was, for Foucault, aesthetic, yes. But it was clear from the interviews he gave toward the end of his life that for him such culture is characterized as well by emotional and political structures that enable us “to escape from the much more serious looming danger of the rigors of the norm and of the totality of a ‘disciplinary’ society” (Eribon 2004, 328). Without escape from the social totality of our daily institutional lives, creating culture, a counter educational culture, cannot occur.

During our time together in Tampere, through our year-round virtual encounters with colleagues at, for instance, the IAACS website (my thanks to web-managers Jacques Daignault and Renee Fountain), perhaps we can think of our own, and not only our students’, self-formation. Despite the corrosive effects of commercialization, despite the complicity of universities and schools in that degradation of character commodification compels, we can focus, for the moment, upon our own *Bildung*. Perhaps we can use our encounters with each other not only to report our own work, faithful to our own national cultures and theoretical programs, but also to allow ourselves to go into temporary exile, to undergo estrangement from what is familiar and everyday and enter a third space, neither home nor abroad, but in-between, a liminal or third space that, in von Humboldt’s (2000 [1793-1794], 60) words, “makes possible the interplay between his receptivity and his self-activity.” In this interplay can occur the internationalization of curriculum studies.

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1. This dialogue could be said to have been initiated by Professor Bjorg Gudem of the University of Oslo by convening a 1995 conference on North American curriculum studies and Didaktik: see Gudem and Hoppman 2002.
2. There are terminological differences as well: Peter Menck (see 2000, 181-182) distinguishes among curriculum theory (*Lehrplantheorie*), subject-matter didactics, Didaktik analysis, and the lifeworld of children. The more inclusive definition of curriculum in the U.S. field – as “complicated conversation” (Pinar et al. 1995, 848) – might subsume Didaktik within it.
3. Ian Westbury (2000, 27) tells us that “Didaktik provides models of teacher thinking,” but in the Hopmann-Riquarts collection, these are implied only.
4. Hopmann and Riquarts (2000, 7) point to the “fragmentation” in U.S. curriculum studies, specifically the separation of curriculum from pedagogy; such a division is, they tell us, “fundamentally opposed” to the “holistic approach” of Didaktik. Due to this fragmentation, they continue, “content was lost in American curriculum studies.” While pedagogy is not separated from curriculum in the U.S. tradition (see Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 13), they are not, in my view, completely mistaken on this point, and I have, in recent years, offered one example (see Pinar 2001, 2006a, b) of the reincorporation of “content” in curriculum studies. The example Hopmann and Riquarts cite – Shulman’s “pedagogical content” knowledge – does not, in my view, accomplish the reincorporation of content to curriculum studies but, instead, elides the binary. See footnote 8.
5. In reviewing a draft of this paper, Tero Autio (2006b) found the term “contribution” to be “ironical.” Didaktik’s “extraction” from general educational theory, he points out, coincided its being embedded in the “bureaucratic-administrative controls of the

- nation state, veiling its bureaucratic-administrative function by claims to disciplinary legitimacy. As for Herbartianism, Autio claims it reduced the complexity of education to “proceduralism” and instrumentality, rationalizing sequence that, in the U.S. context, became behaviorialized. In his 2006 Presidential Address to the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, Autio suggested that bureaucratic-administrative control became restated, in the U.S., as the prediction of behavior.
6. There is, of course, no one American curriculum tradition, a fact belied by the use of “the” in the Hoppman-Riquarts’ sentence. The only specific reference they make to “the” U.S. field is to “Mager or Bruner” (2000, 9), two quite different, even adversarial, intellectual traditions within U.S. curriculum studies. Curiously, we are told that certain German scholars thought the U.S. field “far ahead” of the German one, and just as Schwab pronounced the U.S. field “moribund” (Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 4; see Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 8).
 7. Künzli and Horton-Krüger (2000, 42) write that the consequences of the “affair” with U.S. curriculum studies was that “German Didaktik became ideologically suspect and considered outdated.”
 8. The reference Hopmann and Riquarts make here (see 2000,10) is to that work of two Americans (Lee Shulman and Walter Doyle) and of one Israeli scholar, Miriam Ben-Peretz. The distinctions among the works of these three seem stronger than their similarities: it is not obvious how they are “dealing with the same set of questions” (Hopmann and Riquarts 2000, 10). There are no footnotes to the work of these three scholars, but in his 1992 handbook chapter, Walter Doyle focuses on the institutionalization of teaching in the U.S., specifically, how the construal of teaching as classroom management has eclipsed the curriculum as topic of public debate and educational research, rendering curriculum invisible.

Shulman (1986), too, focused on the eclipse of curriculum by teaching; he is famous for his concept of “pedagogical content knowledge” (1987), which attends to the subject matter of teachers and, more specifically, to the knowledge teachers require to convey subject matter to students. It is, he suggests, that mix of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers. Teachers’ own particular form of professional understanding includes, he asserts, a) knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and b) knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures, and c) knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. Shulman’s model focuses more on the first rather than the second modifier in his concept, except insofar as pedagogy is regarded as an order of content. Gudmundsdottir, Reinersten, and Nordtomme (see 2000, 319) also link Klafki and Shulman as “working theoretically with concrete and practical issues.” That is a rather general link, indeed.

Of the three scholars Hopmann and Riquarts cite (see 2000, 10; Gudmundsdottir, Reinersten, and Nordtomme [see 2000, 320] reference her work as well), Miriam Ben-Peretz (1990, xv) affords teachers the most active role in the formulation of content: “To sum up [her view]: teachers are encouraged to see their major role in the partnership of curriculum development as that of informed and creative interpreters who are prepared to reflect on their curriculum and to reconstruct it.” Her subsequent work focused almost exclusively on teachers, including teachers’ memories of teaching (1995) and their experience of the teachers’ lounge (2000). From my experience at an Israeli National Curriculum Conference, chaired by Professor Saul Feinberg (and at which Professor Ben-Peretz spoke), held in Jerusalem in February 2005, I would venture

to say that Miriam Ben Peretz is regarded by many as the dean of Israeli curriculum studies.

9. I am referring to the autobiographical tradition in North American curriculum studies (Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 10). I choose “resonance” to emphasize the fact that there is no simple correspondence of the two traditions’ interest in self-formation through educational experience, a point amplified by Autio in his review of this manuscript.

Autio (2006b) begins by underlining Klafki’s use of Herbart’s “apperceptive mass” in the passage I have quoted, but in a “mechanical” way, in which he seems to assume that “content itself” has “organizing power,” implying that we know how consciousness works or, more probably (in Autio’s judgment), that consciousness is secondary in Klafki’s formulation. In *Didaktik*, Autio continues, the subjective suffers a subsidiary even “subjugated” position; what is important is outside subjectivity, the content, wherein characteristics of subjectivity are, presumably installed. He concludes that the emphasis upon content in *Didaktik* implies that the locus of determination resides outside the subjectively existing individual. Individuality is defined in “collectivist terms” – as “humanity” – that is to be realized in individual ways. Autio’s analysis is, in general, shared by Daniel Tröhler (see 2003, 759), who notes that, especially in early twentieth-century conceptions of *Bildung*, “the individual person can perfect himself only in the framework of the typical characteristics of his *Volk* – the German *Volk*.” Especially in my conception of *currere*, the individual’s study of his or her self-formation requires skepticism toward the national culture and character (see Pinar 2004).

10. This phrase recall William Heard Kilpatrick’s (1918) emphasis on the educational project as providing an opportunity for “creative self-activity.”

11. Klafki (see 2000a, 89) acknowledges the gendered dimension of the classical concept of *Bildung*.
12. Autio (2006b) underscores the nostalgia and detachment from, even aversion to, history implicit in such “reconciliation.” I have stressed the interiority of education (Pinar 1994), and its relation to the external restructuring of reality (Pinar 2004), but I conclude not with “reconciliation” but “reparation” (Pinar 2006b). In the politically polarized America of George W. Bush, I inflect the “synthetical” moment of the method of *currere* as “self-mobilization.” This represents no “reconciliation” with an archaic past, of course. Rather, “synthesis” is the final (if recursive) moment or phase in an ongoing regressive-progressive-analytic-synthetic social and self-understanding enabling social reconstruction through study (Pinar 2006a).
13. This is a crucial difference in emphasis from Klafki’s contemporary concept of “co-determination” (see, also, Autio 2003, 322).
14. Klafki (see 2000b, 141) tells us that his study of the Frankfurt School (he lists Adorno, Horkheimer, and Habermas) as well as his ongoing dialogue with theorists committed to revising traditional German pedagogy led him, from the late 1960s onward, enabled him to theorize a “crucial constructive science of education” and, within this framework, a system of “critical-constructive Didaktik.” In this phrasing, “critical” is to be understood in the sense of “social criticism.” In terms of Didaktik, Klafki explains, this implies “constant reflection on the relations between school and instruction on the one hand (their goals, contents, forms of organization, and methods) and social conditions and processes on the other.” The concept of “constructive” indicates an emphasis on practice, and on “reform.”

Klafki is, of course, not alone in emphasizing the link between Didaktik and progressive democratic politics. For example, Karsten Schnack (see 2003, 272) understands *Bildung* as closely linked to democracy: “Democracy without *Bildung* is merely an empty shell,” he writes. Without democracy, Schnack continues, echoing the critique of aestheticism Jonsson summarizes, “democracy is reduced to what the leaders of the hour have defined as highbrow culture and good manners.”

15. Conformity implies non-thinking acceptance of the status quo, while its conscious “cousin” – solidarity - implies self-chosen, self-critical, and self-conscious participation in a common cause, an important distinction to be sure, but one that can fade in (especially political) practice. In his discussion of Klafki’s critical-constructive Didaktik and its commitment to egalitarian social practice, Autio (2003, 323) posits “solidarity as a precondition of egalitarian practice,” a notion, he tells us, based on “the moral conviction intrinsic to the very meaning of *Bildung*.” Such moral conviction recalls, Autio continues, the classic notion of “general *Bildung for all*, as the right of every person, without qualitative or quantitative gradations in status determined by social origins or future positions in society” (Klafki, 2000, p. 103), or as in Humboldt, “that each and every person, even the poorest, should receive a complete education” (ibid., p. 89; both passages quoted in Autio 2003, 323). The slippery slide from solidarity to conformity can be demonstrated by reference to the key issues of academic or intellectual freedom.

U.S. teachers appreciate the constraints on their intellectual freedom installed by local – and federal - political interests, especially, politically conservative interests. In Germany, Weniger (2000 [1952], 119) allows that while there is a “danger” associated with an “omnipotent state pedagogy,” the “freedom” of pedagogy is

most strongly “guaranteed” by the state. Even a cursory historical review recommends qualification of that statement. Certainly one cannot trust the Administration of U.S. President George W. Bush to protect academic freedom; indeed, the legislated foreclosure of such freedom is nightmarishly evident (see Pinar 2004).

16. Klafki (see 2000b, 142) makes this social definition explicit in his concept of instructional planning, wherein teaching and learning are understood as processes of interaction, that is, as processes in which relationships between people – between teachers and learners and between the learners themselves – play a central role. These processes must therefore be comprehended not only as processes of acquisition in which subject matter and problems are confronted, but also as social processes or processes of social learning. Certainly this is one sense of the U.S. concept of curriculum as “complicated conversation.”

16. Willem Wardekker and his colleagues see the apparent similarity. In fact, they suggest that this similarity is the reason Dutch scholars have had little interest in the reconceptualized U.S. field: “We end this section by noting that a reconceptualization of curriculum thinking, as advocated in the U.S. by Pinar, has not found many adherents in the Netherlands, probably because it is perceived in a way as too reminiscent of the outmoded paradigm of *Bildungstheorie*” (Wardekker, Volman, and Terwel 2003, 488). This is a mistaken reading, however, as the differences between (especially) autobiographical studies and *Bildung* tradition are several and striking. Most prominent among them, perhaps, is the politically assertive, even antagonistic, character of curriculum conceived as *currere*, in contrast to the tendency, at least historically, of *Bildung* to coincide with, not contest, politically conservative conceptions of German culture and nationhood. “Politicization of the German person,” Tröhler (2003,

760) writes, “had to take place in the context of *Volksstaat*, not in democracy. To be free meant the embedding of the individual into the harmonious beauty of the whole.”

17. Autio’s notion of an inverted hermeneutic resonates with Patrick Slattery’s (2003, 652) depiction of a postmodern hermeneutic, “grounded in aesthetic experience and poststructural subjectivity” while “attentive to the Aristotelian sense of *applicato*.” Slattery (2003, 652) continues:

An educational experience which incorporates *Bildung* — without separating learning from its application to oneself as happens in technical, managerial, and behavioral models — encourages interpretation within lived world experiences and intersubjective contexts. It is here that forms of self-encounter emerge where various human communities are imaginatively engaged in individual and social transformation; where administrators and educators – management and labor – all recognize and act upon their mutual needs as well as the broader interests of the environment and marginalized global societies; where teachers and students are aesthetically present to subject matter rather than assuming they possess it and can manipulate it in decontextualized projects. (Slattery 2003, 652)

This is *Bildung* with a Messianic – in Walter Benjamin’s sense (see Wolin 1982) – inflection.

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