GENERATIVE TENSIONALITY:
INTELLECTUAL WORKS OF TED TETSUO AOKI

by

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Abstract

The intellectual odyssey of a scholar can be complex and dynamic, especially when such an odyssey was lived within the juxtapositions of linguistics, cultural dynamics and intellectual traditions. Ted Tetsuo Aoki was a cadet in the Canadian Officer Training Corps, but was forced into exile in his Canadian homeland during the Second World War. He was an important Canadian curriculum theorist and a dear, lifelong, mentor to many students. He was a strong critic of the division between theory and practice, and of the binary between East and West. Who was this man who lived and provoked these contrasting dynamics? What were the main concepts explored in his works? In what ways were these concepts significant in the field of education and curriculum studies? What was the uniqueness that surged from and through his thinking and writings over time?

While keeping these questions in the periphery of this Aoki focused study, I first attend to the question of the historical present that juxtaposes history, society and subjectivity, specifically within contemporary Canadian curriculum studies, to situate Aoki’s intellectual life. Further in responding to the specificity of Aoki’s scholarship, I attend to the interwoven, dynamic and poetic essence of Aoki’s intellectual formation and life history and especially the prominent influence of phenomenology and Martin Heidegger’s writings. By contextualizing Aoki’s narrations on his momentous life events, I engage with Aoki’s critical reflective and unique style of theorizing, and I suggest that understanding, for Aoki, is a mode of being-in-the-world, which reveals pedagogical significance.

By delving into Aoki’s main concepts and selected writings from Heidegger, I find, Aoki, in his writings, reflects Heidegger’s critical position of constantly pointing out the conceptual assumptions and philosophical blind spots in the wor(l)d of instrumentalism. By returning to the
ontological ground of humanness, articulating the particularity in phenomenon and dwelling poetically in the hermeneutic imagination that calls for the self-identified subjectivity, theorizing for Aoki, I suggest, *is* poetic dwelling as human being-in-the-world.
Lay Summary

Ted Tetsuo Aoki (1919 – 2012) is an influential Canadian curriculum scholar whose publications and public lectures impacted the field of curriculum studies and the discipline of education in Canada and transnationally. In this Aoki focused research, I attend to the interwoven, dynamic and poetic quality of Aoki’s intellectual formation and life history and especially the prominent influence of phenomenology and Martin Heidegger’s writings. Through a careful examination of a pivotal curriculum scholar’s life and work within its historical, societal and intellectual context, I believe this dissertation enriches our understanding of the present situation in the field of curriculum studies. Furthermore, the articulation of Aoki’s intellectual life history and the significance of his scholarship advances knowledge and an appreciation of the national distinctiveness of the field of Canadian curriculum studies.
Preface

This dissertation is original, independent work by the author, Patricia Fu-Hui Liu Baergen. Some passages in Chapter 5, section 5.1 – “Return to Research Questions” – have been published previously. Liu Baergen, P. (2018). Theorizing as Poetic Dwelling: An Intellectual Link between Ted Aoki and Martin Heidegger. In Hasebe-Ludt, E. & Leggo, C. (Eds.). Canadian Curriculum Studies: A Métissage of Inspiration / Imagination / Interconnection (pp. 141-150). Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars. These passages have been reworded and rearranged for this dissertation.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii

Lay Summary ................................................................................................................................... v

Preface ............................................................................................................................................... vi

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................... vii

List of Figures .................................................................................................................................. xi

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... xii

Dedication .......................................................................................................................................... xiv

Chapter 1: Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Why Study the Intellectual Works of Ted Tetsuo Aoki? ......................................................... 1

1.2 Research Questions ..................................................................................................................... 4

1.3 Organization and Overview of Chapters ...................................................................................... 6

1.4 Illuminating the Path of Contemporary Canadian Curriculum Studies ................................. 8

1.4.1 Present Circumstances: As Canadian as Possible ................................................................. 8

1.4.2 The Very “Idea” of Canadian Curriculum Studies ............................................................... 13

1.5 Historical Present ......................................................................................................................... 17

1.5.1 Theoretic Dimensions of Curriculum: Reflections on the Canada Studies Foundations Curriculum Development ........................................................................................................... 17

1.5.2 The Political and Philosophical Threads: Nationalism, Canadian Studies and the Canadianization Movement ................................................................................................................................. 22

1.5.3 A Canadian Approach to Curriculum Development ............................................................ 27

1.5.4 Concerns about Canadian Studies and Curriculum Development ........................................ 30

1.5.5 Whose Culture? Whose Heritage? ........................................................................................ 32
Chapter 2: Understanding as a Mode of Being .................................................................37
  2.1 Introduction ..............................................................................................................37
  2.2 Being A Mixed-Up Hybrid Kid (1919-1932) ..........................................................41
    2.2.1 Childhood in Cumberland (1919-1932) ..........................................................41
    2.2.2 Questioning the Meaning of Being .................................................................43
  2.3 Experiencing the Dialectic of the Individual Being and Social Being (1932-1943) ....45
    2.3.1 Being an Ahistorical Black Head in Japan? .....................................................45
    2.3.2 Being a Historical Black Head in Canada? .......................................................48
    2.3.3 Dasein, Mode of Encounter and Its Temporality ..............................................49
  2.4 Being the Homeless at Home ..................................................................................54
    2.4.1 Being in a Bewildering School Day – A Story of June Aoki (1941-1942) .........54
    2.4.2 Being and Becoming a Teacher in Alberta (1944-1964) .................................57
  2.5 Being-in-the-World as Dwelling with Sakura-Rose (1964-1978) ............................61
    2.5.1 Being a Professor at UBC (1975-1978) ..........................................................61
  2.6 Summary Note ........................................................................................................62

  3.1 Introduction ..............................................................................................................67
  3.2 Voices of Teacher Educators: Doctoral Dissertation (1969) ..................................69
  3.3 Curriculum in a New Key (1964-1979) ..................................................................73
    3.3.1.1 Curriculum Inquiry – National Perspective .................................................73
    3.3.1.2 Curriculum Evaluation in a New Key ...........................................................78
    3.3.2 Curriculum Inquiry – A Cross-Border Perspective .........................................85
  3.4 Critiquing Instrumentalism (1981-1987) .................................................................88
3.4.1 Bridging as Two Ways of Knowing (1981) ................................................................. 88
3.4.2 Questioning the Notions of Implementation and Competence (1983) .............. 95
3.4.3 Questioning the Notion of Application (1987) ....................................................... 100
  3.5.1 First Appearance: Curriculum-as-Plan and Curriculum-as-Lived (1985) ....... 107
  3.5.2 Teaching as Indwelling between Two Curriculum Worlds (1986) ................. 110
3.6 Summary Note ............................................................................................................. 113

Chapter 4: Poetic Wisdom (1987-2003) ........................................................................ 120

  4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 120
  4.2 Language as House of Being .................................................................................. 122
    4.2.1 Dialectic of Mother and Second Languages (1987) ............................................ 122
    4.2.2 The Notion of Identity (1987) ........................................................................... 130
    4.2.3 Striving for the Secret Places of the Soul (1989) ............................................. 134
  4.3 Poetic Thinking ....................................................................................................... 139
    4.3.1 Listening to the Sound of Pedagogy in Silence of the Morning Calm (1990) .... 139
    4.3.2 Tasting Multicultural Curriculum as Multi-Flavored Nourishment (1990) ....... 146
    4.3.3 Hearing Curriculum on a Jazz Note (1991b) ...................................................... 152
  4.4 Theorizing as Poetic Dwelling .................................................................................. 158
    4.4.1 Dwelling in the Midst of Double Imaginaries (1996) ........................................ 158
    4.4.2 Dwelling in Language, Culture, Curriculum and Metonymic Moments (2000) 163
  4.5 Summary Note ........................................................................................................ 167

Chapter 5: Point of Returning ......................................................................................... 170

  5.1 Return to Research Questions .................................................................................. 170
List of Figures

Figure 2-1 From left to right, brothers, Tats, Harry and Ted. Image released by Cumberland Museum and Archives .......................................................... 41

Figure 2-2 Mr. & Mrs. Aoki center back row and students in front of Japanese Language School, Cumberland. Image released by Cumberland Museum and Archives................................................. 42

Figure 2-3 Calligraphy at the Japanese Language School. Image released by Cumberland Museum Archives. ........................................................................................................ 45
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Dedication

To my loving parents and my dedicated husband.

To my teacher whom I have never met – Ted Tetsuo Aoki
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Why Study the Intellectual Works of Ted Tetsuo Aoki?

Aoki is a Canadian scholar, uniquely so. To be grasped in terms of Canadian intellectual life, his work must be situated within Canadian history and culture, specifically, within Canadian curriculum studies.

(Pinar, 2005, p. xv)

The intellectual odyssey of a scholar can be complex and dynamic, especially when such an odyssey was lived within the juxtapositions of linguistics, cultural dynamics and intellectual traditions. Ted Tetsuo Aoki was a cadet in the Canadian Officer Training Corps, but was forced into exile in his Canadian homeland during the Second World War. He was an important Canadian curriculum theorist and a dear, lifelong, mentor to many students. He was a strong critic of the division between theory and practice, and of the binary between East and West. Who was this man who lived and provoked these contrasting dynamics? What were the main concepts explored in his works? In what ways were these concepts significant in the field of education and curriculum studies? What was the uniqueness that surged from and through his thinking and writings over time?

Ted Tetsuo Aoki (henceforth Aoki), who lived from October 17th, 1919 to August 31st, 2012, was an influential Canadian scholar, and his publications and public lectures from the late 1960s onward “shaped the field of curriculum studies and the discipline of education in significant ways in Canada, North America and international contexts” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2014, p. xiii). Cynthia Chambers (2003), a Canadian curriculum scholar, considers Aoki “has made the journey through almost all the contemporary curriculum discourses in Canada” (p. 237). William F. Pinar (2005), a pivotal curriculum scholar for the American curriculum reconceptualization movement, regards Aoki’s works “enormously erudite…and his leadership in the effort to understand curriculum phenomenologically is legendary” (p. xv). Pinar (2005) further notes that
Aoki’s “brilliance as a pedagogue is inextricably interwoven with his brilliance as a scholar and theoretician” (p. xv). Aoki is also remembered for his “extraordinary generosity” (p. 1) as a mentor to his students, emphasized by Max van Manen (2012), a well-known phenomenological curriculum scholar and former doctoral student of Aoki’s. As a mentor, Aoki’s “generosity was revealed especially in his discernment of positive potential in even the most ordinary for us [his students], nurturing it to bear fruit,” (p. 1) recalled David Geoffrey Smith (2012), also a former doctoral student of Aoki’s and later a hermeneutical curriculum scholar. Aoki’s scholarship, mentorship and leadership influenced and inspired “generations of curriculum scholars, students, teachers and administrators” (Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2014, p. xiv).

I was first inspired by Aoki’s works in 2011. It was during the last semester of the Master of Education program at the University of Ottawa where I first encountered Ted Aoki’s works. His works collected in a volume titled Curriculum in a New Key (2005), edited by William Pinar and Rita Irwin, is a book that still resonates with me. As a Taiwanese-Canadian, I have lived, studied and worked in Taiwan, Switzerland and Canada and Aoki’s unique way of “theorizing” in the juxtaposition of linguistic and cultural dynamics and thinking in-between intellectual traditions reflect much of my own lived experiences that embody my innerwordly being. In particular, Aoki’s intellectual attunement to his dramatic life events opened the door for me to see, to listen and to contemplate the pedagogical significance of lived experiences. It seemed clear to me then that one should consider how life experiences and intellectual influences contribute to the works of a scholar. Also, Aoki’s critical stance in thinking curriculum and pedagogy arises in the midst of tensions between different wisdom traditions and his distinctive ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutic approach provoked my interest in the continental philosopher, Martin Heidegger’s writings. This dissertation is a study of Aoki’s main concepts
and an exploration of Aoki’s thinking in relation to selected works of Martin Heidegger.

Aoki was born in Cumberland, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. His family was evacuated from British Columbia to Alberta after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1942. This momentous life event, among others, became a significant point that provoked Aoki’s thinking and enriched his intellectual odyssey – an odyssey informed by both oriental and continental philosophy. Ultimately, British Columbia and Alberta became two prominent geographical hubs of Aoki’s intellectual life and academic career. As mentioned previously, this dissertation is a study of Aoki’s intellectual life history and as Pinar (2005) points out, to be able to “grasp” Aoki’s intellectual life, “his work must be situated within Canadian history and culture, specifically within Canadian curriculum studies” (p. xv). Responding to Pinar’s calling, in this chapter, section 4 and 5, I attend to the situatedness of Aoki’s intellectual life history within the rich and diverse intellectual trends of contemporary Canadian curriculum studies.

To situate Aoki’s intellectual works within the contemporary Canadian curriculum studies, I return to the question of the historical present that juxtaposes history, society and subjectivity. In Pinar’s 2003 *International Handbook of Curriculum Research*, Canadian curriculum scholar Cynthia Chambers traces the historical present of Canadian curriculum research. In her article, “‘As Canadian as Possible Under the Circumstance:’ A View of Contemporary Curriculum Discourses in Canada,” Chambers (2003) points out that Canada is a settler’s, colonized, land that carries “a linguistic and political complexity that lives on today” (p. 222). Curriculum remains the responsibility of the country’s ten provinces and three territories. Thus, regionalism continues to mark the Canadian educational imagination. There is a strong link between “curriculum and place” (Chambers 2003, p. 221), and as such the field of Canadian curriculum studies is characterized by “both historical and intellectual pro/vocations of
a Canadian topography” (Ng-A-Fook, 2012, p. 5) (see also Chambers, 2003; Maleswski, 2010; Gibson, 2012; Hasbe-Ludt & Hurren, 2014; Ng-A-Fook & Rottmann, 2012; Stanley & Young, 2011; Hasebe-Ludt & Leggo, 2018). Therefore, an in-depth study of a prominent scholar’s works from a particular region can reflect and illustrate such a topography and history, hinting at a greater significance of the Canadian curriculum studies field.

Through an inquiry into the historical and political background of the intellectual texts of this scholar, I seek to articulate and illuminate Aoki’s primary thinking and the field of curriculum studies within a situated time and place. Aoki was a prominent curriculum scholar among those pushing back against the trend of instrumental language of school curriculum developers and policymakers across Canada, and he questioned the “general recognition of the epistemological limit-situation” that is “encased” in curriculum research (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 94). Aoki focused his intellectual works on re-conceptualizing the notion of curriculum, and notably contributed to the phenomenology formation of Canadian curriculum studies. Accordingly, this Aoki-focused research intends to contribute to the knowledge in the field of curriculum studies nationally and internationally, as it “privileges the meanings of lived experiences for situated personhood that goes beyond the totalizing abstraction of identity politics” (Pinar, 2009, as cited in Wang, 2009, p. 38). The implications of researching the specificity and situated-ness of a scholar’s intellectual history enable us to understand the past and how we arrived at where we are in the field of Canadian curriculum studies.

1.2 Research Questions

There are rich and detailed studies about the history of North American curriculum reconceptualization (Huber, 1981; Miller, 1979; Schubert, 1980, 1986; Mazza, 1982; Benham, 1981; Pinar, 1988a, 1988b; Jackson, 1992; Lincoln, 1992). However, research focusing on the
scholarship of principle figures in the movement is limited. In Canada, scholarly studies of the histories of curriculum theory are very limited in number (Tomkin, 1986/2008; Gidney, 1999; Clark, 2011). In addition, these works are not primarily studies of the intellectual works of a curriculum scholar.

More specifically, the interwoven, complex, dynamic and poetic essence of Aoki’s intellectual formation and life history – especially the prominent influence of phenomenology and Martin Heidegger’s writings on Aoki’s scholarship – has lacked attention. Phenomenology later became a prominent intellectual strand as “a form of critique of the instrumental language of curriculum” (Chambers, 2003, p. 225) in the “reconceptualization of curriculum studies” of the 1970s (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 419) in North America. This was often attributed to the influence of curriculum theorists such as Dwayne Huebner, who introduced phenomenology in 1967 at an Ohio State University Curriculum Theory Conference (Pinar & Reynolds, 1995). In Canada, as Chambers (2003) indicates, “most of the phenomenological research in curriculum has occurred at the University of Alberta” (p. 225). Aoki and his students Max van Manen, Kenneth Jacknicke and Terrence Carson have contributed greatly in “institutionalizing” (Chambers, 2003, p. 225) this European intellectual tradition in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. Given its influence, the field of phenomenological curriculum studies warrants greater attention.

Recent publications by Magrini (2014, 2015) began to reference the connections between “ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutics” and the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical essays of curriculum theorists such as Dwayne Huebner and William F. Pinar in the United States and Max van Manen and Ted Aoki in Canada. While appreciating Magrini’s treatise, I also want to point out that Magrini’s research is not an exclusive study of a particular scholar’s
life works. Thus, this dissertation anchors itself in Aoki’s intellectual life history specifically within Canadian history and culture, and the field of Canadian curriculum studies. In this dissertation, I broadly engage with the following research questions:

- What are the main concepts explored in Aoki’s lifetime of work, and can we associate them with his life history?
- In what ways does Aoki draw upon the phenomenological tradition, especially Martin Heidegger’s writings, in forming his critical reflective and poetic style of theorizing?

1.3 Organization and Overview of Chapters

The primary life works of Aoki are collected in the *Curriculum in a New Key* (2005) and the book is organized thematically. However, in this intellectual life history focused dissertation, I follow Aoki’s life works in chronological time periods, for several reasons: 1) to trace the specificity and situated-ness of a scholar’s intellectual past and how we arrived at where we are within the particular intellectual trends in the field of Canadian curriculum studies, and to indicate that a chronological study of a scholar’s intellectual life history can be educational; 2) to affirm that personhood is situated in history, place and culture, and to underscore that the trajectory of life may influence thoughts; 3) to study Aoki’s intellectual concerns, concepts and the ways these concepts came to be articulated and transformed over time. In addition, the title of each chapter suggests the significance of Aoki’s thinking during each particular era.

Chapter 1: Introduction presents an argument for the question, “Why study the works of Aoki?” In addition, it provides a rationale for the emphasis of this dissertation on the specificity and the situated-ness of a scholar’s intellectual history. The historical analysis of curriculum movements during the late 1960s-1970s, predominantly in Western Canada, enables us to understand the past, and how we arrived at where we are. Furthermore, this chapter emphasizes
culturally specific self-consciousness in relation to both local and cross-border contexts. For example, it could be argued that while the progressive development of technology is merging borders, it comes at the expense of self-conscious individual differences and distinct intellectual traditions. In some ways, this chapter addresses nationally specific situations and illustrates how personhood is embodied in the larger social, cultural and political space. As such, life and thoughts can be enhanced or disrupted.

Chapter 2: Understanding as Mode of Being contextualizes Aoki’s early writings. To articulate the interdependence of life and thoughts, I draw primarily from Aoki’s (1979) early writing, “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity,” to first give a portrayal of Aoki’s childhood, adolescence and early career as a teacher after his internment in Alberta during World War II. Also, to illuminate the ontological-phenomenological characteristic in Aoki’s approach to narrative, I engage with Aoki’s critical reflective and unique style of theorizing and the significance of this style of theorizing in relation to Heidegger’s ontological-phenomenological analysis of Dasein. I proffer that understanding, for Aoki, is a mode of being in the world, which reveals its pedagogical significance.

Chapter 3: Polyphonic Sounds of Pedagogy discusses the main concepts explored in Aoki’s work from 1964 to 1987, and also the ways in which these concepts came to be articulated and transformed over time. I open with comments on Aoki’s master’s thesis (1964) and a review of his 1969 doctoral dissertation. This empirically grounded research of Aoki’s doctoral dissertation, I suggest, is a point of departure for Aoki from the empirical research to seek methodological alternatives. In addition, his guiding research question that focused on the inner attitudes of teachers’ “belief” and “disbelief,” I also suggest, was foreshadowing his later emphasis on lived experience. Thereafter, I contextualize Aoki’s publications in a chronological
order primarily from 1978 to 1987, and I examine the main concepts that Aoki explored during this era, particularly his consistent criticism of instrumentalism approach in understanding curriculum and its relation to Heidegger’s critique of technology in modernity. Lastly, Aoki’s turn to the lifeworld of teachers and students – an ontological-phenomenological approach in understanding the phenomena of curriculum-as-lived. The distinctiveness of language that Aoki used to lure the readers to see, to hear and to attune to his polyphonic sounds of pedagogy is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Poetic Wisdom discusses Aoki’s writings from 1987 to the new millennium. To further explore the “is-ness” of curriculum, in this era, Aoki’s language became increasingly poetic and hermeneutical. It is an exploration that Heidegger (1947) describes with the phrase: “language, the house of being” (p. 12).

Chapter 5: Point of Returning returns to the research questions summarizing how the research has helped me to answer the research questions I put forth. I also discuss the possible directions for new lines of research in Canadian curriculum studies and I conclude with an invitation for future research.

1.4 Illuminating the Path of Contemporary Canadian Curriculum Studies

1.4.1 Present Circumstances: As Canadian as Possible

Regionalism...is as important a part of the Canadian imaginary as is nationalism and internationalism.

(Cameron, 1997, as cited in Chambers, 2003, p. 221)

Curriculum is many things to many people.

(Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 94)

Canada is a vast, multi-national state with many regions and various Indigenous peoples; it is a country born of colonialism, accommodating Asian immigrants on the West coast and African American refugees in the Eastern and Central provinces. Inheriting this history of
colonialism and situated between geopolitical themes, Canadians are often led to think of what is happening over “there” – in England, France and America – as always having been more important than what is happening “here” in Canada, as Chambers (1999) describes in her work, “A Topography for Canadian Curriculum Theory.” In Canadian curriculum, the language spoken, by-and-large, is from “an imaginable space derived from and created by the cognitive habits of Europe” (Chambers, 1999, p. 142). From speaking the language of others to living in the land of others, for many Canadians, home has become ambiguous. The challenges for Canadian curriculum theorists are to “search within the physical and imaginary curricular of Canada” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147) and to create the interpretive tools to understand “how we have come to be ‘out of place,’ and how we can finally come home here” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147).

In understanding the place-stories, and to write about the place-stories, Chambers’ (1999) notion of topography describes it further in detail, especially calling for the Canadian curriculum theorists’ attention. Regarding the curriculum of a settlers’ land such as Canada, Chambers (1999) points out four particular challenges for Canadian curriculum scholars. In the first challenge, writing from this place, Chambers (1999) reminds us that the interwoven historical and political themes of colonialism and American influences leads to the ideology of what is happening in England, France and America and this eclipses the actual existing artifact and the vast diversities on the Canadian curriculum landscape. From speaking the language of others to living in the land of others, we as Canadians are “preoccupied with ourselves as Alienated Outsiders” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147). Finding and creating a language of our own and to turn to that language, as Chambers (1999) indicates, is the second challenge for Canadian curriculum scholars.
Using the Eurocentric unilingual language and grammatical rules as the inherited imaginary tools to interpret the curriculum métissage of this land, often the authenticity and originality of the multi/lingual/cultural is lost in translation. In the loss in translation, we are uncertain of who we are, where we come from and whether we belong and the notion of home, for many Canadians, has become ambiguous. This ambiguity about home, for Canadian curriculum theorists, is like a riddle, a certain “malaise” and “this malaise has left many Canadians longing to know who we are and where home is” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147). The third challenge for Canadian curriculum theorists is to “search within the physical and imaginary curriculum landscape of Canada” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147) to create the interpretive tools of our own, tools that can help us to see our home, to help us to understand “how we have come to be ‘out of place‘ in this home, and how we can finally come home here” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147), to understand the interdependence of our various identities and how they can “play” in harmony.

In turn, Chambers (1999) suggests we find and create the language of our own through “writing in a detailed way the topos” (p. 147), the situated place where we live and work. Therefore, through each situated topography, the place-stories, we may begin to see how these places are inscribed in historical and political themes and become an imaginary curriculum landscape. More importantly, we may begin to understand the hybrid essence of the curriculum landscape and to “reach into and cross the territories of differences” (Chambers, 1999, p. 148).

With students and teachers coming from diverse backgrounds, curriculum becomes a lived experience of the “whole world in one classroom” (Hasebe-Ludt, 1999, p. 39). Additionally, within the country’s political context, curriculum remains the responsibility of the ten provinces and three territories. This leads to a strong link between curriculum and place (Chambers 1999, 2003, 2004; Ng-A-Fook, 2012). Especially during the 1980s, Canadian
scholars such as Ted Aoki, Max van Manen, Kenneth Jacknicke, Terrence Carson, David Smith, Margaret Hunsberger and Dennis Sumara “took up the study of phenomenology and hermeneutic research – inspiriting the worldliness of Canadian curriculum studies” (Ng-A-Fook, 2012, p. 12). In addition, these curriculum scholars reconsider the theoretical tools for reinterpreting the existential dimensions of the lives of students and teachers in schools. Under such circumstances, writing from the place where curriculum scholars live and work may lead curriculum researchers to see how these places are inscribed in historical and political themes.

Such writing is also reflected in Chambers’ 2003 intellectual topography. This intellectual topography, juxtaposed with political, phenomenological, hermeneutical, Indigenous, autobiographical, post-structural, post-modern and art-based inquiries – rich and diverse interdisciplinary studies that speak to regional intellectual historiography – illuminates the distinctive character of the Canadian field of curriculum studies. Amongst the various types of scholarship, Chambers (2003) indicates that the phenomenological and the hermeneutical inquiries are the second domain of Canadian curriculum scholarship. Also, these two intellectual traditions act as “practical wisdom” for Canadian curriculum scholars to “interpret Canadian curriculum” (p. 225).

Chambers (2003) further explains that it is perhaps “phenomenology’s focus on lived experience – the particulars of life lived in a specific place in relation to others,” which “enabled scholars to at once be critical of the abstract discourses dominating curriculum and the violence they do the earth and children, and to see, hear, and feel the ‘stubborn particulars of grace’” (to quote Jardine, 1987; 2000 quoting Canadian poet Bronwen Davies, as cited in Chambers, 2003, p. 227). Aoki’s unique critical reflective and poetic approach to narrative speaks, sees, hears and feels such particulars of grace (I discuss this in Chapter 2). Aoki’s unique approach to narrative,
according to Chambers (2003), has been “intensely pedagogical and highly influential” (p. 232) in the Canadian phenomenological and hermeneutical curriculum scholarship. In addition, Chambers (2003) points out, Aoki’s effort in making “the distinction between the curriculum as lived and the curriculum as planned” is “perhaps not the first,” but it is “in a succinct and heartfelt way that (teacher) audiences heard and responded to [it]” (p. 226). Aoki’s “curriculum actualization” in the midst of the lived experiences, Chambers (2003) suggests, is both phenomenological and hermeneutic while it paid attention to the lived experience and it also “sought the practical wisdom … in the situation” (p. 226). Chambers (2003) also points out the poetic characteristic in phenomenology as it “poeticizes the world and its ordinary particulars” (p. 227). While phenomenology “seeks the universal through particularity,” hermeneutics “attends to the linguisticality of understanding,” (p.227) Chambers comments. Attending to the linguisticality of understanding, the “power of the hermeneutic imagination,” according to Chambers (2003), is “its capacity to reach across national and cultural boundaries to enable dialogue between people and traditions superficially” (Smith, 1999, as cited in Chambers, 2003, p. 227). In turn, in the Canadian imaginary, the “very idea of Canadian curriculum studies” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 13) may be just as important as nationalism and internationalism in understanding the 1960 CBC challenge winning phrase, “as Canadian as possible under the circumstances” (Chambers, 2003, p. 221).
1.4.2 The Very “Idea” of Canadian Curriculum Studies

… The abundance of different contextual meanings reminds us that normative, performative, material, and psychic notion of “nation” and “multiculturalism” are perpetually shifting and often tremble ontologically with postmodern uncertainty when we utter their names in relation to provoking questions about the very “idea” of Canadian curriculum studies.

(Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 27)

Nicolas Ng-A-Fook (2014) continues to provoke the “very idea of Canadian curriculum studies.” As a “curriculum listener” (p. 42), Ng-A-Fook hears the very “idea” of Canadian curriculum studies as a “storied composition of musical counterpointed movements” (p. 13).

Affirming Chambers’ (1999) four challenges for Canadian curriculum theorists and her emphasis on Indigenous knowledge, Ng-A-Fook (2014) understands the importance of sharing stories in the conceptually complex and linguistically diverse world(s) in which we live in Canada. Departing from the story of the 1960s CBC radio show contest, which challenged people across Canada to complete the adage “As Canadian as…” (p. 23), Ng-A-Fook further illustrates the concept of nation that, for Canadians, is a contemplation of “Canadians’ competing beliefs about the is-ness of what constitutes the myths, dreams, and nightmares of [their] national identity” (p. 11). The winning phrase “As Canadian as possible under the circumstances” (Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 21) correspondingly anchors Chambers’ central message in her 2003 intellectual topography of Canadian curriculum studies. In other words, an important part of the Canadian imaginary is nationalism and internationalism.

National identity and its relation to the image of a nation on the international stage are highly politicalized issues. Exercising nation-building through civic education seems to be a task that is a commonly shared political agenda among many. However, what constitutes Canadian-ness for a nation and the curriculum question “what knowledge is of most worth?” is a “complicated conversation” (Pinar, 2011) that juxtaposes the twain of political and philosophical
threads. Although, the Canadian government attempts to display multiculturalism as a national distinction in projecting its internationalism, it fails to recognize its colonial and immigrant history. Even as the inclusive French and English bilingualism of the country sets forth a premise of multiculturalism, First Nations, Metis and Inuit nations as well as diverse immigrants are systematically excluded from such self-righteous association of nationality. If Canada is “constituted by First Nations within a nation” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 22) and we are all “treaty people,” Ng-A-Fook takes up Chambers’ (2012) provocation and further asks Canadian curriculum theorists to contemplate a shift in “epistemological topographical navigations towards what Derrida (1991/1992) called ‘The other Heading’” (p. 22).

Such a heading cannot escape the effort of working through the stories of history and historical events personal or collective, and of revisiting present or absent topographical sites. As we, curriculum theorists, continue to share the stories we tell ourselves about the world(s), the very “idea” of Canadian curriculum studies remains as an opening, always available for theorists to improvise and reiterate using different intellectual histories and interpretations (Ng-A-Fook, 2014). In this sense, differences play as a counterpoint to “provoke our taken-for-granted understanding of Canadian identities in relation to our curriculum theorizing” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 23). Attention to the tensionality in-between the uncommon narrations and attunement to the particularity in the story of differences is what the great Canadian curriculum theorist Aoki (2005) sagely shared with Canadian curriculum theorists forty years ago.

In articulating the importance of Aoki’s works in the field of Canadian curriculum studies, Ng-A-Fook (2014) emphasizes the intertext of curriculum, culture, language and wisdom traditions. Ng-A-Fook (2014) traces a historical point of departure of some Canadian curriculum scholars, such as Ted Aoki, Van Manen, Antoinette Oberg, Deborah Britzman and Jacques
Daignault who, in spite of “there [being] a sense during the 1970s and 1980s of ‘a conspicuous lack of attention paid to the meaning of curriculum theory in a Canadian context’” (Osborne, 1982, p. 95, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 2), were pushing boundaries and provoking more possibilities in understanding curriculum. About the same time, Ng-A-Fook (2014) comments, their American colleagues, William F. Pinar, Madeleine Grumet and Janet Miller (1981) were also “reconsidering their professional obligations to the field of curriculum studies in terms of theorizing differences of possible international meanings for curriculum theory” (p. 3). In Canada, during the 1980s, Ng-A-Fook (2014) comments, Aoki was “busy provoking curriculum studies at the University of Alberta” to “stretch” the curriculum scholars’ thinking “toward curriculum in a new key,” (p. 3) and increasingly, the phenomenological tradition was given emphasis by Canadian curriculum scholars. While Aoki and his colleagues were provoking and reconsidering the field, they also “‘felt suspended as in brackets,’ wondering whether or not they were constructing a ‘mystified dream world’” (Aoki, 1980/2005, pp. 109-110, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 3). It is the feeling of estrangement “from the mainstream flow of educational researchers,” Ng-A-Fook (2014) suggests, Aoki and his colleagues “become more sensitive to the urgency of coming to know how to communicate cross-paradigmatically… [and] to theorize within the uncommon countenance of Canadian curriculum studies” (p. 3).

A part of the uncommon countenance of Canadian curriculum studies dwells in the tensions between curriculum, culture and language. Since 1971, Canada “sought to confirm its place in the world as a cosmopolitan society by establishing a multicultural policy in federal legislation” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 9). Since then, creating and implementing the multicultural policy has been on the political agenda at the federal level. Ng-A-Fook (2014) points out that curriculum scholars like Aoki “were invited to events like the Designing Japanese Canadian
Curriculum conference” and “at this historical event” (p. 9) Aoki spoke to the audience from “a minority voice that asks that minorities not be erased” (Aoki, 1992/2005, p. 268, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 10). In addition, Aoki “provokes the minority scholars to ask more of theorizing in relation to concepts like multiculturalism” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 10). More so, Aoki asks that curriculum scholars think multiculturalism “beyond the striated linearity of its conceptualizations as a noun” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 10). Furthermore, to contemplate “Canadian multiculturalism as a polyphony of lines of movement that grow in the abundance of conjunctive middle, the ‘between’ and ‘AND,,’” – a generative tension – that “populate[s] the international landscape we call curriculum studies” (Ng-A-Fook, 2014, p. 10).

As curriculum scholars’ work is very much situated within, linked to and uttered by the overlapping political and educational issues that preoccupy the place where they work, the fragmented, hyphenated, in-between, diversified topography illuminates the complexity of the Canadian field of curriculum studies. The emergence of collective works (Gibson, 2012; Ng-A-Fook & Rottman, 2012; Stanley & Young, 2011; Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, 2013; Leggo & Hasbe-Ludt, 2018) and braiding languages (Chambers, Leggo & Hasbe-Ludt, 2009) that theorize curriculum from a particular place and intellectual tradition highlight the distinctiveness of the contemporary field of Canadian curriculum studies. As indicated previously, curriculum is often under the influence of the political agenda. The National History Project in 1965, a nationwide in-school investigation that rode on the hype of the government’s political agenda of promoting a national consciousness, that later became the Canadian Studies movement, had two dramatic impacts on education. It enhanced the scholarly debate over the concept of Canadian identity, and it encouraged school-based curriculum development. Furthermore, the Canada Project West – a part project of Canada Studies Foundation was a key focus in Aoki’s burgeoning university
career. Also, the debate over the concept of Canadian identity and school-based curriculum development constitute the two central themes of Aoki’s early works. As curriculum is often influenced by the political agenda at the time, I believe it is important to understand the political climate surrounding Aoki’s early thinking and to portray the historical present that is juxtaposed with political and philosophical threads. This propels my inquiry into the past.

1.5 Historical Present

1.5.1 Theoretic Dimensions of Curriculum: Reflections on the Canada Studies Foundations Curriculum Development

We need to retain that critical stance that Hodgetts took, and ask openly and rigorously “What Curriculum? What Instructional plan? What Instruction?”

(Aoki, 1977, p. 49)

In 1964, Aoki was invited to join the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta as a secondary school social studies methods instructor. A few years later, in 1970, he became the committee member of the Project Canada West (PCW) – a western regional arm of the Canadian Studies Foundation’s curriculum development consortium. The aim of the PCW was to develop a Canada Studies curriculum on urbanization for social studies programs in western Canada. Additionally, through the collaboration of teachers, students, provincial Departments of Education, administrators and university professors, the PCW worked on the feasibility of decentralized and teacher-oriented curriculum development. The British Columbia social studies curriculum assessment, part of the PCW, was not only a point of departure for Aoki to reflect on the instrumentalist understandings of curriculum theorizing, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation, during his early university career years, it was also a reoccurring topic that Aoki spoke about throughout his scholarship on the advancement of Canadian curriculum theorizing (see Aoki, 1978, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1991a, 1996).
In June of 1970, Aoki (1977) was invited to give a speech, “as a part of ‘bon voyage’” (p. 49) to the representatives of the PCW project team. In the speech, Aoki spoke about “‘A Curriculum and Instructional Design’ based on [his] adaptation of Mauritz Johnson, Jr.’s conception of curriculum and instruction” (p. 49) and Aoki further encouraged his audience to “touch, feel, play with, think about” (p. 49) the conceptual scheme. Aoki also “urged the assembled curriculum developers” to take a critical stance and ask “openly and rigorously ‘What curriculum? What Instructional Plan? What Instruction?’” (Aoki, 1977, p. 49).

To reflect on his experience with the British Columbia social studies curriculum development at PCW, in 1977, a year after the six-year PCW phase one completion, Aoki published an article, “Theoretic Dimensions of Curriculum: Reflections from a Micro-perspective,” in a special issue of Canadian Journal of Education. Despite the “domain of the major thrust of [the] Canadian Studies Foundation” – “the development of actual school programs” (Aoki, 1977, p. 50) – Aoki hoped to generate more interests in curriculum development activities “at the conceptual level in curriculum theory” (p. 50). In his article, Aoki identified and described three themes as three curricular theoretic concerns.

In the first theme, “Exploring the Theoretic in ‘the Practical,’” Aoki (1977) gave the credit to the PCW and Canada Studies Foundation (CSF) for “nurtur[ing]” the “curriculum development modality” by “focus[ing] on the practicing teachers as the key personality in curriculum development” (p. 50). However, in regard to the conceptual advancement in curriculum theoretic thought, Aoki referred to an American curriculum theorist, J.J. Schwab (1972), who proclaimed that “the field of curriculum is moribund, unable by its present methods and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods” (p. 79, as cited in Aoki, 1977, p. 50). In turn, Aoki (1977) called upon
the curriculum program developers for “an authentic radical departure” to “shift” their conception in understanding the term “practical” (p. 51). The term practical was one of the CSF’s emphases, which most of the curriculum developers interpreted as the practicality of being an administrator. To interpret the term “practical” from a different aspect, Aoki (1977) urged the curriculum developers to position themselves not only “as a being engaged in program engineering and solving curriculum development problems,” but also “as a being engaged consciously…in the construction of his own meaningful human and social reality” (p. 51). More so, Aoki (1977) encouraged the curriculum developers to reflect on what has been taken-for-granted and to “explore at a fundamental level, fundamental perspectives, found in the lived practical world of curriculum developers” (p. 52). Referring to Michael Apple’s (1975) (an American curriculum theorist) interpretation of the work of critical social theorist, Jürgen Habermas, Aoki (1977) outlined three perspectives: strict science perspective; hermeneutic science perspective; and critical theory perspective, to discuss the “relationship between human interests and knowledge” (p. 52). These three perspectives, Aoki (1977) pointed out, have the “potential for a theoretic study of the practical, the domain of the practical lived experiences of program developers” (p. 52). Understanding the term “practical,” only as the practicality of “how to,” for Aoki, was an epistemological limit situation. He suggested the curriculum developers to pursue “rigorously the theoretic of the practical” to “come to grips with the meaning of the practical” (p. 52) lived experiences of their own.

In the second theme, “Re-conceptualizing the Concept of Implementation,” Aoki (1977) was critical about the term “implementation” that was commonly “seen simply as a process of ‘putting a program into practice’” (p. 53). This “common-sense schema” of conceptualizing the term implementation carried “the fancier labels of ‘diffusing and adoption’” (p. 53). Aoki
commented. Furthermore, the term “pilot-testing” seemed to be synonymous with the term “putting into practice’ or ‘diffusing and adopting’” and these terms have become the “popular curriculum language,” (p. 53) Aoki noted. Although, the PCW recognized the conceptual problem of implementation, Aoki pointed out, the difficulty in overcoming this conceptual problem was the program developers who “tend to assume the stance of the ‘salesman’ selling his wares as a means of promoting curriculum change” (Aoki, 1977, p. 53) to the teachers. To shift this “producer-consumer” (Aoki, 1977, p. 54) paradigm in thinking curriculum implementation, Aoki (1977) suggested, is not to view implementation “in terms of dissemination of a product” but “in terms of the meaning of a given program to teachers” (p. 54). Although, at this point, Aoki became critical about how the curriculum implementation was conceptualized under the problematic understanding of the “practical” perspective, it was not until 1983 that Aoki discussed the implementation again and offered praxis as a way of rethinking implementation and competence. I will discuss this in the Chapter 3, section 4.2. However, in this 1977 journal paper on theoretical recommendations for PCW, Aoki’s suggestion that implementation be viewed “in terms of the meaning of a given program to teachers” gave a hint to his later interest in exploring phenomenology.

In the third theme, “A Curriculum Evaluation Paradigm,” Aoki (1977) remarked that the curriculum evaluation area was “one of the strong theoretic advances that CSF and PCW have made” (p. 54). Aoki also underscored some problems that were associated with curriculum evaluation. One of them was “the prevailing view that curriculum evaluation [as] an activity secondary to the primary activity of curriculum development” (Aoki, 1977, p. 54) and attached to the prevailing view was thinking evaluation as of “low importance” (p. 54) in the curriculum development process. Another concern of Aoki was the dominance of the
“psychometric/experiential design” that had “overshadowed other complementary approaches” (p. 54) to curriculum evaluation. Furthermore, the “goal-based evaluation” that had become “the evaluation model” (p. 54) merited attention, Aoki (1977) stated. To move away from the goal orientated model of evaluation, Aoki and his Study of Urban-Rural Transition (SURT) project (a project of PCW) team used an “ethno-methodological approach” (Aoki, 1977, p. 55) for the SURT curriculum evaluations. Different than the standardized psychometrically orientated evaluation, this approach “enabled program development to be viewed as a dynamic historical, social and cultural process” (p. 54). Also, the ethno-methodological approach can “accommodate” the “conceptual scheme of both the external evaluator and the program developer” (p. 55), Aoki (1977) emphasized. More so, this approach allowed the program developer as “insiders (emic)” to examine the “meaning that [they] assigned to their own activities” (Aoki, 1977, p. 55). Aoki also pointed out, the significance of this ethno-methodological approach in the SURT evaluations was the conceptual advancement that was made in the Doctoral study of D. C. Wilson (1976), University of Alberta, where Wilson modified the “emic perspectives” to “accommodate methodological concepts from the literature of phenomenology” (p. 55). Aoki (1977) further commented that these new dimensions were “not heretofore found to [his] knowledge in any evaluation or implementation literature” (p. 55).

In this 1977 Canadian Journal of Education volume 2, number 1, issue that was mostly devoted to the discussions about the projects of CSF and of Canadian Studies related curriculum concerns, Aoki (1977) concluded with the remarks that in order to advance “the conceptual dimension of curriculum theorizing,” CSF shall enable the “practicing teachers” to “relate their personal and social realities to the curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation they are experiencing” (p. 56). Such a concluding note, I believe, also indicated Aoki’s interests in the
live(d) experiences of curriculum that he later developed (see Chapter 3, section 5.1). In the following section, I track back to the 1960s and discuss the Canadian Studies movement that was involved with school-based social studies curriculum development and was much imbedded with political agenda, which Aoki and other curriculum scholars questioned about the conceptual assumptions.

1.5.2 The Political and Philosophical Threads: Nationalism, Canadian Studies and the Canadianization Movement

Curriculum development is a political act. (Werner et al., 1977, p. 48)

And here in Canada, I ponder the word of “nation” in “the founding nations,” “the first nations,” the Canadian Nation. I am pulled into the tensionality of differences of meaning. I ask more. (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 383)

To lay out the curriculum landscape that Aoki found himself in during the 1960s and 1970s, I will begin at the 100th anniversary of Canada. Owing particularly to the Canadian Centennial celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation that lasted all year and culminated on Dominion Day, July 1, 1967, nationalism was again pushed onto center stage of the Canadian political scene. Special events and projects were set up across Canada to celebrate this national historical moment. The politically embedded agenda of promoting the idea of Canada as the collective interests of a national state rather than those of the individual also stimulated school children to raise their consciousness of Canadian nationalism and history.

A year after Aoki began his career at the University, in 1965, the National History Project had been launched as a centennial project sponsored by Trinity College School, Port Hope and the Ontario Board of Governors and directed by A. B. Hodgetts. Despite the initial plan to keep its independency from government funding, the project was not entirely disconnected from the
government. As Tomkins (1986/2008) indicated in his research, “Hodgetts later established liaison with and gained the approval of the Canadian Education Association and later of the council of Ministers of Education” (p. 297). A History master at school, Hodgetts’ primary concern was the “influence of formal instruction in developing the feelings and attitudes of young Canadians towards their country” (p. 297). This influence traditionally stemmed solely from three academic subjects: Canadian history, social studies and civics. These three subjects, namely Canadian Studies, became the central theme in the National History Project research.

During this two-year project, Hodgetts and his observers investigated 951 elementary and secondary school classes in ten provinces. The scale of this project was a “compelling examination of civic education in Canadian history and social studies classes,” as described by the Director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, R. W. B. Jackson (1968). The results of this project were published in Hodgetts’ (1968) analysis report, “What Culture? What Heritage?” In Hodgetts’ (1968) findings, courses of study were generally identical across the provinces except for Quebec. Textbooks were not only lacking in detail relating to Canadian realities; much of the content that did exist was antiquated. Hodgetts’ study found that contemporary history (after 1931) was virtually non-existent in the textbooks. Canadian studies of economic, social and cultural history were outweighed by British, American and European political and constitutional history. Teachers and students were more versed in American history than Canadian history. Hodgetts’ study particularly pointed to the teachers’ lack of knowledge and teaching skills as the primary cause for pupils’ dislike of Canadian studies. Most teaching was by means of assignments and lectures. Classroom discussions were rare, and when they did occur the majority of teachers avoided Canadian topics. Administrators did not escape Hodgetts’ criticism either. After his examination of the teaching about Canada in hundreds of schools,
Hodgetts (1968) concluded, “we are teaching a bland, unrealistic consensus version of our past; a dry-as-dust chronological story of uninterrupted political and economic progress told without the controversy that is an inherent part of history” (p. 115). Although, Hodgetts reports raised questions about Canadian social studies, history and civic education in relation to students’ identities and nationalism, a few years later, Ted Aoki and a group of educators including Walter Werner, Bryan Connors and Jorgen Dahlie began to study how ethnicity was prescribed in social studies curricula across Canada. After examining elementary and high school social studies curriculum documents from the 1974-1975 school year from provinces across Canada in their collective work, “Whose Culture? Whose Heritage?” (1977) these scholars questioned the “selectivity” of ethnic studies, which I discuss in section 1.5.5.

Also, stemming from Hodgetts’ assessment of civic education in elementary and secondary schools, the following year in Mathews and Steele’s 1969 report, “The Struggle for Canadian Universities: A Dossier,” the authors raised concern about the large numbers of non-Canadians teaching in the country’s universities. These two Carlton University professors had originally campaigned for equality for Canadian scholars in the university’s hiring practices, citing the lack of Canadian content in many courses at Carlton University. Despite some voices questioning whether such a campaign might lead to the practice of curtailing intellectual freedom and a surreptitious act of anti-Americanism, Mathews and Steele’s 1969 report about “Canadianization” was quickly responded to by many universities across Canada. By 1972, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) commissioned T. H. B. Symons (Chair of the Commission on Canadian Studies) to “study, report, and make recommendations on the state of teaching and research in various fields of study relating to Canada.” The Symons report – “To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies,” released in
1976 – advocated a wide variety of activities in universities, government agencies, professional associations and private and public organizations. Following Symons’ study, changes were made not only at the educational level, but also by the introduction of new government programs, policies, studies, commissions and reports. Consequently, the Federal Department of Employment and Immigration Canada introduced rules to stipulate that a search for a Canadian applicant would be necessary before a job offer was made to a non-Canadian candidate. Eventually, Canadian universities were required to follow government policies related to employment practices and the percentage of courses with Canadian content.

Riding on the momentum of the Canadianization movement, numerous new organizations and commissions were established regionally and nationally. On the national level, the Canada Studies Foundation (CSF) was launched in 1970, of which Aoki sat as a committee member of its western arm. Following Hodgetts’ main recommendation from his research study, viz. the creation of a Canadian Studies Consortium (Walter L. Gordon served as Chairman, Hodgetts and George S. Tomkins as co-directors) supported by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), the primary objective of the CSF is to suggest ways of improving the quality of Canadian Studies in the country’s elementary and secondary schools. With a solid core of school teacher participants, in four years the CSF received support from provincial Ministers of Education and the federal Secretary of State. Before the foundation surrendered its charter in 1986, the CSF was the sole nonprofit developer of Canadian Studies material. The CSF published volumes of teachers’ manuals and a bilingual newsletter. The CSF also provided about thirty thousand teachers across the country with in-service training on the new approaches to Canadian Studies. By 1978, the foundation’s work culminated in the publication of a design for curriculum entitled “Teaching Canada for the 80’s.”
At the university level, another national organization was created during the 1970s when various faculties that were interested in Canadian Studies established the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). As an interdisciplinary organization, the primary devotion of ACS was to encourage teaching, publication and research about Canada at the post-secondary level. National themes were the central matters for ACS-organized conferences. With widespread interest across Canada and strong financial and policy support from various Canadian governments, Canadian Studies made its presence known on the international stage. In 1982, ACS initiated the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS). With vast resource support from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of Canadian Heritage, ICCS had some twenty-member countries and some Canadian affiliations.

The phrase “Canadian Studies” has become a designated distinctive interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching about Canada nationally and internationally. Tracing the history of “Canadian Studies” as such, we find that it owes much to the evolution of Canadian nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s. Initially, Hodgetts’ 1965 National History Project was meant as an assessment of civic education. However, his nationwide in-school investigations rode on the hype of the government’s political agenda of promoting a national consciousness. His report entitled “What Culture? What Heritage?” generated what Tomkins (1986/2008) described as “the birth of the formal Canadian Studies movement” (p. 298). This movement emerged clearly as some scholars raised issues concerning not only education, but also the textbook publishing industry, science and technology, archives, international relations, etc. Nevertheless, in retrospect, the Canadian Studies movement had two dramatic impacts on education: the scholarly debate over the concept of Canadian identity, and school-based curriculum development. The curriculum research related to Canadian Studies and Canada
Studies Foundation projects was one of the key concerns of Aoki’s burgeoning university career, as I discussed previously in section 5.1. Additionally, the debate over the concept of Canadian identity and school-based curriculum development constituted the two central themes of Aoki’s early works, which I discuss in the following sections.

1.5.3 A Canadian Approach to Curriculum Development

There is probably no more active area of curriculum development in Canada than Canadian studies.

(Tomkins, 1977a, p. 1)

Regionalism, probably the greatest fact of Canadian life, soon manifested itself in curriculum theory and practice to the point that impressionistically one could think of several distinct educational cultures.

(Tomkins, 1977a, p. 10)

At a time when society was under a strong political influence towards nationalism, for Canada, situated on a vast geographic terrain and with colonial and immigration histories, the ideology of national identity was a premise not without complications among many Canadians. Hodgetts’ (1968) landmark study of young Canadians’ perception of their national identity indicated that regions serve as a strong tie to youth perception of national identity. To summarize the study, various regional differences and local traditions influence youth identities, and these findings reflect the complexity of the issue of national identity.

Civic education, from a political socialization point of view, is considered as a means of formulating pupils’ national identity through the socialization of education, and “Canadian history is the main academic subject through which political socialization is meant to take place” (Hodgetts, 1968, p. 6). Thus, Hodgetts’ (1968) report centered on critiquing the “dominance of a narrow, almost pedantic view of Canadian history and civics, a bland consensus interpretation” (p. 6). His statement that “in actual fact we are continuing to teach a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant political and constitutional history of Canada” (Tomkins, 1977a, p. 20) touched “a raw
nerve in a body politic that was still bathing in the euphoria of Expo and Trudeaumania and adopting an increasingly nationalistic stance” (p. 6), as described by curriculum historian, Tomkins. Evolving from the primary concern raised by Hodgetts’ findings, the narrative view of Canadian history in civic education does not reflect the contemporary Canadian reality – the great regional and cultural diversity of the country as a whole. Responding to a regionally and culturally diverse contemporary Canadian reality, the “basic prescription for reform” was to establish a Canadian Studies Consortium (Tomkins, 1974, p. 22).

A Canadian Studies Consortium, according to Hodgetts’ recommendation, was aimed to urge the provinces to work horizontally together in the mutual cause of national awareness and understanding. Furthermore, such reformation “cannot support any one ideological position or any single interpretation of Canadian reality” (p. 7), as stated in the annual report of the Canada Studies Foundation (1972). Thus, the “continuing Canadian concerns” that both historically and contemporarily “have dominated social, economic, cultural, and political life” (Tomkins, 1974, p. 23) served as the organizing principle of the CSF for the “new national efforts in curriculum” (p. 22). These new national efforts in curriculum development were brought about through a collaborative process of “horizontal interaction” across provincial and regional boundaries and “vertical interaction” among educators from various levels (Tomkins, 1977a, p. 9) to bridge the “fussy methodology purveyed by faculties of education and the concomitant lack of any philosophical or historiographical context in which to view the problems of teaching” (Tomkins, 1974, p. 23).

By the end of 1970, several major projects were well on their way under the reformation principles of the CSF. The Laurentian Projects, the sole group of bilingual projects involving teachers and students from Quebec and Ontario schools, worked on various themes.
among these various themes was the effort toward “developing common approaches to the study of various periods in Canadian history, utilizing source materials in each case from the ‘other’ side” (Tomkins, 1974, p. 25) – a significant gesture to signify the tensions between the two provinces. The attempt to “bridge” the “widest river in Canada” between the educators of Hull, Quebec on one side of the Ottawa river and those in Ottawa in the National Capital Region on the other side, the CSF “encouraged” a “first cooperative endeavor” between the “English and French speaking educators from schools and universities in the region” to develop studies around the theme “Towards a Mutual Understanding” (Tomkins, 1974, p. 25).

In the Atlantic region, Project Atlantic Canada was formed as a team of four semi-autonomous groups, involving teachers from Newfoundland-Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, P.E.I. and a francophone teachers’ group from the four provinces. Project Atlantic Canada aimed to produce materials and develop teaching strategies with the broad theme of regionalism and cultural diversity. Most of the universities and all of the teacher’s associations, school districts and Departments of Education were on board with the project, with the aim of developing Canada-wide materials and approaches.

Project Canada West (PCW), of which Aoki had become a committee member in 1970, had been launched in Edmonton as a western regional arm of the CSF’s curriculum development consortium. This project included representatives from the teachers’ associations from the four western provinces – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba – and the Universities of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The central themes of the fourteen PCW sub-projects revolved around the topic of Canadian urbanization. During its five-year mandate, the PCW supported the research and publications of fourteen sub-projects distributed throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with subjects ranging from Indian and Metis
integration to rural-urban transition and Canadian urban government. The aim of the PCW was to develop a Canadian Studies curriculum on urbanization for social studies programs in western Canada. Additionally, through the collaboration of teachers, students, provincial Departments of Education, administrators and university professors, the PCW worked on the feasibility of decentralized and teacher-oriented curriculum development. As such, “where curriculum development is concerned,” the PCW was unique “in the history of Canadian education,” as described by the Canadian curriculum historian, Tomkins (1974, p. 25). Furthermore, this curriculum development also moved to the post-secondary level, building on the CSF’s concerns over teacher education. In 1971, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education established an office of Canadian Studies and held a national conference on Canadian Studies in Universities.

These interactions urged the provinces to work together “thematologically” on their regional perspectives and perceptions that are often bound by the assumptions inherent in the teachers’ and students’ own linguistic, socio-cultural milieu. Moreover, through these interregional exchange programs and conferences, students, teachers and researchers exchanged and shared their divergent viewpoints inter-regionally. As such, horizontal and vertical interactions became a distinctively Canadian approach to curriculum intervention and this topographical approach might have also inadvertently enhanced the regionalism in the field of Canadian curriculum studies.

1.5.4 Concerns about Canadian Studies and Curriculum Development

A special issue of the 1977 Canadian Journal of Education was mostly devoted to Canadian Studies and Canada Studies Foundation related research. These articles illustrate certain concerns raised by researchers about Canadian Studies and its issues related to curriculum development at the time. First, there were concerns about the emergence of
behavioural sciences and political studies. In the 1960s and 1970s a “rapid growth of the
behavioural sciences in Canada provided a new focus to political studies,” noted Tomkins (1977,
p. 83). This new focus on political studies led social scientists (Zureik & Pike, 1975; Johnstone,
1969; Richert, 1974; Ullman, 1975) to engage in studies of children and youth and their
perceptions of Canada and Canadian society. This belief in scientism and its approach in
“measuring” youth and children’s feelings, perceptions, and sentiments towards their country,
and the hypothesis of “the prevalence and social correlates of nationalistic feelings” (Harvey, et
al., 1975), also led educational researchers to focus their study on political socialization – that is,
“on political learning or on how knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes are acquired in any
given civic culture” (p. 83). The most referenced in the political socialization literature and the
study that “has done much to stimulate scholarly investigations” (Tomkins, 1977b, p. 87), was
Hodgetts’ 98-study analysis “What Culture? What Heritage?” As the largest investigation carried
out in Canadian classrooms on a national scale at the time (Tomkins, 1977b), “What Culture?
What Heritage?” was itself also a political socialization study. Hodgetts placed an explicit
emphasis on the role of school in political socialization and concluded that “formal civic
education in Canada is an ineffective socialization process, because it fails to convey an adequate
conception of the Canadian political culture and heritage” (Hodgetts, 1968, p. 50).

Hodgetts’ statement raised several concerns. First, Hodgetts’ study assumed that the role
of school in the process of socialization is to solve the social issues at hand, and “there has been
a beginning of this type of curriculum development in recent years,” commented Tomkins
(1977b, p. 90). Other curriculum developers took the same position as Hodgetts. Referring to the
experience of the American neighbor, Tomkins (1977b) pointed out that it is difficult for the
school to play a major role in political socialization and that “it is becoming increasingly clear
that the school cannot and should not attempt to solve the problem of the larger society” (p. 90).

Additionally, the assumptions embedded in Canadian Studies concerning areas such as “students’ developmental level,” (p.74) “language patterns,” (p. 74-75) the belief that a new curriculum will make students more “effective citizens” (p.75) and the presumption that the power of choosing curricula lies in the hands of “experts,” (p. 80) were questioned by scholars like T. R. Morrison, K. W. Osborne and N. G. MacDonald (1975). Moreover, the concept of nationalism was also a topic of debate (van Manen, 1976), and its relationship with curriculum was widely discussed by various scholars in the collection *National Consciousness and the Curriculum: The Canadian Case*ix (Milburn & Herbert et al., 1974).

1.5.5 Whose Culture? Whose Heritage?

It was in the midst of scholars’ concerns over questions of ethnicity and nationalism and their urgent need to answer Hodgetts’ questions as outlined in the previous section that another group of scholars – Ted Aoki, Walter Werner, Bryan Connors and Jorgen Dahlie – began to study how ethnicity was prescribed in social studies curricula across Canada. After examining elementary and high school social studies curriculum documents from the 1974-1975 school year from provinces across Canada,\(^x\) in their collective work, “Whose Culture? Whose Heritage?” (1977), these scholars questioned the “selectivity” of ethnic studies. They pointed out that in social studies programs “the Canadian ethnic mosaic was composed primarily of Native Indian, Inuit, British, and French” and considering the population percentage of these groups in relation to their visibility within curricula, these groups appeared to be the “ethnic elites” (p. 3) in Canadian social studies. The question of “why some groups are chosen and others neglected” (p. 5) was of the utmost concern of Aoki and these curriculum scholars.

The images of minorities, that is “non-white groups,” are “interpreted largely as they
relate negatively or positively to the expansion and history of the dominant group” (Aoki et al., 1977, p. 15) and in general these minority groups are seen as the “beneficiaries” (p. 16) of the British and French. The minorities became marginal and hyphenated Canadians. Stripping away the history, values and beliefs of minorities, non-white groups were reduced to artifacts for students to look at, and for the “children from the minority groups, social studies may be a place where they learn insecurity in their own cultural background” (Aoki et al, 1977, p. 18). In turn, social studies became populated by labels of ethnicity, objectified as “simplistic and stereotyped” images of minorities. Culture is as material as artifacts. An “outsider’s stance of cultural heritage tends to reduce the students’ ethnic experience to a trip to a museum or art gallery” (Aoki et al, 1977, p. 55).

Additionally, due to a general lack of rationale for the conceptual approach to curriculum, curriculum developers become the “gate-keepers of reality definitions” as they “select, classify and evaluate viewpoints and knowledge for inclusion within programs” (Aoki et al, 1977, p. 48). Ethnicity and related issues were curricular, to be defined and interpreted for students by educational experts. The underlying conceptual approach is a linear process of curriculum legitimation through hierarchical decision-making by the curriculum producers (social studies experts) for curriculum consumers (ethnic groups). Knowledge is transmitted through power and control, and under the circumstances, “curriculum development is a political act” (Aoki et al, 1977, p. 48). Almost a decade after Hodgetts’ (1968) study report “What Culture? What Heritage?” and after much movement towards the school-based curriculum development stemming from Canadian social studies that envisioned curriculum as the mode of social efficiency, Aoki and his curriculum colleagues raised the important question for social educators – “Whose Culture and Whose Heritage” is prescribed in social studies curricula and represented
by social studies?

Such a question provoked the underlying political “ideological interests and assumptions” (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 380) about the ethnic content in Canadian social studies programs. Aoki made it clearer in his 1990 talk at the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s Multicultural Education Council’s annual conference. A museum approach in conceptualizing ethnic identities was rooted in school-based curriculum intervention that emphasized the “what-ness of Canadian cultural and historical studies in school curricula” (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 379). The problematic position about the what-ness of Canadian cultural and historical studies is the inevitably embedded assertion, the enframed thinking and the blind spot of emphasizing mere many-ness and diversity in Canadian social studies, the tendency of reducing “life to a half-life” (p. 380). The lived meanings and the is-ness of curriculum are concealed in the nomothetic process, the what-ness of identity politics (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of this problem).

It has become evident that, historically, national identity, heritage and culture have been an incondensable curricular in civic education in Canada. For most of the Canadian educators, the dilemma is especially sharp, “as on the one hand they may value and promote cultural diversity while on the other hand they may espouse a national civic education” (Tomkins, 1977b, p. 89) by working with the restrained curricular. Such a dilemma became the premise for curriculum researchers and scholars to seek a “broader view” (Aoki, 1978, p. 2) in regard to research approaches in social studies and in curriculum. Among these curriculum scholars seeking a broader view in terms of understanding curriculum, Aoki’s decisive departure from the empirical research tradition and his turn to phenomenology eventually foreshadowed his future theoretical direction, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

In the following chapter, continuing on Aoki’s theorization of the concept of ethnicity, I
draw primarily from Aoki’s (1979) early writing, “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity,” to offer a portrayal of Aoki’s childhood, adolescence and early career. Moreover, I suggest that the significance of outlining Aoki’s life history is to illuminate the situated-ness of Aoki’s fundamental thinking. Also, to illuminate the distinctiveness of ontological-phenomenological tradition in Aoki’s writing in relation to Martin Heidegger’s concept of the historicity of Dasein – that the existential meaning of man should be understood as contextualized by a flow of concrete events of life history – I follow the momentous life events from Aoki’s own narration.

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i A part of the complexity is the historical tension between the First Nations and the European settlers with disputed land claims. The fact that Canada is a multinational state suggests that the settlers “hang a curtain” around themselves as “a settler society, hiding [themselves] from seeing the colonized landscape [they] occupy” (Butler et al., 2015, p. 44). This colonial history also “manifested itself in our educational curricula, which have historically looked elsewhere (to Europe or the United States) to define who we are here in Canada” (Tomkins, 1981, as cited Butler et al., 2015, p.45). This latent nationalism with the emphasis on the multi-nations is not only “nation”, but also “land” demarcates curriculum studies in Canada.


v This refers to M. Johnson, Jr.’s publication (1967), Definitions and models in curriculum theory, Educational Theory, 7(2), 127-140. M. Johnson Jr. is Dean of the School of Education at the Cornell University. In this article, Johnson Jr. (1967) examined various curriculum theorists’ notions of curriculum and discussed the shortcomings of these “currently popular definition[s]” (p. 130). Johnson Jr. critiqued that the educational practitioners, at the time, were more “interested in curriculum,” especially on “how to organize and direct professional and lay groups effectively for curriculum improvement,” but they were not “particularly concerned with
The “majority of educationists, educational practitioners and scholars active in curriculum reform are oriented toward improvement rather than understanding” (p. 127). The term “curriculum” had been “confused with curriculum development” (p. 129) by some curriculum theorists. This can be “evidenced as late as 1962,” Johnson Jr. pointed out. Furthermore, curriculum and instruction were often considered as a system and the concept of curriculum was considered as “planned learning experience” (Johnson Jr., 1967, p. 129). Johnson Jr. (1967) stressed that the pitfall of this well-received definition was that it “stipulated curriculum is a structured series of intended learning outcomes” and “curriculum prescribes (or at least anticipates the results of instruction” (p. 130). Thus, curriculum is “concerned with ends” and curriculum indicates “what is to be learned, not why it should be learned” (Johnson Jr., 1967, p. 130).


This book is a collection of articles drawn from a wide range of arts and academic disciplines. It is edited by Geoffrey Milburn (Member of the history department of the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario) and John Herbert (a member of UNESCO at the University of Malaysia) and was published by Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1974. These collected works “attempt to highlight important questions and offer new interpretations and points of view” (Milburn, 1974, p. 75) on the “Canadian identity on one hand and the role of the nation’s schools in fostering that identity on the other” (Milburn, 1974, p. 75). Among the wide range of scholars’ contributions, for example, Max van Manen suggests that there are difficulties in attempting to define nationalism; George Tomkins discusses the growth of national consciousness in Canada and the development of Canadian studies in the nation’s schools; Peter Regenstreif discusses the ways in which certain national institutions have served actually as brakes on the development of distinct national identity; Jill Conway examines the notion of identity through the eyes of an Australian-born historian; Walter Pitman, a former member of both the federal and Ontario legislatures, reflects on his own experience of political awareness among high school students; Canadian poet, Alden Nowlan, discusses the Canadian identity and Canadian poet, Don Gutteridge, creates his own methods of introducing Canadian children to literature.

Provinces and territories including: Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan.
Chapter 2: Understanding as a Mode of Being

2.1 Introduction

Education is Being.

(Aoki, 1991, p. xi)

For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression “being.” We however, who used to think we understand it, have now become perplexed.

(Plato, Sophist 244a, as cited in Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. xxix)

“Education is Being”°xi affirms Ted Aoki (1991, p. xi) in the opening statement of his collaborative work with five American educators. While these thought-provoking words symphonize the voices of these five educators, Aoki also shares continental philosopher Martin Heidegger’s deep concern about a doubled forgetfulness of being that characterizes our historical present. Heidegger asserts that not only have we forgotten the question of being and how to ask it, but this forgetting is also no longer noticed, as it too has been forgotten. Heidegger’s (1953/2010) analogy is that before we “anew the question of the meaning of being,” we need to “reawake an understanding for the meaning of this question” (p. xxix), as he invites his readers to enter the gate of his 1953 masterpiece, Being and Time.

Why is the search for the meaning of being important to education? Aoki (1991) points out that, reflective of Heidegger’s explication of a doubled forgetfulness of being, many educators in North America including himself have “generally become enamored with scientism and instrumentalism” (p. xi). Instrumentalism Aoki defines through the words of a South Korean scholar, Dr. Bom Mo Chung (1981/2010):

Instrumentalism is to see the present moment in life as means to the next, including the present job, status, residence, human relatives and even you yourself. What you do and have now is of no intrinsic value of its own but only of instrumental value to the future… Life seen strictly from such a view has no value, no meaning of its own. Out of
instrumentalism so defined, what we call culture would not be born nor thrive…Those who do not see intrinsic value in whatever he is doing…are effectively severed from cultural life, creation and enjoyment…They are alienated person…haunted by ontological doubts about one’s own being (as cited in Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 225).

In turn, educators seem to have become “inured to the texture of the half-life of who they might be” (p. xi), and Aoki is critical about the scientism and instrumentalism embedded in our way of understanding education. For Aoki, this dominant way of understanding education is cast in the technocratic power of scientism. This linear view perceives education as the pre-chosen end of curricular goals. Grounded in this belief, the language of curriculum speaks of education as a technical means-ends process, wherein “instructing students becomes in-structuring students in the image of the given” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 418). In this understanding, students become objects rather than subjects who speak the linguistics of humanness and diversity. Although the array of curricular meaning may appear as diverse and plural, it is ultimately “an illusion,” reduced to “a singular meaning of curriculum” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 417). This ends-means paradigm ignores the possibility of human potential, and this provision of universal education comes at a cost to humanity and its cultural diversity. Aoki (1983/2005) is concerned about this mono-vision of understanding; he points out that educators “seem to be caught up in a singular meaning of the word curriculum” and that such instrumentalism amounts to a “crisis in Western reason” (p. 113). This crisis is a “fundamental contradiction between a perspective committed to technological progress and that committed to the improvement of personal and situational life” (p. 113). Aoki suggests that this crisis in Western reasoning reflects an internal crisis in understanding. In the progressive modern world, while scientists unceasingly seek the advancement of knowledge by making discoveries about the external world through systematic
methods, not much effort has been invested in understanding human life itself. The blind spot in this seeking of knowledge from the external world is the lack of a deep understanding of being.

Stemming from Heidegger, understanding of being is for Aoki a historical interpretation of *Dasein*. *Dasein* is Heidegger’s way of referring to both the human being and the ways of being that humans live. Returning to the world to question the meaning of being, Heidegger turns towards the worldly entangled lived moments where “human life can reveal itself in its specificity” (Safranski, 1998, p. 146). Philosophy, to Heidegger, “becomes the art of the growth of *Dasein* for itself” (p. 146). Rather than seeking for method, for formalization or generalization, Aoki drew near to Heidegger’s approach to exploring what Bauman (1978) describes as “the ontological foundation of the understanding which men and women reach by the very fact of being-in-the-world” (p. 149). To move away from this traditional metaphysical way of thinking, the treatment of such a question for Heidegger cannot be an “emphatic one” but is instead a “semantic one,” that is: “What do we mean when we use the term ‘being’ (*seiend)*, in what ‘sense’ do we speak of Being (*Sein*)?” (Safranski, 2002, p. 149). Thus, for Heidegger, understanding is not a lengthy operational manual that outlines the operations of what forms life, but rather a primordial mode of *being* in human life itself.

For Aoki (1991), moving away from the abstraction of theory and attuning to the significance of personhood is educational. Moreover, the “narrative inquiry of lived experiences can disclose the existential texture of the beings” (p. xi) as we, the educators, have come to be. By probing the narratives of personhood as self-engaged with surrounding circumstances and questing and questioning for deeper meaning in the affairs of life, a situated, biographical understanding emerges through the composition of the enchanting discourse of culture, history, place, politics, class, gender, the way of knowing and the greater social welfare.
Considering Aoki’s concern about the linear way of thinking and about Heidegger’s double forgetfulness of being, I draw primarily from Aoki’s (1979) early writing entitled “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity” to offer a portrayal of Aoki’s childhood, adolescence and early career. Moreover, the significance of outlining Aoki’s life history is to illuminate the situated-ness of Aoki’s fundamental thinking. While affirming the Heideggerian concept of the historicity of Dasein – that the existential meaning of man should be understood as contextualized by a flow of concrete events of life history – I follow the momentous life events from Aoki’s own narrations. Thus, through contextualizing Aoki’s early writings, in this chapter, I engage with Aoki’s critical reflective and unique style of theorizing, and I suggest that understanding, for Aoki, is a mode of being in the world, which reveals pedagogical significance. Now, I take you back to 1919, to a coal-mining town in Cumberland, British Columbia, Canada.
2.2 Being A Mixed-Up Hybrid Kid (1919-1932)

2.2.1 Childhood in Cumberland (1919-1932)

I was, since very early, a mixed-up hybrid kid. Figure 2-1

(Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 304)

Figure 2-1 From left to right: brothers, Tats, Harry and Ted. Image released by Cumberland Museum and Archives.

Ted Tetsuo Aoki 青木哲夫 was born on October 17th, 1919, the first of seven children, to a Japanese immigrant family in the coal-mining town of Cumberland. Cumberland lies by the foothills of the Beaufort Range, perched on the eastern edge of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Cumberland was a bustling coal-mining community from 1888 to 1966, with workers streaming in from across Canada, Europe, China and Japan. Despite the discriminative working conditions – such as earning half the wages of their European co-workers, the 1923 Oriental Exclusion Act and other hardships – Japanese and Chinese mining settlers established communities of their own on the periphery of the main English town lorded over by the huge estate of the Dunsmuirs in Cumberland. The earliest Japanese miners and their families had
settled in 1891, along with a few merchants who established businesses over the years. Later, from 1914 to 1939, the women even had a traditional Japanese tea garden at Comox Lake, not far from Cumberland.

Aoki’s father, Sadayoshi, was a sensei (schoolteacher). His mother, Masa, was an accomplished pianist who taught Aoki’s younger brother Harry (Hiro-o), who had a talent for music, to play the piano. Aoki’s father also loved music. A big Duke Ellington fan, he spent hours listening to records with his children. Aoki’s parents were also educational diplomats from Tokyo, employed by the Japanese government to open and run Japanese language schools abroad. Responding to requests from the Japanese community in Cumberland, Aoki’s parents came to this small town and operated a Japanese language school Figure 2-2 – 日本學校 – where Aoki and other children of the community attended class in the afternoon, six days a week.

Figure 2-2 Mr. & Mrs. Aoki, center back row, and students in front of the Japanese Language School in Cumberland. Image released by Cumberland Museum and Archives.

At this school, Aoki learned the Japanese language, Haiku and Japanese historical heritage. He was especially fascinated by a literary story of a young man who was executed because of his vociferous resistance to Japan’s ideology of island isolationism after he was
caught leaving Japan for the West. Aoki was also enchanted by the ambivalence in the essays, written in Japanese, by Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, a Greek Irish migrant from England to the New England states and then to Japan who later adopted a poetic Japanese name, Koizumi Yakumo – 小泉八雲 (translated literally as “eight floating clouds over a fountain”).

During the mornings, Aoki and the children from the community attended the public schools – called 白人學校 or “a school for whites” by Aoki and students like him. At this school, Aoki (1979/2005) was “encouraged into the discursive world of English” (p. 304), and he quickly learned to speak English out loud and to speak Japanese silently, due to the “language code of recess break” (p. 303). On the way to Japanese school, however, Aoki was always “jabbering in Japanese” with his fellow classmates. In addition to the English language, Aoki was also being schooled in the “exciting gung-ho narratives of Western discoveries and exploits” (p. 304), such as the discovery of American continents new to Europeans and the daunting exploits of Ferdinand Magellan. This childhood experience of double schooling “positioned” him in the midst of “twofold Pacific languages and histories,” and growing up in a small but diverse coalmining town, Aoki said, “I was, since very early, a mixed-up hybrid kid” (p. 304).

2.2.2 Questioning the Meaning of Being

The settlement history of Cumberland is a rich part of Aoki’s childhood, and it also reflects a part of Canadian history. Division and segregation revealed themselves in the Japanese and Chinese cemeteries in Cumberland, which became historical sites. Growing up in Cumberland is much reflected in Aoki’s writings. Thus, it is significant to understand Aoki’s situated-ness in both childhood and adulthood. Additionally, by probing the meaning of these experiences of “being,” Aoki, traversing through time, let them manifest themselves in his intellectual works, where we walk with him through the layers of his narrations.
In one of his early writings, “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity” (1979/2005), speaking at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association, Aoki approached the conference theme “Multiculturalism, Ethnicity, and Curriculum” with the question, “How many of you are ethnics?” In the assembled group of two hundred participants, about fifty hands went up. Aoki then pointed out the irony of this phenomenon, which is that likely most of the group, a hundred and fifty people, considered themselves “non-ethnic.” Aoki reckoned that many of the people perhaps felt that “ethnics are those people over there, about whom we write, about whom we talk, about whom we film, about whom we package into curriculum, about whom we conference” (p. 333). In this way, “ethnicity” tends to conceal much of what we see and read about. Here, heeding Heidegger’s (1953/2010) standpoint that “the question of the meaning of being is the most universal and emptiest” (p. 37), Aoki (1979/2005) pointed out that the question of ethnicity has become the most universal and emptiest, explored merely through “object studying about ethnic people” (p. 333).

Moving away from this objectifying way of studying about ethnicity, Aoki turned to the ground of his own lived experience to disclose what he calls “experiencing ethnicity as experiencing subjectivity” (p. 333). The experience of “being” a Japanese Canadian within his own historical situation is the way he came to know “what it means to be ethnic” in the time and space where he was born and has lived.
2.3 Experiencing the Dialectic of the Individual Being and Social Being (1932-1943)

2.3.1 Being an Ahistorical Black Head in Japan?

I guess, I was on a search for the inner ṭheaning of my isness. Figure 2-3

(Aoki, 1979 / 2005, p. 336)

Figure 2-3 Calligraphy at the Japanese Language School. Image released by Cumberland Museum Archives.

Aoki’s (1979/2005) Japanese Canadian hybridity was complicated even more in 1932, when Aoki and his family spent five months in Japan. For the first time, at the age of 13, Aoki found himself “being thrust into a sea of black heads”xiii (p. 334). In Canada, as a “mixed-up hybrid kid” amongst the Occidentals, Aoki’s life was not one of belonging to the dominant mainstream group. Along the crowded sidewalks of Tokyo, with his own black head merging into a sea of black heads, Aoki found the same strange feeling of “belonging and not belonging” (p. 333). “Why was I so conscious about being among black heads when the native Japanese were not? Why wasn’t I one of them with them?” (p. 334). Aoki questioned his own being and belonging. Not sharing common personal histories with these Japanese people, Aoki realized that his past and present being – a double schooled, hyphenated Japanese Canadian – had made him
become an ahistorical being in Tokyo.

And yet, when Aoki visited the ancient temple and gardens in Nikko, his thoughts transcended. Nikko, which literally means sunshine or sunlight, is a small town just north of the city of Tokyo – an ancient city grown out of the establishment of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples on the mountainous site. Before Aoki’s trip to Japan, he had already learned in the Japanese Language School in Cumberland about the majestic scenery of Nikko through the saying “Nikko wo minakerebakekkō to iuna,” which means, “Don’t say you’re fulfilled until you’ve seen Nikko” (p. 334). While Aoki meandered along the pebbled trails of Nikko, he was deeply touched by the mysterious essence revealed in the landscape of shrines and temples under the unfolding sky, in between mountains and waterfalls. With the lingering echoes of “Nikko wo minakerebakekkō to iuna,” Aoki found that he “seemed to transcend the merely physical [black heads] and to come close to what is humanly true” (p. 334).

What appealed to Aoki even more was Matsushima, further north of Nikko. Matsu 松 (pine) Shima 島 (island), is famous for its bay, dotted by over 260 small pine clad islets – hence its name. The view of Matsushima changes from place to place and from season to season, and its beauty has been written about in Waka 和歌 (long poems), or Haiku 俳句 (short poems) since ancient times. The Haiku poet Matsuo Basho wrote in his legendary work The Narrow Road to the Deep North about the road that traversed Matsushima Bay formed by more than 260 motley kinds of islands in different shapes and sizes:

Matsushima ya,
A Matsushima ya,
Matsushima ya.

It was Basho’s Haiku that Aoki had learned in the Cumberland Japanese school. The blue sea
and the dotted islands surged through him.

Aoki and his family also visited the city of Honshu where Aoki’s mother came from. At the plaza of Hirosaki Castle, Aoki found his “grandpa in armour” (p. 335). Aoki’s grandfather, a samurai of Lord Tsugaru was once photographed as a model for the making of the lord’s sculpture. This photograph had been a part of Aoki’s family album, and “grandpa in armour” was the way Aoki knew him. When Aoki and his family were “approaching the castle from the open plaza, at the end of which, etched against the white walls of the castle, stood a sculptured figure” Aoki spotted the “dozo” (statue) and shouted “ojisan” (grandfather) and ran across the plaza to be with him. As Aoki recognized the sculpture as “my grandfather in his usual armour,” (p. 335), in some mysterious way, Aoki recalled this vivid memory. Hirosaki, Matsushima, Nikko, Cumberland, beneath is the deeply experienced life prosaic, a navel fleeing, that Aoki “knew so much of but he knew not how to say” (p. 334), perhaps only through the ruminations of the words, Pine Islets…Matsushima ya, A Matsushima ya, Matsushima ya… 松島やああ松島や松島や。

Lifted by the words in Basho’s Haiku, back in Tokyo, Aoki was puzzled by the parades of elementary school children, each toting a wooden gun on their shoulder, “led by their lady teachers also toting wooden guns” (p. 335). Boys and girls were “marching along the streets of Tokyo to the rhythm of oichi-ni, oichi-ni (one-two, one-two)” (p. 335). Visiting the naval yard at Ujina in the Inland Sea of Japan as a preteen Japanese Canadian youngster, Aoki “couldn’t make sense of schools marching,” nor could he “make sense of a naval fleet in the beautiful Inland Sea” (p. 335). At the time, he was not yet aware that after World War I, three allied nations – the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan – started a naval arms race to extend their dominance in the world. The naval rivalry between the United States and Japan had become
increasingly tense over the years, and between the years 1933 and 1934 Japan tried to consolidate their position in China. In 1934, when China was governed largely by the Chiang Kai-shek regime, with help from the militancy in Japan, the former boy emperor of China, Pu-Yi 溥儀, was crowned at the age of 28 as monarch of Manchukuo 滿州國. In 1934, Japan announced to the world that it had “special responsibilities in East Asia” and Japan would withdraw from the Washington and London agreements concerning naval limitations. While militancy was pervasively sweeping through Japan and patriotism was pumping through the heads of school children, flying flags bedecked naval vessels ready for maneuver. Japan was ready for conquest.

“What did this experience of five-month stay in Japan mean for a British Columbia-born Japanese Canadian?” (p. 335), Aoki asked. As a young adult in Japan, Aoki said, “I was both Japanese and non-Japanese, … both insider and outsider, ‘in’ yet not fully in, ‘out’ yet not fully out” (p. 335). Digesting these feelings of being and belonging, historical and yet ahistorical, identity, for Aoki, was not only an individual internal being, but also a perplexing external being simultaneously situated within the social context.

2.3.2 Being a Historical Black Head in Canada?

In 1934, Aoki’s family moved from Cumberland to Vancouver, where Aoki’s parents opened another Japanese language school. Vancouver became home for Aoki and his family. Here, Aoki attended Britannia Secondary School with his younger brother, Harry. Both of them were keen athletes and won the Greater Vancouver rugby championship for the school two years in a row. In Vancouver, Aoki attended the University of British Columbia (UBC) and earned a Bachelor of Commerce degree in 1941. UBC – an “Alma Mater” and “foster mother,” as Aoki (1979/2005, p. 336) called it – was another place that taught Aoki a few lessons about social
conditions. At the time when Aoki was studying at UBC, Aoki and his “ethnic” colleagues learned that the Faculties of Law and Applied Science and Medicine and the School of Education disallowed the entrance of Japanese Canadian students (p. 336). In other words, the professions of law, engineering, medicine and education were reserved for certain people. UBC’s motto at the time was “Tuum Est,” which means “It is up to you.” For a Japanese Canadian like Aoki, this motto belied the unseen ethnic “fence” erected around so-called “liberal” studies (p. 336).

Before the event of Pearl Harbor, Aoki had been a cadet in the Canadian Officers Training Corps for two years. “Yes, I marched toting a relic Lee Enfield (as lifeless as the wooden guns the Japanese school children carried) with a ‘professor’ lieutenant up front barking the rhythm of left right, left right” (p. 336), recalls Aoki. Then, in the early fall of 1941, Aoki was summoned to the basement of the University Administration Building at UBC by the Commanding Officer, Colonel Shrum (p. 336). Aoki was questioned about what he would do should there be a war between Japan and Canada. “I am a Canadian, Sir!” (p. 336), responded Aoki in an assured voice. “That was a damn good honest answer” (p. 336), Aoki thought. It was not enough, however. Aoki received an honorable discharge from his Majesty’s service two weeks after. “Rough? Yes! Rough! Rough on a fellow seriously trying to find meaning in his life, a reason for being” (p. 336), Aoki wrote, with liberal use of exclamation marks. I can hear his voice shouting over the hurts of these life experiences that impacted him. Nonetheless, “even with the few hurts,” Aoki probed deeper into “what it means to be a Japanese Canadian in Canada” (p. 336).

### 2.3.3 *Dasein, Mode of Encounter and Its Temporality*

To probe deeper into *what it means to be a Japanese Canadian in Canada* (p. 336), Aoki, intentionally avoiding any form of totalizing thought, approached the concept of “ethnicity.”
Before so doing, Aoki needed to shed light on the blind spot of totalizing thought and in his preparation of such ground work reflected much of Heidegger’s explication on *Dasein*, modes of encounter and its temporality. For Heidegger, the meaning of being is *Dasein* that asks the question “what is Being (Sein).” *Dasein* is Heidegger’s way of referring to both the human being and to the ways of being that humans dwell in the world. It comes from the German verb *sein* which means to exist or to be with a compound *da* as preposition meaning here or there depending on the context. The verb *dasein* means to exist, to be here or to be there. For the noun *das Dasein*, Heidegger also emphasizes that the root meaning of being here dwells in there-being to suggest an un-affixed, always layered, contextual essence for humans being. Why does Heidegger speak of humans being in this way? In *Being and Time*, passage 42, Heidegger (1953/2010) describes:

The *whatness* (essentia) of this being must be understood in terms of its being (existentia) insofar as one can speak of it at all…. The “essence” [“Wesen”] of *Dasein* lies in its existence [“*Existenz*”]. The characteristics to be found in this being are thus not present “attributes” of an objectively present being which has such and such an outward appearance,” but rather possible ways for it to be, and only this (p. 41).

In other words, the essence of *Dasein* carries an existential meaning (existentia) that cannot only be portrayed and understood by an outward appearance (essentia). In turn, *Dasein* is generally determined by always being-mine. The existential analysis and the interpretation of *Dasein*, for Heidegger (1953/2010), is twofold: the priority of existential meaning over the objective outward appearance; and *Dasein* as an internal reflection of “always-being-mine” exhibits an analysis of this *being* of *Dasein* that confronts a unique phenomenon within the world. As such, “world itself is constitutive of *Dasein*” (p. 51) and formation of the phenomenon
of world requires an “insight into the fundamental structures of Dasein” (p. 51). For Heidegger, 

*Dasein* is a being that understands its own being through its being-in-the-world and *Dasein* needs 
to be spoken with a personal pronoun, I or You. In turn, *Das Dasein ist seine Erschlossenheit* 
(existence is one’s own disclosure) is the fundamental message of Heidegger.

In so understating, *Dasein* can never be “laboriously patched together from bits and 

pieces of empirical evidence,” but the fundamental a priori of [being-in-the-world] as we know 

and can know it” (Bauman, 1978, p. 154). Heidegger uses a compounded expression – Being-in- 
the-world – to indicate a “unified phenomenon” as the basis of what constitutes the being of 

*Dasein*. Thus, the point of departure for the analysis of *Dasein*, for Heidegger (1953/2010), 

resides in the interpretation of this unified phenomenon of being-in-the-world. Therefore, being-in-the-world “must be seen as a whole” (Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 533), as Heidegger stresses 

and Aoki’s critical reflective narrations echo. Heidegger’s existential analysis and interpretation 

of *Dasein* are reflected in Aoki’s (1979/2005) efforts to avoid thinking “ethnicity” as an object of 

study (p. 333) and to think of it instead as an experience. With a close reading, we can trace 

Heidegger’s explication on the mode of encounter of *Dasein* to Aoki’s narrations about his 

family visit to Japan.

Aoki made a clear connection between internal and external worlds when exploring the 

meaning of being in terms of the experience of a dialectical relation between individual and 

social being. This reflects much of Heidegger’s (1953/2010) claim that the “worldly character of 

the surrounding world announc[es] itself in inner worldly beings” (p. 72). As Heidegger 

specifies, “world itself is not an innerworldly being, and yet it determines innerworldly beings to 

such an extent that they can only be encountered and discovered and show themselves in their 

being insofar as ‘there is’ world” (p. 72). To depict Heidegger’s rather complicated claim, Aoki
skillfully incorporated a fine image of “black head” to intertwine Dasein and the modes of encounter.

Aoki projected black head as a merely physical object and being a black head for Aoki, was a given-to-hand (Zuhandenheit⁴) reality that dissolved in his daily existence – a “mixed-up hybrid” being. Heeding Heidegger’s (1953/2010) analysis, this mode of encounter is normally unproblematic, because it is “being circumstanced” and Dasein is “in its familiarity with significance” (p.85), as Aoki previously depicted his childhood in Cumberland. This mode of being is what Aoki described as his familiarity with what his world consisted of. Therefore, being a black head was circumstanced and unproblematic for understanding his existence and the surrounding world. However, in this familiarity, Heidegger (1953/2010) points out, “Dasein can lose itself in what it encounters within the world and be numbed by it” (p. 75). Thus, the interpretation of this everydayness without problematizing the condition is “confined itself to the analysis of indifferent inauthentic existing” (Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 233). In other words, if later Aoki had not problematized his condition of being a black head in Canada and along the side walk of Tokyo, Japan, he would have confined his existence to the merely perceived difference, which is inauthentic to his innerworldly meaning. To further explain the understanding of the being of innerworldly beings, Heidegger (1953/2010) raises a set of important questions: “Why can the worldly character of innerworldly beings appear? How is the referential totality (Verweisungsganzheit) in which circumspection ‘moves’ to be understood more precisely? When this totality is broken, the presence of being is thrust to the fore” (p. 75).

To illuminate the path of Heidegger’s query, Aoki probed deeper into his experience of walking along the crowded sidewalks of Tokyo. “Being thrust into a sea of black heads” (Aoki 1979/2005, p. 334), Aoki connected the merely physical appearance of being a black head to his
inner worldly being – of a double schooled, hyphenated Japanese Canadian – to illuminate the
“worldly character of innerworldly beings.” Thus, Aoki’s presence of being an ahistorical black
head, broke the totality of the “sea of black heads” of native Japanese along the side walk in
Japan. By pointing out his not commonly shared history with the native Japanese, Aoki more
precisely revealed that a merely physical black head being is only a referential totality and by
connecting one’s inner worldly being, one’s circumspection can be understood more precisely.
The innerworldly being, according to Heidegger, is self-referring of Dasein, and it needs to be
understood ontologically. What Heidegger (1953/2010) meant is, “it is in its familiar being-in-
relevance, understanding holds itself before that disclosure as that within which its reference
moves” (p. 85). Heeding Heidegger’s claim, Aoki in his narrations moved thematically further
from the side walk on the street of Japan to his visits to the temple and gardens in Nikko and then
onto the Hirosaki Castle and Matsushima. Understanding the innerworldly meaning of each visit,
for Aoki, was to find what it meant in his innerworldly being in relevance to what he had learnt
in the Language School, to his grandfather and to his everydayness in Cumberland, Canada. In
other words, understanding is a mode of being in which Dasein finds its meaning from the lived
experience in the world.

Thus far, Aoki affirmed that what Heidegger deems as knowledge is more than
abstraction laid on top of abstraction, a thing or collection of things disconnected from tangible
experiences. Rather, it is revealed in series of life experiences that intimately compose Dasein,
human existence and its fundamental in-the-world being. In other words, theoretical knowledge
is a secondary derivative of being-in-the-world. Also, echoing Heidegger’s assertion that
temporality is an important key to interpreting the meaning of Dasein, Aoki tactfully teased out
these momentous life events to probe the meaning of being. Temporality, for Heidegger, is
primary to the understanding of Being, because it makes historically possible the kind of Being that *Dasein* itself possesses, regardless of whether *Dasein* is considered as an entity within time or not. Thus, a fundamental task of interpreting being, is working out first the temporality of Being. Also, the understanding of being can only be radically clarified as an essential factor in the being of *Dasein*. Therefore, it is only through temporality that the meaning of Being can hope to be articulated. Aoki discloses Heidegger’s assertion on *Dasein’s* temporality and the ways of articulation through his unique style of “theorizing” his experience of the dialectical relation between internal being and social being.

2.4 Being the Homeless at Home

2.4.1 Being in a Bewildering School Day – A Story of June Aoki (1941-1942)

The characteristic of being-in was then made more concretely visible through the everyday publicness of the they which brings tranquillized self-assurance-being-at-home with all its obviousness, into the average everydayness of Dasein. Anxiety, on the other hand, fetches Dasein back out of its entangled adsorption in the “world.” Everyday familiarity collapses. Dasein is individualized, but as being-in-the-world.

(Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 182)

In probing further into the question of what it means to be a Japanese Canadian in Canada, Aoki also shared his wife June’s story of her being-ness in 1941, during the World War II years. On “a cloudy day in early April,” June – a Japanese nisei (二世, second generation), seventh grade student at Fanny Bay School, a two-room school about forty miles from the city of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island in British Columbia – went to school “solely for the purpose of leaving school” (Aoki, 1992/2005, p. 193). It was a “bewildering day for many of us” (p. 193), June recalled.

As the military alliances of the Axis\textsuperscript{xi} became more aggressive, and the ambitious Empire of Japan attacked the American naval base of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii sparking the outbreak of the Pacific War, in 1941 Canada declared war against Japan. In Canada, the
emergency War Measures Act had already been invoked in 1939, and after Canada declared war on Japan in 1941 further orders were passed against Japanese Canadians. Under the War Measures Act, Order-in-Council P.C. 9591 required all Japanese “nationals” to register by February 7 with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens. Over 23,000 Japanese Canadians lined up to be fingerprinted and photographed, and were issued an alien registration number by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Their registration cards bore the stamp “Canadian born” or “Naturalized.” By this act, Japanese Canadians were hastily declared to be enemy aliens. Their own country rejected their belonging-ness, and their being-ness became the face of the enemy in the eyes of their Occidental fellow citizens. Twelve hundred Japanese fishing boats were rounded up and detained by the Canadian Navy. As a Japanese issei (一世, a first-generation immigrant, born in Japan), June’s father had been “sent to a road camp near Blue River in the far-off wilds of the Rockies” (p. 193). The British Columbia Ministry of Education had ordered the closure of the Japanese Language School that June attended. Fear and uncertainty were flung into the air, and rumors has been circulating at the school that “we were to be moved, first to Vancouver, then somewhere into the interior of British Columbia and possibly beyond” (p. 193), June recalled. Charlie, a friend of June’s brother, speculated that “all Japanese would be herded en masse to Hastings Park… that way only one bomb will do it!” (p. 194).

Amid these disturbing rumors and the dramatic changes suddenly affecting daily life, on this particular April day, June and her Japanese schoolmates went to school and as soon as class began, cleaned out their desks and returned textbooks that belonged to the school, gathering their books and belongings while their “Occidental schoolmates silently watched [their] movement” (p. 194). With their arms full, walking cautiously step-by-step down the stairs they “winded their way along the worn path of the school playground, homeward bound” (p. 194). Somehow, June
knew this leaving was different from her “usual taking leave at the end of the school day” (p. 194), and her “usually happy feet had no skip to them” (p. 194). She felt emptiness, knowing she was “leaving behind what had become so much a part of her everyday existence” (p. 194), a place like home where she belonged. Not knowing what to say in a silent farewell, as June was walking away from the school “something called upon [her] to turn around for a last look” (p. 194). “On the balcony of the school stood, alone, my teacher, Mr. McNab” (p. 194), the teacher who had encouraged the Japanese Canadian students in the school to display their Japanese kimonos and perform Japanese dance, odori, to Japanese music. He was “watching us as if to keep guard over us in our departure” (p. 194), June recalled. It was that moment of feeling a teacher’s guardian-like watchfulness – a deep seeing that embodied his full presence, a thoughtful being-ness – that most resonated in the heart of a seventh-grade student who was about to face the upheavals of relocation.

Little did June know that all the rumors would ultimately become true experiences. As the war proceeded, Japanese Canadians were given five options: men could be assigned to work in road camps or move to certain self-supported areas; women and children who had no support could move to detainment camps in the remote B.C. interior or move to eastern Canada in the face of hostility in most of the country; or, families could stay together if they would contract to work in the sugar beet farms in Alberta or Manitoba. By 1942, Order-in-Council P.C. 365 created a 100-mile protected area on the coast of British Columbia where Japanese Canadian men, who had become enemy aliens, were prohibited to enter and curfews were imposed.

The hostility against Japanese Canadians was infectiously spreading. Several communities displayed banners reading “Japs keep moving, this is a white man’s neighborhood,” or, “Japs, keep out, you are not wanted,” on their front porches. Over 8,000 Japanese Canadians
from the coastal area were detained at Hastings Park on the east side of the city of Vancouver before being sent to internment sites or across Canada.\textsuperscript{xviii} Mass evacuations began and approximately 22,000 Japanese Canadians – men, women and children, dispossessed of the accumulated wealth of a lifetime – were rounded up and placed in remote internment camps in the interior of B.C. where they spent the remainder of the war years in exile in their homeland. The magnitude of the discriminative social conditions facing Japanese Canadians disrupted their lifeworld. For Aoki (1979/2005), the question of “what it means to be a Japanese Canadian in Canada” is a quest for understanding, not an object that one studies about. It is a question of one’s being and belonging, of “experiencing subjectively one’s lived situation from one’s own ethnic perspective” (p. 335). This quest for understanding takes place at the very primordial foundation of human existence.

2.4.2 Being and Becoming a Teacher in Alberta (1944-1964)

I speak now from the perspective of a Japanese Canadian Nisei and evacuee…. who as an “evacuee” holds a special experiential relationship with those who relocated me, the “evacuators.”


Being an evacuee among the Japanese Canadian Nisei, during the winter of 1944, while felling timber at Burmis in the Crow’s Nest Pass area, Aoki responded to “a newspaper advertisement calling upon Grade 11 students to become teachers” (p. 340). To transcend from being an “economical object” as a sugar-beet worker during his internment years to become a teacher in Alberta was not a voyage without hurdles, as Aoki later candidly shared in a dialogue with Chief Maurice Wolfe of the Ermineskin Band at the Hobbema Indian Reserves south of Edmonton in 1971.

Meeting with Chief Maurice Wolfe was perhaps another eminent life event for Aoki in pondering the question of “what it means to be a Japanese Canadian in Canada.” In 1971, Aoki
and a colleague, Dr. Ralph Sabey, were jointly looking for an opportunity to work with the people of Hobbema on a Native Curriculum Project to include the “insider’s perspective on what it means to be schooled” (p. 338). Aoki later reflected on his naiveté in mounting such a curriculum project.

The conversation with Chief Wolfe remained a vivid memory for Aoki in the contemplation of his experience of being a Japanese Canadian evacuee and the endeavor to liberate himself from his “objectified condition” (p. 339) after having been partially stripped of his history, familiar surroundings and circle of livelihood. Drawing a parallel between the experience of Japanese Canadian evacuees – the “expropriation of their properties and their forced evacuation” (p. 338) to work as sugar beet laborers on Southern Alberta farms – and the experience of Canada’s First Nations, Chief Wolfe asked Aoki “how the Japanese Canadians transcended ‘the state of being economic objects’ (this is how Chief Wolfe viewed sugar-beet workers) and how they transformed themselves ‘to become beings with increased control of their own destinies’” (p. 339). For Aoki, Chief Wolfe viewed humanity “in a dialectical relationship between one’s subjective being and one’s objective world in contrast to a popular view of people as strictly economic beings that is an objectified and ‘thingified’ view of human kind, shorn of humanness and human dignity” (p. 339). Chief Wolfe wanted to know how the Japanese Canadian exiles rose from that objectified condition as sugar beet workers to the point where they are again subjects of their own thoughts and actions, being in the world and becoming human beings again. Aoki answered, “in the only way [he] knew” (p. 339), by sharing with Chief Wolfe his personal experience of becoming and being a teacher during war time in Alberta.

The invocation in Canada of the emergency War Measures Act in 1941 had disrupted Japanese Canadians’ lifeworld, but there was another emergency measure in store for Aoki – one
that “turned out to be…a personal transformation from a sugar beet worker to a teacher” (p. 339).

At the outbreak of World War II, along with the national War Measures Act, the Alberta provincial government also issued a School Emergency Measures Act due to a serious shortage in the teaching force during war time. This provincial emergency measure called for Grade 11 students to undergo a three month “crash program” including a “9-day practicum” to be “followed by two summer schools at the University of Alberta” (p. 339), for a teaching certificate. In response to this, during the winter of 1944, Aoki applied to the program and was accepted by the Calgary Normal School with his “fully qualified” (p. 340) Bachelor of Commerce degree from UBC. However, for a Japanese Canadian evacuee, attending a program for a period of two and a half months in Calgary was another adventure.

According to the bylaws of Calgary at the time, being a Japanese Canadian evacuee, Aoki was forbidden to enter the confined city area. To attend the program, Aoki was required to apply for temporary permission to reside within Calgary. While waiting for permission, Aoki stayed with a Japanese couple who were “working at Hay’s Dairy just outside the city limits” (p. 340). In the cold February winter, as a daily routine, Aoki commuted to Calgary “on the 7:00 a.m. milk wagon” and “Greyhound bussed home at night” (p. 340). The report for Aoki’s application eventually came out; a “six-to-five vote of the council referred Aoki’s case to the city commissioners” (p. 340) and he was permitted to attend the Normal School for a period of two and a half months, despite certain discriminative and harsh comments in the deliberation. Two months later, in April, Aoki had a “temporary ticket as a teacher” (p. 340).

Holding a temporary ticket was not a ticket to a smooth ride in terms of becoming a teacher. Aoki quickly learned that “when the government spoke of a shortage of teachers, they had in mind ‘typical’ teachers. There was no shortage of Japanese Canadian teachers…. there
was one too many” (p. 340). The Normal School principal “tried hard to locate a job” (p. 340) for Aoki and eventually found him a job at a one-room Grade 1-8 school at a Hutterite colony, a hundred kilometers east of Calgary. Around the same time, Aoki also received two other job offers “out of the blue” (p. 340) – one as “a radio broadcaster at BBC, London, England to propaganda broadcast in Japanese to Japan for the British Army” and another as an “officer-instructor of the Japanese language, giving instruction to the Canadian Intelligence Service” (p. 341). It was not a hard decision for Aoki to make; he accepted the job at the Hutterite school as “caretaker, teacher, principal” (p. 340). However, being a Japanese Canadian teaching on a Hutterite colony was a “stranger’s existence” (p. 340) for Aoki. It was a life with little contact with fellow teachers, as he was only permitted to enter the “sector of the world associated with the ‘English’ school (the other school being the German school)” (p. 340). Even after becoming a teacher, existing as a Japanese Canadian meant Aoki was kept apart from the mainstream. For Aoki, this was not an “unaccustomed kind of experience;” still, it was a move in his “pedagogic career” (p. 340) that Aoki never regretted.

A year later, in the spring of 1946, Aoki “scouted for another job” (p. 341) in Foremost, a village in the southeastern part of Alberta. He came to know the superintendent of schools in Foremost and enquired about vacancies in the Division for the following year. In the letter responding to Aoki’s enquiry, it was clearly indicated by the superintendent that he thought “men should be judged on their individual merits irrespective of race or creed,” however, in selecting a teaching appointment the “community’s reaction must be taken into account” (p. 341), and most likely the position available would be in a rural school. After the board meeting, Aoki was appointed to a town school in Foremost, Alberta.
2.5 Being-in-the-World as Dwelling with Sakura-Rose (1964-1978)

2.5.1 Being a Professor at UBC (1975-1978)

In 1964, Aoki moved to the university. He was invited to join the faculty at the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. There, while involved in several projects, he “came to realize the significance of the term curriculum.” Together with his graduate students, Aoki had “wander[ed] off” to the other department across campus, particularly, “the department of philosophy, which most of us [the scholars] avoided,” as Aoki shared in his 2003 speech at the first Provoking Curriculum Conference at the University of British Columbia (UBC). It was Aoki and the graduate students’ “curriculum of wander off” that opened/offered new possibilities for curriculum studies in the Canadian context. I will discuss the significance of this intellectual effort in the next chapter, but in this section, I wish to emphasize Aoki’s 1979 writing about being a professor at UBC.

From 1975 to 1978, Aoki was Professor and Director of the Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of British Columbia. “To seek momentary refuge from routinized activities and from life in the huts,” Aoki (1979/2005) would “wend his way and slip in” to Nitobe Garden (p. 345). Nitobe Garden, a traditional Japanese tea and stroll garden tucked away at the northwest end of the UBC campus, dwells behind the Department of Asian Studies. Japanese gardens are deeply rooted in the complex spiritual, literary and philosophical traditions of Japan. This garden created in memory of Dr. Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), who expressed the desire to be a “bridge over the Pacific,” is a place that became a pedagogical site of contemplation that spoke dearly to Aoki’s heart. Finding “no two things alike, yet together possessing a unity of their own” (p. 345), while strolling in this garden Aoki was provoked by the two root metaphors of Sakura and Rose in Dr. Nitobe’s book, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan.*
Two flowers, for Aoki, symbolized two ways of seeing, two ways of knowing, two ways of living. Rose was the symbol of Europe and the West, and Sakura the symbol of Japan. Aoki kept them simultaneously in view. The power of “double vision” or “learn[ing] to see life within the fullness of a double or even multiple vision” (p. 347) was Aoki’s attempt to give meaning to himself as a Japanese Canadian.

In resonance with Heidegger, “seeing” for Aoki does not only mean perceiving with the bodily eyes, neither does it mean the mere non-sensory perception of the “objectively present in its objective presence” (Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 142). The only peculiarity of “seeing” which Heidegger claims for “the existential meaning of sight is the fact that it lets beings accessible to it be encountered in themselves without being concealed” (p. 142). Such “seeing,” writes Aoki (1979/2005), “may reveal more fully within my lived human condition, self-imposed or socially imposed distortions that call for action – action that in the very acting will empower me to become…a historical being engaged in his own personal and human becoming” (p. 347). With this phenomenological way of “seeing” the existential possibilities of the double vision of the Sakura-Rose as a Japanese Canadian, Aoki divulges understanding as a disclosed ability to be-in-the-world. “Maybe, being a Japanese Canadian is just that – maybe experiencing ethnicity as Japanese Canadian is just that” (p. 347); dwelling with Sakura-Rose, keeping the double vision of these symbolic flowers from two traditions in the periphery and letting the thought-style manifest itself are Aoki’s unique ways of revealing himself, the unconcealed-as-such, comes to stand being-in-the-world.

2.6 Summary Note

Questioning emphatically the meaning of being through probing the meaning of the term “being” semantically and through lived experiences, understanding for both Aoki and Heidegger
is not restricted to the problem of method. By drawing from the reflective insight of his own experience, Aoki (1991) reminds us that “narrative inquiry of lived experiences can disclose the existential texture of the beings we have come to be” (p. xi). In Heidegger’s (1953/2005) existential analytic style of thinking on understanding, “the thing we are able to do is not a what, but being (Sein) as existing,” and “the mode of being of Dasein as a potentiality of being lies existentially in understanding” (p. 139). In agreement with Heidegger that understanding is a mode of being rather than a mode of knowledge, Aoki’s attunement to the self-reflective narrative inquiry opens to the question of “ethnicity” that insistently calls upon lived experiences on their own ground. The mode of being Japanese Canadian dwells in the temporality of “curriculum as experienced” (Aoki, 1991, p. xi), and the existential meaning of this understanding of being can only be acquired through the reflective, temporal interpretation of “being with.” Being and being with momentous life events serves as the point of returning for Aoki to dwell, to linger, to contemplate the pedagogical essence of these life events that is ultimately being-in-the-world.

The life history of Aoki, as reflected through his own narrations, is a journey with a hyphenated sense of tensionality. Through a critical-reflective stance, Aoki turned to his juxtaposed lived experiences between cultures, languages, wisdom traditions and dwelt in the midst of hyphenated tensionality. It is his effort toward ontological disclosure, Aoki understands, that our existence, as teachers and students, cannot be easily determined by the scientific rationale. Aoki recognizes that through instrumentalist representation, beings are revealed as calculative and productive objects. This instrumentalism imbedded knowing empties the existential meaning of human beings. By telling the lived stories of his own, joy or sorrow, confined or confused, home or homeless, Aoki transforms understanding from a conceptual way
of knowing to an engagement in being. In part of this transforming understanding, Aoki (1991) reminds the researchers to listen to the “original etymological understanding of person as per [thought] + sonare [to sound]” (p. xiii) in their search for the original ground of being. Aoki’s intellectual emphasis upon being, I suggest, are ways of being in tensionality, in which he dwelt throughout his intellectual journey. The mode of being calling upon curriculum as experiences is what grounds Aoki’s intellectual explorations. With his continued attunement to the tensions and dilemmas arising from the what-ness of the generality and the is-ness of the particularity, Aoki refined the articulation of his well-known notion of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

In seeking the initial passage of Aoki’s intellectual interest in the exploration on “Being” and the life world of students and teachers, in the next chapter, I begin by examining Aoki’s doctoral dissertation. I discuss Aoki’s empirical research-based dissertation to illustrate the pervasiveness of the embedded instrumentalist scientific and technological rationale in research at the time. I further discuss Aoki’s deeply felt sense of the limitations of empirical-analytic research, expressed at the end of his doctoral dissertation, which suggested Aoki’s decisive departure from the empirical research tradition, as well as his detour to phenomenology, which eventually foreshadowed his future theoretical direction. I then follow the significant efforts he made toward contributing to questioning such rationality in the field of curriculum theorizing, nationally and across borders, during the 1970’s and 1980’s.

xi Aoki draws these words from a conference banner of the Institute for Education of the University of Heidelberg, Germany.

xii 青木 is the kanji (漢字 – Japanese Chinese character) of the family name Aoki and 哲夫 is the first name. The first name usually carries significant meaning as the parents’ well-intended wish to a child. 哲夫 Tetsuo means philosopher. Ted is an example of a Nisei (二世 – second
generation Japanese Canadian) who often reconfigured their given names as near-homophones that are easier for English speakers to pronounce (Aoki, 2014, p. 3).

This is how Ted Aoki metaphorically described Japanese.

Toshogu, one of the Shinto shrines in Nikko, is the most lavishly decorated shrine in Japan. A powerful Shogun – Tokugawa Ieyasu, established his government in Edo (Tokyo) – Tokugawa Shogunate that ruled Japan for over 250 years until 1868. In 1616, the dying Shogun Tokugawa Shogunate made his final wish to “Build a small shrine in Nikko and enshrine me as the God. I will be the guardian of peace keeping in Japan.” Toshogu became his final resting place.

In the perspective of in-the-world, Heidegger (1953/2010) carries out the task of “questioning the ontological structure of the ‘world’ and of defining the idea of worldliness as such” (p. 54). Then, in what ways might the world confront Dasein and what might Dasein know a priori of the world or can know about it? For Heidegger, the world is already there and Dasein tends to relate to entities within the world by two modes of being: vorhanden and zuhanden. Both vorhanden and zuhanden in German language are adverbs. Zuhanden can be translated as “to hand,” “at hand,” or “to give.” Heidegger uses the word to describe “handiness” or “relevance” as a mode of encounter, that Dasein involves, with the objects that the being of beings encounter in the surrounding world. This mode of being Heidegger (1953/2010) calls “average everydayness” (p. 233). Heidegger (1953/2010) claims that all knowledge starts from this rather practical understanding and he suggests that:

In its familiarity with significance Dasein is the ontic condition of the possibility of the discovery of beings with the kind of being of relevance (Zuhandenheit) which are encountered in a world and that can thus make themselves known in them in-itself (p. 85).

What if the condition of this given-to-hand reality, Zuhandenheit, no longer holds? Heidegger refers it to another mode of encounter, Vorhandenheit “present-at-hand”. Vorhanden literally means “before at hand;” the noun, Vorhandenheit can be translated as “present-at-hand” and this mode of encounter is triggered when the condition of acting from the familiarity of given-to-hand Zuhandenheit fails. When the quality of an object no longer holds, then a theoretical image needs to be created in which the object is posited as an object that can be analyzed, as a Vorhanden. This mode of encounter creates matter of fact relations and prevents the being from being such. Thus, this theoretical knowledge is derivate from a secondary order of knowing.

The Axis powers were the nations (Nazi Germany, Empire of Japan and Kingdom of Italy) that fought against the Allied forces (United Kingdom and France with their colonial empires, China, the Soviet Union and the United States) in World War II.

Of the 23,303 persons of Japanese origin in Canada, 75.5% are Canadian citizens, 60.2% Canadian-born and 14.6% naturalized citizens. (Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Adachi, 1979).

Information obtained from Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre.
“One alderman referred to Japanese Canadians as ‘well educated cultural devils’ and shouted, ‘If I had my way I’d take them all out to the middle of the Pacific Ocean and pull the cork.’ Another alderman stated: ‘they are treacherous. They are our enemies. And I don’t like them—yellow bellies! And if there are no black marks against them, they will make good spies’” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 340).
Chapter 3: Polyphonic Sounds of Pedagogy (1964-1987)

3.1 Introduction

The term curriculum is many things for many people. (Aoki, 1978/1980/2005, p. 94)

In Chapter 1, I described relevant historical landmarks and past events taking place primarily between the 1960s and 1970s in the educational field. Suffice it to say, the findings of Hodgetts’ (1968) study became the primary impetus for the Canadian school-based curriculum development during that era.

The central underlying issue of school-based curriculum development was the epistemology limit-situation – where knowledge is perceived to be generated through scientific rationale and method – characterizing curriculum research (Aoki, 1978). With the emergence of nationalism as a political thread and positivism as a philosophical thread, goals, applications and development became the root metaphors for curriculum research; the upshot was that the prevailing concept of a coherent, essentialist national identity reduced understanding of “one’s life reality to an abstracted totality of its own, pretending to wholeness” (1987/2005, p. 354), as Aoki sagely pointed out.

With the separation between “man and world [sic]” (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 101), empirically, curriculum theorists thought they could enjoy an Archimedean objectivist perspective that would allow them to view the world objectively. There seemed to exist a “common illusion that one somehow increases one’s understanding of a person if one can translate a personal understanding of him into the impersonal terms of a sequence or system of it-processes” (Laing, 1960, p. 22). Instead of bringing the experience of sequence into focus, one is only concerned with the processes of sequence. In so thinking, man is seen as an “organism” and “there is no place for his desires, fears, hopes or despairs as such” (p. 22). Thus, “man cannot be
anything but a complex of things, of its, and the processes that ultimately comprise an organism are it-processes” (p. 22). The system of it-processes is much mirrored in the Tylerian utilitarian logic of curriculum developmentxx.

Education is not an object, nor should it be the solution to social problems. It is, rather, a reflection of everyday life that is inseparable from love, gender, growth, self, conflict, accomplishment, decay and death. It is humanity. Wandering off to phenomenological ground and abandoning the mechanistic metaphors for reducing human possibility to putatively predictable and manageable variables, Aoki’s approach was to reveal the complex character of individual student and social life – the essence of education.

Aoki’s intellectual disposition – his shift from instrumentalist “scientific and technological thought/action” (Aoki, 1983, p. 113) to “experiencing a leap of faith” (Aoki et al., 1991, p. 129) in the “foreign” land of Continental European thought – became a provocation in the field, as I discuss later in this chapter. Together with his graduate students and colleagues, Aoki’s efforts toward “speaking across boundaries” (p. 129) and bringing forth ways of seeing reflect Wittgenstein’s (1922) assertion that everything could be different than we see it and “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (p. 74). Such intellectual disposition recognizes the hubristic certainty that funds technical rationality as an overstated if not an errant assumption that misguides our seeing, thinking, saying and doing.

This part of history between the 1960s and 1970s related to the Canadian Studies Project has very much sketched and reflected the landscape of the contemporary Canadian curriculum field that underlines its national distinctiveness. The process of bringing understanding from and about the past forward into educational change informs the distinctiveness of the history and
culture of a nation. It also points to the situated-ness of Aoki’s intellectual formation on curriculum theorizing.

In this chapter, I delve into Aoki’s main concepts and the ways these concepts came to be articulated and transformed over time. For this reason, I fluctuate between timeframes in sections 3.2 and 3.3. I open with a review of Aoki’s 1969 doctoral dissertation with the following questions in mind: In what ways did Aoki situate his research and what is Aoki’s research question in his dissertation? What did he intend to search for and what were his findings? In what ways was his dissertation significant in relation to his later thinking and scholarly works? Thereafter, I contextualize Aoki’s publications primarily from 1978 to 1989 and the main concepts he explored during this era, particularly his approach to understanding the phenomena of curriculum-as-lived. The distinctiveness of language that Aoki used to invite his readers to see, to hear and to become attuned to his polyphonic sounds of pedagogy are also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Voices of Teacher Educators: Doctoral Dissertation (1969)

After serving the public-school system as a teacher and an assistant principal at Lethbridge Collegiate Institute over two decades, Aoki maintained a keen interest in and dedication to teachers’ education, particularly secondary education, curriculum development and social studies instruction. In September, 1963, at the University of Alberta, he completed his Master of Education with a thesis entitled “The Development of the Lethbridge School District No. 51 to 1960” which undertook to “examine the significance of certain social forces resulting in the establishment and growth of the Lethbridge School District No. 51” (Aoki, 1963, p. 1) from its inception to the year 1960. Lethbridge, a place where Aoki became a teacher and lived for 13 years, holds a “special meaning” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 344) for him professionally and
personally. After his time there, he commenced his Ph.D. program at the University of Oregon in the United States while he was working for the University of Alberta. In his 1969 doctoral dissertation, “The Relationship of Belief-disbelief Systems of Pre-service Teachers and Differentiated Instruction in Interaction Analysis Systems to Change in Attitude Toward Teaching Situation,” Aoki particularly attended to the “study of the act of teaching in situ” (Aoki, 1969, p. 1). The guiding question was, “What is the relationship of belief-disbelief systems of pre-service secondary school social studies teachers and instruction in classroom verbal interaction analysis systems differentiated in terms of assigned tasks to changes in attitude toward teaching situations?” (p. 4). The significance of this guiding question, which focused on the inner attitudes of teachers in terms of “belief” and “disbelief,” I suggest, foreshadowed Aoki’s later emphasis on lived experience.

By this time, Aoki had worked as a member of the Senior High School Social Studies Curriculum Committee, Department of Education, Province of Alberta (1959-1967), and commenced his career as a member of staff at the Department of Secondary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (1964). During this early period of his scholarly work, Aoki followed an empirical research tradition that investigated a focus group of pre-service secondary school social studies teachers. Aoki sought findings from focus group teachers who had enrolled during the academic year 1968-1969 in a course entitled Curriculum and Instruction in Secondary School Social Studies, at the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, that would support his four hypotheses. The language used and the conceptual and methodological approaches in his dissertation were very much in line with the research tradition in behavioral science which dominated the educational research field in the 1960s and 1970s, as discussed in Chapter 1. However, what Aoki had in mind was questioning the “dynamic” relationship among
teachers’ judgment, variation of instruction and attitude toward teaching situations. His intention was to “provide some empirical evidence to the growing body of knowledge about teaching” (p. 1), which he later abandoned.

Based on the findings in his investigation, one of the implications to teacher education that Aoki emphasized was the feasibility of using more than one instruction analysis system. He stressed the importance of using multiple systems that could effectively change open-minded pre-service social studies teachers’ attitudes toward teaching situations. As part of his recommendations for future studies in teacher education, Aoki clearly pointed out the pitfalls of studying a focus group, that the findings from a related area should not reflect the dimensions of the study as a whole. He was critical of the limitation of the “paper and pencil test” (p. 100) as a measurement tool to examine reactions in teaching situations. The “nature of the statistical design,” Aoki commented, “did not permit the making of conclusive statements regarding the interaction” (p. 101) in actual classroom teaching. In turn, he called for “methodological extension,” suggesting that “studies be conducted, which will allow for the direct testing for interaction” (p. 101). This call eventually led to his exploration into phenomenology that became a distinctive characteristic of his theoretical works.

Although this empirically grounded research is deeply embedded in the instrumentalists’ scientific and technological rational, the significance of Aoki’s early scholarly work is that it provides a glimpse into the beginning of his lifelong endeavors to broaden the understanding of situational dynamics in the classroom, which for Aoki points to the essence of education. Teaching, as a profession, was the commencement of his intellectual odyssey. More specifically, it was the beliefs and disbeliefs of teachers – their inner attitudes – that concerned him, even if methodologically he was confined to means of studying them that were external and
objectifying. Furthermore, the lived experiences that often contribute to one’s inner attitudes became the central theme to which Aoki repeatedly returned in his scholarly works (see Chapter 2; Chapter 3, sections 4.3, 5.2; Chapter 4, sections 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1). In addition, the deeply felt limitations he experienced related to the tightly controlled orientation and language in empirical-analytic research led him to unceasingly push the methodological boundaries to allow for “direct testing for interaction” (p. 101) in educational research.

After completing his doctoral dissertation, which was based on empirical thinking and language of the day, Aoki continued his search for “direct testing for interaction” (p. 101) as an alternative research possibility. However, in this search, Aoki found specific resonance in continental European scholars’ works, especially in phenomenology. Aldous Huxley, as Aoki shared in his 1978 papers, “Toward Curriculum Inquiry in a New Key,” presented at the Conference on Phenomenological Description: Potential for Research in Art Education, wrote:

...We must...intensify our ability to look at the world directly, not through the half-opaque medium of concepts which distort every given fact into the all too familiar likeness of some generic label or explanatory abstraction. (Huxley, 1954, p. 22, as cited in Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 89)

In quoting Huxley, Aoki emphasized the word “directly,” which echoes much in the “research attitude” of phenomenologists “to the things themselves” (p. 90). It was through a phenomenological ethos that research became a mode of inquiry. Aoki celebrated this new interest among educational researchers in “the directly experienced;” quoting Spiegelberg, a phenomenologist, Aoki defined this new mode of inquiry as

the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced,

without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined

It was through passages like these that Aoki began his exploration of new directions in curriculum, abandoning the concept of “testing” and beginning to embrace the “investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced.” Research as putting forth an inquiry “to the things themselves,” was the eminent ethos throughout Aoki’s scholarship. This journey can be traced back to 1964.

3.3 Curriculum in a New Key \(^{xxiv}\) (1964-1979)

3.3.1.1 Curriculum Inquiry – National Perspective

An authentic radical departure calls for not only a lateral shift to the practical but also a vertical shift that leads us to a deeper understanding of the program developers’ theoretical stance. This stance may be implicit or even unconscious, based as it is on assumptions that are frequently taken for granted in dealing with the practical problems of program development.

\((Aoki, 1977/2005, p. 51)\)

What seems to be needed in curriculum inquiry, therefore, is general recognition of the epistemological limit-situation in which current curriculum research is encased, that is, a critical awareness that conventional research has not only a limiting effect but also to some degree a distorting effect on new possibilities in curriculum research. Accordingly, we need to seek out new orientations that allow us to free ourselves of the tunnel vision effect of mono-dimensionality.

\((Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 94)\)

In 1964, Aoki, now a junior vice principal and secondary school social studies teacher, was invited to join the teaching staff at the University of Alberta’s Department of Secondary Education \(^{xxv}\) in Edmonton, where he spent ten years. It was during this time that Aoki started working on the notion of curriculum and I discussed a part of it in Chapter 1, section 5.1. As a faculty member in the University of Alberta’s Department of Secondary Education, Aoki (2005) had noticed that all the courses in the department were “prefixed” with “Ed.C.I.” (Educational Curriculum and Instruction) (p. 449). Aoki, who had been a teacher for many years, assumed the
term “curriculum” in the prefix Ed.C.I. was a “prescribed mandated school program by the provincial Ministry of Education,” and “instruction” referred to “transmitting to students the substantive knowledge, skills and attitudes prescribed as a normative standard for all students in the province” (p. 449). However, Aoki felt that “teaching was cast into a trans-missive mode” through “an instrumental view” (p. 449). It was also during this time that, together with his graduate students, Aoki began to venture out to “seek modalities of thought and practice that moved beyond instrumentalism” (p. 449), a “new key” to understanding curriculum.

In 1975, Aoki returned to Vancouver and took a position at the University of British Columbia as the first Director of the Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education. During this period, he sat on the committee for the B.C. Social Studies Assessment and published several writings. These publications included collaborative works taken from the “Assessment of B.C. Social Studies.” Continuing to push thinking beyond instrumentalism and seeking modalities of thought and practice, Aoki (1979) posed questions, such as: “What are possible ways of approaching the phenomenon of social studies in British Columbia?” (p. 96) and “Descriptive knowledge, phenomenological or otherwise, what for?” (p. 110). Aoki’s publications during this period largely reflected on questions like these.

The first 1979 monograph of eight series, *Curriculum Canada: Perceptions, Practices, Prospects*, a collection of articles and reports from the Symposium of Curriculum Inquiry: Prospects and Perspectives from Different Institutions across Canada, may provide a glimpse into the Canadian scene regarding the “status of curriculum inquiry”xxvi at the time. The eight series were published by the Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of British Columbia. On the status of the Canadian field of curriculum research in the first symposium monograph, Walter Werner (1979), a Ph.D. student of Aoki, reported some issues
and trends that were similar to what has been described in Chapter 1. The national identity, heritage and culture have been important curricular subjects in civic education in Canada. For most Canadian educators, the dilemma is especially sharp, “as on the one hand they may value and promote cultural diversity while on the other hand they may espouse a national civic education” (Tomkins, 1977b, p. 89) by working with the restricted curriculum. Such a dilemma became the premise for curriculum researchers and scholars’ works (see Aoki, et al, 1977; Aoki, et al, 1979; Harvey, et al, 1975; Johnstone, J. C., 1969; Miller, 1979; Milburn & Herbert, 1974; Morrison et al, 1977; Tomkins, 1977b; Werner (Ed.), 1979; Zureik & Pike (Eds.), 1975) in seeking a “broader view” (Aoki, 1978, p. 2) in research approaches to social studies and in curriculum. The significance in seeking this broader view was the “increased academic interest in curriculum as a field of inquiry” (p. 7). With the considerable cross-border debate that had emerged over the “reconceptualist movement” (p. 4) in the United States, the major question from the first symposium participants was, “Why is there so little curriculum research occurring in Canada, generally?” (p. 3).

Although some “curriculum workers” (p. 4) viewed it as “a field of study” – “a discipline which takes as its subject the phenomenon of curriculum and instruction” (p. 3) – curriculum was still largely viewed as “a field of practice,” that is, “based on the technical interest of practical problem defining and solving” (p. 3) in the day-to-day classroom setting. Aoki and Werner (1979) described that in the field of practice, for the most part, professors of curriculum align with the practical school commitment to deal with the in-service teachers’ issues within their respective provinces. In the case of program development and evaluation projects, university curriculum specialists tend to meet the “immediate interest or applicability for local school boards or ministries of education” (p. 3). This problem-solving approach or evaluative inquiry
reflected a technical, ends-means orientation to curriculum, reminiscent of Ralph Tyler’s (1949) sequentially arranged four-step formulation:

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to attain?
2. How can learning experiences be selected that are likely to be useful in attaining the objectives?
3. How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?
4. How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

In this so-called Tyler rationale, one first sets all goals and objectives; then determines and arranges the learning experiences so that students can attain these objectives; and then, at the end, one evaluates the effectiveness of the learning experiences in terms of goals and objectives initially set. The Tylerian logic and system neatly accommodated time-tested, ends-means, systematic analysis in technical rationale, and they “remain dominant in shaping how researchers approach their work” (p. 4). Although the evaluative curriculum inquiry into methodology and theory was rare, Werner pointed out that there was a “notable exception within British Columbia” in the 1977 Social Studies Assessment reports, which “combined the technical and disciplinary interests in research” (Aoki & Werner, 1979, p.3).

The problem with Tylerian logic as the only way of thinking curriculum, Aoki (1978/2005) pointed out, is that “a bulk of the curriculum writings” over the quarter century since 1949 have largely “been devoted to the elaboration of Tyler’s language of ends-means relationships through the use of increasingly sophisticated, but reified languages of the system theory, games theory, decision theory, and the like” (p. 90). This commonsense appeal tends to “conceal the taken-for-granted assumptions of an instrumental mode of life” (Aoki, 1988/2005, p. 407). Therefore, there is a “good indication that educational research may have reached a
“crisis stage” (p. 89), Aoki indicated. However, since the 1970s there have also been some “bellwether signs in curriculum inquiry” (p. 90). Jerome Bruner, an American psychologist whose thinking was influential in the field of education in 1971, made the announcement of his refocus away from his 1963 publication, “The Process of Education,” “wherein the understanding of the ‘structure of the disciplines’ was considered to be the “open sesame” to curriculum studies” (as cited in Aoki, 1988/2005, p. 91). Similarly, J.J. Schwab, an American Biological Sciences Curriculum Studies theorist who was closely engaged in the 1960s with science-oriented curricula and who had advocated for “curriculum thought controlled by the codification of disciplined knowledge” (Aoki, 1988/2005, p. 91), announced in his 1972 publication, “The Practical: A Language for Curriculum,” that the “field of curriculum is moribund, unable by its present method and principles to continue its work and desperately in search of new and more effective principles and methods” (as cited in Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 91). Aoki (1978/2005) also pointed out that some scholars in art education, like Kenneth Beittel and Elliot Eisner, were “seriously questioning underlying presuppositions of the dominant tradition in curriculum conceptions” (p. 92) and were calling for re-examining curriculum concepts at the root level. Furthermore, James Macdonald (1975) expressed his concern that the “curriculum thinkers have been unaware of the different levels and kinds of value perspectives that are involved in curriculum thinking” (as cited in Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 93). Michael Apple (1975) argued that “educators, especially members of the curriculum field, have taken an outmoded positivistic stance that disarms critical reflective self-reflection and have given it the name and prestige of the scientific method” (as cited in Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 93). Above all, these curriculum thinkers have started identifying “the mono-dimensional effect of the dominance of the traditional orientation to research” (p. 93-94) as the critical point in the field of curriculum.
Taking a similar critical stance to these curriculum thinkers, Aoki particularly pointed out that many “curriculum people” (p. 94) have attempted to center their thoughts on various objects, such as the teachers, the children, the structure of the disciplines, the society and so on. These “centering attempts” in thinking and researching curriculum, Aoki found “too confining” (p. 94). In addition, they are not able to provide “sufficient scope and contextuality that allow entertainment of views of human and social acts we call ‘education’” (p. 95). Aoki further commented:

I find it important to center curriculum though on a broader frame, that of man/world relationships, for it permits probing of the deeper meaning of what it is for persons (teachers and students) to be human, to become more human, and to act humanly in educational situations (Aoki, 1978/1980/2005, p. 95).

To loosen the attention to a singular objective centering, Aoki brought a broader way of “centering” curriculum thoughts – “man/world relationships” (p. 95). The man/world relationships, Aoki explained, allowed him to “view a teacher or the student as an individual in his dual appearances as a thinking and willing being within the immediate spheres of his experience and as a social actor involved in interchanges with others in face-to-face relations” (p. 95). The man/world relationships became the core for Aoki in thinking curriculum in a new key.

### 3.3.1.2 Curriculum Evaluation in a New Key

No program can be evaluated in its entirety. But we can increase our vision of whatever we are viewing through the employment of as many perspectives as we can find appropriate and utilize for our purposes.

(Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 96)

We approached our evaluation activities mindful of the importance to us of ourselves being open to fresh possibilities.


Against the backdrop of Canadian Studies – fast becoming dominant on the Canadian
educational scene – and a prevailing reliance on curriculum evaluation as a means to the end of school improvement – Aoki began to articulate his concerns about the state of the field. The disciplinary interest in curriculum research in the province-wide Social Studies Assessment of British Columbia, funded by the Government of British Columbia’s Ministry of Education, was much exhibited in the 1977 assessment report, conducted by Aoki and his team – Carol Langford, David M. Williams and Donald C. Wilson. Aoki revisited his experience of the evaluation in his 1978 and 1986 publications. In both publications, he makes clear his concern about the risk of restraining methodology in curriculum evaluation, by sharing M. Q. Patton’s (1972) point:

The very dominance of the scientific method in evaluation research appears to have cut off the great majority of practitioners from serious consideration of any research paradigm. The label “research” has come to mean the equivalent of employing the Scientific Method … of working within the dominant paradigm (as cited in Aoki, 1978/1986/2005, p. 96-97).

This ends-means concern reflected in the orientation of evaluation went “hand-in-hand with the technically oriented mainstream curriculum development/evaluation” (Aoki, 1986/2005, p.140), in mentality that is. The ends-means (technical) evaluation orientation, emphasizing its interests in the primacy of controllability, has expressed its values in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, certainty and predictability. Knowledge is formed by generalizing and idealizing facts and ways of understanding through empirical evidence. Reality is “out there” and “life in this world can be explained with certainty, predictability” (p. 101). Man is the subject that acts upon the world as object. In addition, the generated “data are transformed into second-order descriptions guided typically by predetermined theoretical constructs” (p. 103). In turn, the “uniqueness and
messiness of any lived situations tend to be reduced out” (p. 103). Aoki was critical regarding educators’ heavy leaning on the ends-means orientation that has for the “pragmatically oriented a commonsensical ring carrying with it the validity of popular support” (p. 141). This empirical analytical (technical) orientated curriculum evaluation falls into the trap of an ends-means paradigm. Ultimately, it lives in the shadow of social engineering.

Whilst an instrumental approach to evaluation separates the concrete lived experience from the man into the objectified world, situational interpretation suggests a phenomenological approach to inform the evaluation and direct attention back to living situations. Situation, a phenomenological concept, specifies and articulates a “first order” experience of those who live within the situation rather than second order descriptions that are removed from the lived experiences. Thus, a situational interpretive evaluation emphasizes its interest in the “meaning structure of intersubjective communication between and among people who dwell within a situation” (p. 144). The form of knowing is situated in understanding in terms of the structure of meaning. The mode of evaluation is situational, which seeks the “qualities of meanings people living in a situation give to their lived situations” (p. 144). Ways of thinking are self-identified and subjective. The view of the man/world relationship is an “intersubjective act of man-in his-world of fellow man” (p. 104). Based on these grounding concepts, the researcher can no longer “stand aloof as an observer as in empirical analectic research, but...must enter into intersubjective dialogue with the people in the research situation” (p. 104). Regarding the approaches to the interpretation of situations, Aoki points out that there was a “growing interest among the educators in theoretical studies that fall within the phenomenological attitude” (p. 104), which, interpreting the research text and text analogues, is embodied in social-cultural phenomena. As phenomenology directs social science to recall its “lived” origins and
foundations, the situational interpretive oriented curriculum evaluators “are interested in the quality of life-as-lived in the classroom or school, life experienced by those who dwell within the situation” (p. 144).

Inspirited by this phenomenological approach, in the B.C. Social Studies Assessment, Aoki and his team explored two situational evaluation frameworks: “(1) an ethnographic approach in which [they] sought out views of the curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-in-use as interpreted by parents, students, teachers and administrators, and (2) an approach using conversational analysis of the meaning structures of existential life of teachers and students” (p. 144). These first order phenomenological descriptions from the everyday world, Aoki thought, are complementary to empirical analysis. Additionally, situational interpretive oriented research requires close attention to the “curriculum researchers whose interests lie in the study of curriculum-in-use, curriculum development in situ, or curriculum evaluation in situ” (p. 105). Furthermore, the inclusion of their assessment reports “represented [their] attempt to portray more fully the social studies phenomenon as it existed in British Columbia” (p. 105).

According to the critical evaluation perspective, reflection is the root activity in the research mode, Aoki (1978) points out. In reflection, researchers undergo the critical analytical process required to “uncover and make explicit the tacit and hidden assumptions and intentions held” (p. 105). The primary interests of critically orientated evaluators are in an ongoing questioning of the descriptive accounts of everyday life, whether these descriptions are the results of mono-logical law-like statements from “mediated and systemized interpretation of experience” or the first person giving the meaning to immediate acts in the situations, to probe underlying biases to make the unconscious conscious. In critical evaluation, the evaluators engage themselves as a part of a study subject and reflect in a reciprocal manner. Allowing the
emergence of new questions from evaluators and subjects and engaging in the dialectical process between them, evaluation becomes an inquiry that resides in an open dialogue between the evaluator and subject. In this sense, “critical reflection leads to an understanding of what is beyond” (p. 106), and this critical knowing through the process of critical reflection liberates man from the hidden assumptions regarding rationalization at the personal level or ideology at the societal level. In turn, a critical perspective towards curriculum evaluation would not only focus on the “knowledge structure of life experiences, but also on the normative structure as well” (p. 106). Such orientation promotes a “theory of man and society that is grounded in the moral attitude of emancipation” (1986/2005, p. 147).

The significance of the above orientations towards curriculum evaluation lies in the efforts towards epistemological opening for fresh possibilities as Aoki and his team examined the “official text of the social studies curriculum-as-plan” (p. 147). The concluding statement of their critical analysis report gives a clearer view of such efforts:

The B.C. Social Studies program approaches the study of man-in-his-world from three different perspectives: scientific, situational and critically reflective knowing. Through each of these, students are exposed to various interpretations of how the social world has been constructed. The program, however, does not provide a balance among these perspectives; rather, it emphasizes scientific knowledge. Through such an emphasis teachers and students are made dependent on one particular way of viewing the social world. Such dependence limits the possibilities which the participants have available for exploring their social environment. The extent to which the perspective influences classroom presentations (passive vs. active, non-committal vs. committal) stresses the importance of providing knowledge perspectives in the program (Aoki et al., 1977, p.
Since then, curriculum scholars have made efforts to shift from the technical instrumentalism-embedded ways of knowing to which educators in North America have been so prone towards an understanding of evaluation as “human intentional activities grounded in multiple human interests” (1986/2005, p. 149). Following their original intentions for the B.C. Social Studies Curriculum Assessment, to approach “evaluation activities mindful of the importance to us of ourselves being open to fresh possibilities” (1986/2005, p.139), Aoki and his team relocated themselves from the dominant intellectual tradition of curriculum program developers’ theoretic stance. The reason for this repositioning was to probe the taken-for-granted assumptions in dealing with the practical problems of program development in the terrain of phenomenology, hermeneutics and critical theories. Such efforts of intellectual reposition are crucial in the advancement of concepts.

Along these three epistemological orientations – empirical (technical), situational interpretive and critical – Aoki continued his journey to push the boundary in understanding curriculum. Together with his graduate students such as “Terry Carson, Linda Peterat, Walter Werner and so on” (Aoki, 2003, p. 2), they wandered-off across departments on campus looking into the “underlying epistemic, axiological, telic, and ontological” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 109) bases of various programs. Particularly, the Department of Philosophy, which many of the curriculum scholars avoided, drew the graduate students’ attention, recalled Aoki. As a Department Chair of the Secondary Education, Aoki further encouraged this growing attention in philosophy by creating a course called “Curriculum and Ontology, Curriculum and Being” (Aoki, 2003, p. 2) and he hired Robert Burch, an expert in Heidegger’s works, from the Department of Philosophy to teach the course at the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. Around the same time, Aoki and his graduate
students “became familiar with the notion of European philosophy, continental European philosophy, and that the possibilities that had evolved with curriculum” (Aoki, 2003, p. 2).

Also, during the same time, Aoki (2003) “found a fellow from the University of Rochester, ... Dr. William Pinar… [who] introduced… the word currere (p.2). The notion of currere, Aoki recalled, had helped him and his graduate students to “move, to re-examine the notion of curriculum” (Aoki, 2003, p. 2) that was constructed by the Ministry of Education. The significance of Aoki and his students’ “wanderings”, particularly to the department of philosophy, lies in their effort to seek out alternative ways of understanding curriculum. Also, the emphasis on the phenomenological orientation was becoming noticeable in their curriculum research, as Aoki reflected in his 1978 essay, “Toward Curriculum Inquiry in a New Key.” Under Aoki’s mentorship, and with the influence of Max van Manen, Kenneth Jacknicke and later Terrence Carson, phenomenology became “institutionalized” in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta (Chambers, 2003, p. 225).

Seeking and studying alterity to understand, interpret, speak and conceptualize curriculum from different aspects, in his 1978 reflection, Aoki wrote a “biography of [his] research interests” and his “personal transformation over the last several years as mirrored” (p. 107) in the doctoral dissertations of students he mentored – from one dissertation on “investigating life-in-the-classroom by examining school program-in-use” (p. 108) from the stance of an outside observer, a second order framework, to another dissertation, examining phenomenologically the pedagogical relationship through a first person singular interpretation of texts; from a dissertation, examining the “types of codified knowledge in social studies curricula” through an “empirical analytic study of curricula-in-use in the classroom” (p. 109) to a dissertation on taking a hermeneutic approach to grasp the “meaning of perspective” that “man-in-his-world employs” (p. 109). Additionally, grounded in
the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, a study “concerned with the ontological condition of teachers and students” about a “curriculum-in-use” and day-to-day “lived experiences” (p. 109) was completed. Although these different intellectual bases increasingly opened new possibilities and orientations to Aoki and his graduate students, at times they felt “suspended” and that they were “in the process estranging ourselves from the mainstream flow of educational researchers” (p. 110), Aoki recalled. However, the emergence of Aoki and these young curriculum scholars’ efforts in studying alterity ultimately illuminated the possibilities of a diverse intellectual path in Canadian contemporary curriculum studies.

3.3.2 Curriculum Inquiry – A Cross-Border Perspective

The calling for intellectual investigation into the study of alterity had already been set forth in the United States field of curriculum research earlier than in Canada, as Aoki and Walter Werner had remarked previously. In the comprehensive work, Understanding Curriculum, William F. Pinar, William M. Reynolds, Patricia Slattery and Peter M. Taubman (1995) chronicled the intellectual history and present circumstances of U.S. curriculum studies. In 1980, Pinar and Madeleine Grumet pointed out that the field of curriculum did not “begin as a field at all” until the 1920s in Denver due to administrative “need” (p. 20). According to Pinar and Grumet’s study, it was Denver Superintendent Jesse Newlon who decided that “someone in the central office ought to be attending to the curriculum, in specific subjects, in specific schools, and through the district overall” (p. 20). The emersion of curriculum as an administrative category reflects many of the management interests that are embedded in an instrumentalist end-means ethos. This instrumentalist ethos can be traced along the marked path of the modern curriculum field that arose at the end of the nineteenth century from the emergence of the Faculty
of Psychology and Classical Curriculum Theory (Pinar et al., 1995). Inherited from the dominant intellectual tradition of the faculty of psychology “in which the mind was regarded as a muscle to be exercised by memorization and recitation” (p. 70), scientific rationale became the spine of the study of curriculum field. This scientific movement was “succinctly expressed” in many curriculum scholars’ work (Pinar et al., 2008) at a time when the influence of scientism and its rationality was pervasive in curriculum and in education.

This focused attention to scientific rationale continued into the twentieth century, academically, and was further extended politically. In Ralph Tyler’s 1949 rationalization of the school curriculum, scientism and efficiency were the underlying premise. The unprecedented event of the 1957 launching of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviet Union led politicians to challenge the “quality” of the American educational system (Pinar, 2004). As politicians sought to further refine the remnants of scholasticism’s pedagogical practices by employing “social efficiency” and “scientific management” to more effectively organize American education, this gave greater weight to Tyler’s scientific rationalization of the school curriculum. Derived from the philosophy of science, positivism and structuralism reached its “high water mark in the 1960s” (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 21) in American curricular thought. The pursuit of growth (development) in science and technology became obsessive, intellectually and politically. The primary and practical interest in the study of curriculum field was in the development of curriculum (Pinar et al., 2008), and the language of curriculum development, Null (2008) claims, “pervaded all areas of education” (p. 479).

In the 1970s, the field of curriculum in America underwent a profound change. Joseph Schwab (1969) declared the field was moribund; Dwayne Huebner in 1975 termed the field dead (Huebner, 1976); and William Pinar in 1978 termed the field arrested (Pinar, 1979). In Canada,
Ted Aoki (1978) questioned the “general recognition of the epistemological limit-situation” that is “encased” in curriculum research (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 94). Building on the momentum of the waves rejecting the mono-vision in curriculum theorizing, curriculum scholars such as Dwayne Huebner and William Pinar in the United States and Ted Aoki in Canada intellectually kept themselves away from the instrumental interest in the development of curriculum and focused on a conceptual and methodological interest in understanding curriculum phenomenologically, theologically, transcendently and auto/biographically. Under their mentorship and through their own intellectual contributions towards understanding curriculum, this group of North American curriculum theorists philosophized phenomenology as a “major element in the reconceptualization of curriculum studies” in the 1970s (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 419). In the next section, I discuss Aoki’s critical questioning of instrumentalism and his insightful comments on the metaphor of bridging as way of being in tensionality and the notion of knowing.
3.4 Critiquing Instrumentalism (1981-1987)

3.4.1 Bridging as Two Ways of Knowing (1981)

If East-West conversation in curriculum is to be authentically East-West dialogue, if North-South conversation is to be authentically North-South dialogue, I contend that such conversation must be guided by an interest in understanding more fully what is not said by going beyond what is said.


It is in this sense that I understand conversation as a bridging of two worlds by a bridge, which is not a bridge.

(Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 228)

Aoki’s efforts towards encouraging intellectual affiliations were focused not only within the North American realm, but also in a trans-national setting. In the paper “Toward Understanding Curriculum: Talk Through Reciprocity of Perspectives,” presented at the Toward Understanding Trans-National Curriculum symposium, a conference organized in the United States by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), in March 1981, Aoki provided a glimpse into the repertoire of international students he mentored from nations across continents such as “Kenya, Zambia, Ghana in Africa; Thailand, Korea, East India, Malaysia in Asia; and Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt in the Middle East” (p. 221).

Continuing the phenomenological approach by using three concrete situations to explain his position on the meaning of “reciprocity of conversation” (p. 221), Aoki first pointed toward bridging as a metaphor for two worlds to meet only through everyday contact as “more opaque than transparent” (p. 221). Such contact can only result in a “tourists’ surface sense of awareness” and it “fails to lead us too far in our understanding” (p. 221). By questioning the typically understood metaphor of bridging two worlds to meet through an instrumentalist ends-means view, Aoki problematized such an understanding of the metaphor of bridging two worlds. Aoki then drew the attention of the audience to the work of a Japanese born scholar, Magorah
Maruyama (1970), who states, “Empathy is a projection of feelings between two persons within one epistemology. Understanding in a trans-national or transcultural situation, what we need is trans-spection, which is a trans-epistemological process” (as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 219). Here, Aoki pointed his audience toward Maruyama’s imagery of bridging as a “trans-epistemological process” and “a way of bridging two ways of knowing” (p. 219).

Talking to the audience of curriculum developers and administrators, Aoki further conceptualized the metaphor of bridging as two ways of knowing by relating it to his paper, “to understand more fully what it means when two people from different lands meet in a face-to-face situation to make sense together of school and curriculum” (p. 220). Juxtaposing a phenomenological ring drawn from John O’Neil (1974) with a poetic philosophical tone drawn from Michael Oakeshott (1962), Aoki further rendered the notion of a face-to-face conversation as a “meeting of mankind” (as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 220). This face-to face conversation as a meeting of mankind reflects Heidegger’s (1962) existential-ontological interpretation of conversation that is a primary ontological dynamic (existentiale), and it lies in the spirit of everyday human existence. For Heidegger (1962), “conversing” (Rede) (p. 203) is an essential ontological dimension of Dasein. That is, Dasein exists in the world as conversational beings (Heidegger, 1962, p. 203). An “initiation into the skill and partnership” of this meeting of mankind conversation in which “we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance” (as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 220) is, for Aoki, educational.

To further attune the audience to a phenomenological sound and to shed light on the underlying instrumental rationale and administrative control, Aoki returned to his own narratives when he was a department chair. Face-to-face conversations in his office with students from across continents, as meetings of mankind, had momentarily “arrested” him from his routine
living, “the almost mindless instrumental mode of life” (p. 221) in an office. The office, a physical environment, became a pedagogical situation as Aoki tactfully transferred his audience conceptually.

However, as a university professor, Aoki had certain concerns over these conversational situations being “reduced to a monologue, spoken only in the language of one world, the language of the university professor” (p. 222). He “worried about” these educators coming to study in North America and how they might “see their mission as taking home, virtually as ‘commodities,’ notions of education and curriculum [that] educators in the Western world espouse” (p. 222). In ways, these international scholars being immersed in the “North American intellectual imperialism” and “becoming an instrument of that imperialism” (p. 222) without hesitation concerned Aoki, since interactions on these terms were no longer a “dialogue between two worlds” (p. 222).

To further explicate the concept of a dialogue between two worlds, Aoki asked his audience to “enter into another conversation situation” (p. 222) with him. Through unfolding a conversational situation with his student, Francis Lampi, a young Zambian curriculum scholar who had studied with Aoki in a curriculum theory class, Aoki walked the audience through their queries regarding continental European thought in phenomenology and critical theory, which they found less “enamoured of scientism and technology” (p. 223).

The work of critical social theorists, such as Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno of the Frankfurt School, calling for a “dialectic rationality that sees unity in the dialectic between theory and practice” (p. 223), had been impressive for Aoki and his students. In phenomenology, “[Edmund] Husserl’s questioning of the Cartesian objectivist world” and his call “to the things themselves” (p. 223) had enchanted Aoki and his
students, particularly the realm of the ontological basis of human thoughts and actions. Ultimately, they had explored the terrains of Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Gustave Ricouer and George-Hans Gadamer’s works to “seek to understand the essence of our being in language” (p. 223). On the juxtaposed trajectories of these continental thinkers and their “own personal unfolding” (p. 224), Aoki and his students “felt more adequately” equipped for their quest to “understand ‘what it means to educate’ and ‘what it means to be educated’” (p. 224).

This feeling of adequacy on the educational quest did not last long for an international scholar like Francis Lampi. On his return to Zambia, Aoki recounted, Francis found “his colleagues at the University of Zambia and the Ministry of Education entrenched in an empirical view of knowledge…as reflected in Bloom’s Taxonomy” (p. 224), which Francis had critically questioned during his study in Canada. By sharing the narrative of his international student’s dilemma and his concern over North American intellectual imperialism, Aoki skillfully reiterated what he meant by reciprocity of perspectives in understanding curriculum.

The imperialism of North American instrumentalist scientific rationality had reached not only the African continent, but also Asia. Sharing the work of South Korean scholar Dr. Bom Mo Chung (1981/2010) entitled “Development Education: An After-Thought,” Aoki illustrated the pervasiveness of North American imperialism in South Korea. Chung, a developmental education theorist, noted that the “well-worn concepts of development education” in South Korea were “haunted” by “imported” terms such as “‘manpower,’ ‘planning’ and ‘development’” (as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 224). In turn, developmental education had “guided educational thoughts in Korea” (p. 224). South Korean policy planners were entrenched in such thinking, and their language became “infatuated with” these concepts. Along these lines, the South Korean “higher educational plan” was renamed as the “higher manpower training
plan” (p. 224). This infatuation reflected an “instrumentalist thinking” (p. 224) in their view of education.

What does instrumentalism mean? It was a concept of which Aoki had been very critical, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. Aoki invoked Chung’s (1981/2010) description of what he considered a momentous illumination of the problematic site on the educational path:

Instrumentalism is to see the present moment in life as means to the next, including the present job, status, residence, human relatives and even you yourself. What you do and have now is of no intrinsic value of its own but only of instrumental value to the future…Life seen strictly from such a view has no value, no meaning if its own. Out of instrumentalism so defined, what we call culture would not be born nor thrive…Those who do not see intrinsic value in whatever he is doing…are effectively severed from cultural life, creation and enjoyment…They are alienated persons…haunted by ontological doubts about one’s own being (as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 225).

In light of Chung’s above words, Aoki marked clearly that the manifestation of instrumentalism in education is the reduction of the particularity of human traits and qualities to an en-masse set of “knowledge and skills supposedly required in the job settings” (p. 225). This instrumentalist view of education created what Aoki considered to be a “philosophical problem of treating man as means” (p. 225). Aoki reminded his American audience that these imported Western concepts and reasoning did not serve as savior in Zambia and Korea. Rather, these concepts, which are grounded in the instrumentalist belief system that emphasizes merely the utilitarian human doings and ignores the existential human beings, are bound to manifest the phenomena of tensions and dilemmas in the lived world of education.
Now, Aoki had prepared his audience to contemplate some questions: In what ways might “East-West conversation in curriculum...be authentically East-West dialogue?” and in what ways might “North-South conversation...be authentically North-South dialogue?” (p. 227).

To help his listeners imagine what the conversation would be like, Aoki probed deeper into Chung’s “inner dialogue to confront directly two understandings” (p. 225) derived from Eastern and Western cultural traditions. Chung, who had been trained as an educational planner based on Western thought had offered an intriguing East-West dialogue as thought-style about “educational planning” (p. 225). Chung thought that the “traditional Western social science paradigm of system” (Chung, 1981, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 225) in thinking educational planning was something calculative and controllable. As long as there are sufficiently lengthy considerations of the variables, the educational planners should “come out with some plan for figures of student enrolments, financial investment, policies and so on” (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 225). In this way, the educational planners play the “role of god-like prophet looking crystal clear into the future” (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 255), as described by Chung.

In seeking an alternative to understand planning, Chung returns to his Asiatic heritage. He calls upon the notion of “karma” with a “secular doctrine” twist to be understood as “historical causation” (Chung, 1981, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 255). Within this understanding, Chung further explains social change, stressing “what makes change successful …is not change itself but the historical undercurrent, the necessary Karma, that has been slow in the making” (Chung, 1981, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 226). He further connects the possibilities between history and social changes:
History will not respond favourably to those calculating and utilitarian minds who do something today with an eye to the quick and easy return in the future. History responds favourably to something simply because it is the thing that “ought” to be done now and is “desirable” to be done now to the best of your personal, moral and social judgement, and to the best of your calculation (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 226).

In so understanding, Chung re-roots utilitarian-based planning to Karma-based planning that is “in part a philosophy of anti-planning” (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 226).

To make things more concrete for his American audience, Aoki shared Chung’s comments about the formation of Korean elementary education in the 1950s. The significance about this historical establishment of Korean elementary education is that it was based on “traditional valuation among Korean parents and the need for the educated man in democracy,” not because of “calculated manpower needs for economic development” (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 226). In turn, Chung believes that this traditional value-laden formation of elementary education “permitted a populace ready for the transformative decades of the 1960’s and 1970’s” (Chung, 1981/2010, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 226). Further, Aoki shared Chung’s questioning regarding understanding “developmental education” solely from an instrumentalist’s point of view:

When life from birth to death is seen strictly from an instrumentalist’s point of view, does it not total up to having no value, no meaning of its own? Would not life be a chain of void heading toward death, which is itself a supreme void? Severed from cultural life, creation and enjoyment, are not instrumentalists alienated persons… haunted by ontological doubts about their own being with no room for ontological sympathy and commitment? (Chung, 1981, as cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 227)
Thus, Chung suggests that the historical establishment of a Korean traditional value-laden education embedded within “culturally bound ideologies” (Chung, 1981/2010, cited in Aoki, 1981/2005, p. 227) might be an antidote to understanding “development” from a non-instrumentalist point of view. What Aoki found most striking in this discussion is Chung’s dialectic mode of “inner conversation, guided by his interest in coming to a fuller understanding of ‘developmental education’ in his own situation” (p. 227).

By sharing the tensions and dilemmas of two international scholars in their own lived situations, Aoki stepped outside the abstract representation of bridging as a metaphor for two worlds to meet only through everyday contact and walked his audience through the concrete ground of situations. For Aoki, the bridge, from an instrumentalist point of view, serves as a tool to connect two worlds, means to end. However, from a value-laden, culturally bounded ontological point of view, the bridge becomes a locality of gathering – a conversation in which bridging is two ways of knowing. In turn, bridging as two ways of knowing becomes a “trans-epistemological process” (p. 219) that is “not a bridge” (p. 227).

To continue his critique of instrumentality and to explore understanding in phenomenology, Aoki interrogated notions of implementation, competence and application that were the contemporary “buzz words” in the curriculum field.

3.4.2 Questioning the Notions of Implementation and Competence (1983)

A basic problem in implementation of programs may be found in the producer-consumer paradigm underlying the view of implementation.

(Aoki, 1974, p. 37)

Working from phenomenology and critical theory, Aoki (1983/2005) problematized the notions of implementation and competence from an instrumentalist point of view and provided a notion of praxis from a phenomenological stance in thinking implementation and competence. In
his paper entitled “Understanding Situational Meanings of Curriculum In-service Acts: Implementing, Consulting, Inservicing,” which he presented in 1980 at the Summer Institute for Teacher Education at Simon Fraser University and again in 1983 at the American Educational Research Conference, he said:

What I have attempted in this paper is to portray implementation employing the distinction between “instrumentalism” and “praxis,” that is, between instrumental action and situational praxis, between actions of beings-as-things and being-as-human, signifying two frames of reference in which the reality of implementation activity can be constituted (Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 122).

Aoki pointed to an ongoing situation in Canada that “typifies curriculum implementation” (p. 111), where a curriculum director from the Curriculum Branch of the Ministry of Education organizes a group of teachers, perhaps university professors, to develop a curriculum in a subject area. Then, these “experts-in-the-know” travel from school district to school district “providing ‘communiqués’ to assembled teachers” (p. 111). In this way, Aoki explained, the term implementation in the traditional field of curriculum is embedded in an instrumental understanding in which “curriculum producers offer something to curriculum consumers” (p. 113). In this producer-consumer paradigm, curriculum implementation has been conceptually labeled as “a ritual for attempting to bridge the gap between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-in-use” (p. 112). Within this understanding, teachers become the curriculum implementers and their competency is evaluated by the efficacy of their “skills and techniques toward efficient control” (p. 113). It is such a “know-how-to-do view of implementation,” Aoki stated, “embedded in scientific and technological thought/action framework that reduces human competence to instrumental action” (p. 113).
It is not only the term implementation that has been arrested in instrumentalism, as Aoki further outlined in his 1984 paper, “Competence in Teaching as Instrumental and Practical Action: A Critical Analysis.” A know-how-to-do view of the term competence has also been “reduce[d] to the instrumental sense of techniques and skills” (Aoki, 1984, p. 125). Agreeing with phenomenologist Edmund Husserl and critical theorist Jürgen Habermas, Aoki (1983) indicated that the pervasiveness of instrumentalism “dominant in our culture” (p. 113) has become the “crisis of Western reason” (p. 113). This crisis is “manifested in a fundamental contradiction between a perspective committed to technological progress and that committed to the improvement of personal and situational life” (p. 114). Moreover, by following “technocratic strategies” and “centralized management theories,” teachers’ and students’ life in the classroom has become intoxicated by the assumption of “positivistic thought...with the technical power of science and technology, and by the development of business management techniques” (p. 114). Aoki was concerned about this leaner instrumentalist way of viewing curriculum implementation and teaching competency that “strips” the “humanness” of teachers’ and students’ being and reduces them to a “being-as-thing, a technical being devoid of [their] own subjectivity” (p. 115).

Thus far, Aoki had made it clear that understanding implementation or competence as “instrumental action is not the way” (p. 116). Instead, he proposed an alternative mode for understanding implementation or competence as situational praxis “that is grounded in human experiences with the classroom situation” (p. 116). To make explicit what he meant by praxis, Aoki first pointed to the ancient wisdom of Aristotle’s notion of theoria and praxis:

*Theoria* – a way of knowing in which the subject comes to know through a contemplative, nonengaged process, as a spectator as it were, guided by the telos of theoretical knowledge itself.
Praxis – a way of knowing in which the subject within a pedagogic situation (like a classroom) reflectively engages the objective world guided by the telos of ordering human action. Here, theory and practice are seen to be in dialectic unity (as cited in Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 116).

For Aoki, the Aristotelian notion of praxis – regarding activity as a holistic approach to “the total person – head, heart and lifestyle” and also as an individual “given to an ethical life within a political context” – gave a “sense of practice as praxis” that Aoki felt the “need to restore” (p. 116). On the other hand, Aoki also specified that the dichotomy of theory and practice that resides in Aristotle’s “preference to theoria over praxis” (p. 119), in which theory exists as the first order of intellectual knowing and practice as the second order of applying the knowledge, has haunted the contemporary field of education. Being mindful of this centuries-long dichotomy that has become the inevitable destiny of separating theory and practice into a dualistic understanding, Aoki suggested an understanding of praxis with a “contemporary sense” (p. 119).

In light of the Brazilian educator and advocate of critical theory Paulo Freire’s (1972) remarks that “praxis is reflection (thought) and action (practice) upon the world in order to transform it” (as cited in Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 119), Aoki further affirmed Polish phenomenological scholar Karol Wojtyla’s (1979) approach to praxis as “both dealing with the personal and communal venturing of man as he experiences life through action and reflection on his experiences” (as cited in Aoki, p. 120). Therefore, understanding praxis situationally requires “an estrangement from the dichotomized view of ‘theory and practice’ and embracing that which sees them as twin moments of the same reality” (p. 120). By tactfully placing critical theory’s lens to disrupt the binary between theory and practice and restore with the phenomenological understanding of lifeworld, Aoki suggested that “rather than seeing theory as leading into practice, we need now
more than ever to see it as a reflective moment in praxis” (p. 120). Here, Aoki made new meaning in understanding curriculum implementation as situational praxis.

Additionally, grounded by this combination of critical theory and phenomenology, Aoki “renewed” the notion of competence. First, by tracing the Latin root of competence, “‘competere,’ ‘com’ meaning ‘together,’ and ‘petere’ meaning ‘to seek’” (p. 130), Aoki pointed out:

In a root sense, then, to be competent means to be able to seek together or to be able to venture forth together. This root meaning of “competence” as “communal venturing” holds promise for a fresh view of what it means to be a competent teacher. (This, I feel, is embedded in the question Henry Johnson posed: “What does it mean to be human?”) (p.130)

With his critical and reflective mind, Aoki reconnected the term competence to its root sense. With his aspiration to return to a fundamental ontological hermeneutic question of what does it mean to be human, Aoki drew again from Karol Wojtyla’s (1979) approach to “dealing with the communal venturing of man as experienced through acting and reflecting through one’s life” (as cited in Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 130) and pointed to Wojtyla’s (1981) ontological hermeneutics premise in seeing “man as a historical being” who makes his own history and “who [also] together with others” may serve “as co-makers of history” (as cited in Aoki, 1983/2005, p. 130).

Bringing together these juxtaposed ways of thinking, Aoki escaped the instrumentalism-embedded understanding of competence and “made sense afresh of competence in teaching” that is “anchored in a situation of interactions among teachers and students mediated by everyday language, orientated toward practical interest in establishing open intersubjectivity” (p. 130) in classroom situations. It is with this critique of instrumental reasoning and with the mindfulness of the ontological grounding of the man/world relationship and the actions and situated-ness of
teachers and students that Aoki continued to provoke thinking in curriculum. Connecting with
Heidegger’s concern over the forgetfulness of being and his critique of the understanding of
technology in modernity, Aoki (1987/99/2005) questioned the technocratic embedded notion of
application in the field of education and asked: *How shall I understand computer technology?
How shall I understand application?* (p. 152).

### 3.4.3 Questioning the Notion of Application (1987)

How shall I understand computer technology? How shall I understand application?

Mindfulness of the situation allows the person in the situation to recognize that application is a
hermeneutic act, remembering that being in the situation is a human being in his becoming. This
mindfulness allows the listening to what it is that a situation is asking.

Continuing to provoke thinking and searching for the concealed truth through his critical
lens, in 1987, Aoki reflected on an issue – the technocratic embedded notion of application – that
is still much alive today, after three decades, in the field of education. In his 1987 journal article,
“Toward Understanding ‘Computer Application,’” Aoki commented that the curriculum world
has been entrenched in the “waves of technological thrusts” (p. 151) and this enthusiasm over
technology has resulted in institutions like the Provincial Ministry of Education and university
faculties of education getting into a “frenzy” (p. 152) over computer education. Consequently,
“computer literacy” and “computer application” (p. 152) have become the primary curriculum
activities, and Aoki cautioned that this has led to a “partial blindness of high fashion in the world
of curriculum” (p. 151). That “expressions linked to the computer” are “bandied about” by
people “without a deep understanding of what they are saying” (p. 151) and the fact that the term
“computer application…is assumed to be readily understood and stands naively unproblematic”
struck Aoki as concerning. Turning to his critical reflective thought-style and pushing
boundaries, Aoki asked what computer application essentially *is*, and how computer technology and application should be understood.

Drawing from the 1977 writing “The Question Concerning Technology,” by the iconic phenomenology scholar Martin Heidegger, Aoki suggested that seeing computers as a tool and utilizing this “sophisticated man-made means empowering man to achieve specified ends” (p. 152) will ultimately lead to utilitarian reasoning in understanding the computer as technology. Such understanding is embedded in an “instrumental definition of computer as technology” (p. 152) and is also seen as a human activity that carries an “anthropological definition of technology” (p. 153). Aoki further anchored the “instrumental or anthropological conception of computer as technology” (p. 153) in Heidegger’s (1977) explanation:

To posit ends and produce and utilize the means to them is a human activity. The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve, all belong to what technology is (pp. 4-5, as cited in Aoki, 1987a/2005, p. 152).

In this understanding, computer technology is “both a means and human activity” (p. 152) and this conceptualization is informed by “man’s interest in means, reflects his will to master, to control, and to manipulate” (p. 152). However, Aoki pointed out that for Heidegger, this conceptualization is “uncannily correct but not yet true” (p. 152). According to Heidegger, the instrumental and/or anthropological understanding of computer as technology “fails to disclose its essence” (p. 152). Heidegger says:

> the correct fixes upon something pertinent in whatever is under consideration.
> However, …this fixing by no means needs to uncover the thing in question in its essence. Only at the point where such an uncovering happens does the true come to pass. For that
reason, the merely correct is not yet the true (Heidegger, 1977, p. 6, as cited in Aoki, 1987/2005, p.153).

Aoki expounded on Heidegger’s comments, pointing out that “the essence of computer technology is not computer technology as means” (p. 153). Thus, understanding computer technology as ends-means, as merely human activity of mastery, is enframed by the deleterious influence of instrumentalism and utilitarianism. Additionally, the mode of revealing becomes concealed by the “seductive hold of the whatness of computer technology” (p. 153). In this manner, “enframing reduces man and beings to a … ‘standing reserve,’ a stockpile of resources to be at hand and on call for utilitarian ends” (p. 153). The danger of this, both Aoki and Heidegger caution, is the forgetfulness of being – “man’s own essence, no longer able to encounter himself authentically” (Heidegger, 1977, as cited in Aoki, 1987a/2005, p. 153).

Through exploring the passages of Heidegger’s 1977 essay, Aoki revealed “the uncannily correct” and yet “the elusively true” (Aoki, 1978a/2005, p. 153) in understanding computer as technology.

Moving to his next thematic question, Aoki dwelt on understanding computer technology as application. Application is a word in the curriculum world that is, as discussed in the previous section, “caught up within a theory/practice nexus where practice is thought to be applied theory, a secondary notion deriving its meaning from the primacy of theory” (p. 154). Along this linear way of thinking, computer application falls again into the shadow of instrumentalism that is “applying computer technology to a particular situation” (p. 154). Drawing from Hans-Georg Gadamer’s (1975) thinking in *Truth and Method*, Aoki contemplated understanding application as a “hermeneutic act” (p. 155). In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer delved into what Aoki described as a “hermeneutic problem of application in the context of understanding, interpretation and
application” which are “all moments of the hermeneutic act” (p. 154). Understanding, in this sense, “always involves…application of the text to be understood to the present situation of interpreter,” while on the other side of the coin, application is “integral or part of the hermeneutical act as are understanding and interpretation” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 274, as cited in Aoki, p. 154).

Moving skilfully to Gadamer’s hermeneutic terrain in engaging with the passage which asserts that “understanding is always application,” Aoki returned to the question concerning understanding computer technology. He commented, “the meaning of computer technology and its application in a concrete curriculum situation are not two separate actions, but one process, one phenomenon, a fusion of horizons” (p. 155). Aoki also underlined the significance of “mindfulness of the situation” which “allows the person in the situation to recognize that application is a hermeneutic act” (p. 155). Aoki pushed further on the term understanding, dwelling again on the Heideggerian sense of the ontological world of the is and not yet that is a move from the “pre-given generalized notion” to the “particular situation” (p. 155). That is, to move from the phenomenon of what is it? to the pedagogical situation arising in the moment of what is it?

To beckon on the is-ness of a pedagogical situation in understanding technology, in this journal article, Aoki told a story of his doctoral student, Carol Olson. Carol, Aoki explained, “has been for 12 years a child of hemodialysis technology” (p. 157) and together with “her three siblings had been sustained by a dialysis machine at the University of Alberta Hospital” (p. 157). Carol had written about her own experiences with technology, Aoki shared: “We acknowledge our indebtedness to technology; we refuse to be enslaved by technology” (Olson, 1987, as cited in Aoki, 1987/2005, p. 157). Strong words from a young scholar, but no one can easily dismiss
Carol’s deep understanding that comes from the lived experiences with her “lifeblood” (p. 157). Carol knew well her dependency on this means-end understanding of technology as application and yet she was undeterred by “such narrow determination of life” (p. 157), because she knows “to become empty in such a situation is, according to her, to block our spiritual pain. One who is spiritually empty knows only physical pain, the pain that leads one to ask, ‘More Demerol, please’” (p. 157). Through Carol’s story, Aoki candidly revealed once more the tensions and dilemmas in our era that Heidegger described, “when science expands into a total of technocracy and this brings on the cosmic night of the forgetfulness of being” (Heidegger, 1977, as cited in Aoki, 1987a/2005, p. 157).

Referring to Heidegger, Aoki took a similar position in critiquing technology to restate his critique of instrumentalism and his profound concern for lived experience and being. To understand Aoki’s position on the concealment of technology in modernity, we need to return again to Heidegger’s 1953 piece “The Question Concerning Technology” for a deeper understanding. In this writing, Heidegger begins with the everyday account of technology in modern time – the vast array of instruments, machines, artifacts and devices that humans invent, build and ultimately exploit. In this understanding, technology exists merely as tools that humans control. Heidegger (1977) depicts that this everyday account of technology provides only a limited “instrumental and anthropological definition” (p. 44).

With the over-exercised limited instrumental and anthropological definition, the “revealing [of technology] that holds sway throughout modern technology…[is] a challenging…which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supplies energy which can be extracted and stored as such” (p. 320). Thus, modern technology reveals its essence that is concealed in nature, by placing, ordering, hunting – all a sense of stellen – them in order to reform, store, distribute
and redistribute them. This mode of revealing that is enacted through first gathering and then reforming, storing and redistributing is what Heidegger calls standing-reserve. Through this mode of revealing, resources are exploited as means to ends.

Heidegger is critical about this mode of revealing. In his later writing, “What Are Poets For?” he stated that only in modern times does this aggressive way of disclosing technology first “begin to unfold as a destiny of the truth of beings as a whole” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 109) and this pervasive way of revealing technology becomes as a state of totality. In turn, modern science attends to this total state and becomes as the “necessary consequences of the nature of technology” (p. 109). Such nature is only “an instrument concordant with technology… established in the objective character of its raw materials” (p. 110). In this state of totality, “man becomes the subject and the world the object” and “life is supposed to yield itself to technical production” (p. 109).

Thus far, what Heidegger has brought forth into view is his questioning of the unconditioned dominance in the essence of modern technology; he has exposed the depiction of technology as a means to an end, instrumental and as a product of human activity, anthropological in modern times. What Heidegger had in mind was his primary concern regarding the discernment of the essence of technology that is established in a deeply instrumentally embedded worldview in modern science. In addition, by revealing the essence only through the mode of the measurable and the manipulability, ultimately, this view reduces beings to no-beings. Thus, this technological mode of revealing is not the peripheral aspect of being.

For Heidegger, such essence of technology defines and manipulates the modern way of living in the West as dangerous. The danger is the essence of man as framed, claimed and
challenged by a power that manifests itself in such essence of technology, a power which man
himself does not control—enframing as a destining revealing. This leads to enframing essence as
what-ness and the being-ness of being is concealed and above all, “enframing conceals that
revealing which, in the sense of poiesis, lets what presences come forth into appearance” (p. 27).
Thus, “as long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will to
master it” (p. 33). We press on the possibilities of revealing the unconcealed essence of
technology.

Essence, is the traditional translation of the German noun Wesen (p. 3). It is important to
understand Heidegger’s etymological turning appropriately; Heidegger used the word Wesen in
its gerund form as “enduring as presence” (das Withrenals Gegenwart)xxxviii—“to come to
presence,” a “rendering wherein the meaning endure should be strongly heardxxxix.” Essence, in
this sense, is a calling to bring something fourth to presence, into the open and it “reveals what
does not itself bring forth and does not yet lie here before us” (p. 13). Wesen as verb is not a
common usage in modern German language; it survives primarily in inflected forms of the verb
sein (to be) and in such words as the adjective anwesend (present). For Heidegger, the root of
wesen is to dwell. Heidegger turned to the Greek and brought techne into presence:

There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name techne. Once that
revealing that brings forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearing also was called
techne. Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was
called techne. And the poiesis of the fine arts also was called techne. (p. 34)

To respond to the calling of techne, Heidegger turned to the poetic realm of Hölderlin and dwelt
on an old wooden bridge that had spanned the Rhine River for hundreds of years, which later had
the “monstrousness” (p. 321) of technological production in the form of a hydroelectric plant set
beside it. This poetic thinking and dwelling of man in the world as openness to the being-ness of being is what Heidegger turns to next.

Echoing Heidegger’s critique of the understanding of technology in modern times and the Heideggerian sense of the ontological world of the is and not yet, Aoki turned to the narrative inquiry of lived experiences that can disclose the existential texture of the beings that teachers and students have come to be. In turn, mode of being calling upon curriculum as lived grounds Aoki’s explorations. With his continued attunement to the tensions and dilemmas arising from the what-ness of the generality and the is-ness of the particularity, Aoki refined the articulation of his well-known notion of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived, which I will discuss in the following section.


3.5.1 First Appearance: Curriculum-as-Plan and Curriculum-as-Lived (1985)

The environment ceases to be environment, and in its place comes into being a pedagogical situation, a lived situation pregnantly alive in the presence of people.


Curriculum essentially belongs to the world of the practical. Hence, curriculum studies, if they are authentic, must return to the concrete world of the practical. Such is my belief.


The first appearance of the term curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived took place on May 28th, 1985. On this date, Aoki received an Award for Distinguished Contribution to Canadian Curriculum Theory and Practice from the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies at the CACS/CSSE conference in Montreal, Quebec. This momentous event, like many others in Aoki’s life, not only represents a historical landmark in curriculum studies,xi but also becomes a pedagogical site in Aoki’s works. In his acceptance speech entitled “Signs of Vitality in Curriculum Scholarship,” Aoki shifted the scenery to his audience thematically in viewing the
“significant features in the curriculum landscape” (Aoki, 1985/2005, p. 229) – again, a phenomenological approach. As part of the first theme addressed in his speech, Aoki detailed the detrimental influences of “human sciences” (p. 229) on education and how these had resulted in some North American curriculum scholars giving “serious recognition” (p. 229) to this crisis in education. From amongst their works, Aoki summarized a few major questionings arising from within curriculum studies:

1. The questioning of the dominance of the technological orientation that prevails in curriculum rooted in instrumental reasoning.
2. The quest for the originary ground of curriculum as a human study.
3. The questioning of the priority to curriculum understanding of epistemological considerations over ontological considerations.
4. The questioning of the adequacy of the assumptions underlying the domain of curriculum studies (pp. 229-230).

Given the particular historical movements in the 1970s in the North American curriculum field discussed previously, these questions are accordingly reflected. However, Aoki ended his first theme with a strong aspirational statement that he had “no doubt that curriculum scholars must be reckoned with” as their questioning represented the “cutting edge of promising scholarship” and their scholarship “cannot be ignored” (p. 230).

In his second theme, Aoki concurred with his previous theme and further commented that “in both Canada and in the United States faculties of education seem to be seeking ‘curriculum scholar[s] with a new vitality’” (p. 231). There is a long history of educational psychology having “enjoyed a privileged place” and having “been separated from educational foundations” (p. 230). This separation, Aoki asserted, has contributed a hegemony to the understanding of
“learning” in education – a phenomenon which he shared in deep concern with the American curriculum scholar, Dwayne Huebner. However, with the increasing “vigorous interests of foundation people in curriculum” (p. 230), Aoki was optimistic about the vitality in curriculum scholarship. Moreover, these foundation people, “educators of the sociological anthropological, historical, philosophical persuasions” (p. 230), can bring their own “disciplined perspectives” to understanding “about the curriculum world, the livedness of the everyday life of teachers and students” (p. 230). For Aoki, this interdisciplinary approach to understanding curriculum was enabling distancing from the existing hegemony and was simultaneously infusing new meanings into the understandings of curriculum. The growing interdisciplinary curriculum scholarship had also flourished in a discussion around creating a curriculum studies division at the 1985 American Educational Research Association conference in Chicago, and Aoki excitedly shared the news with his audience. Noting these monumental shifts in North American curriculum scholarship, Aoki was “convinced” that “curriculum is now moving in and receiving some prominence if not center stage prominence” where “‘learning’ had the ownership” (p. 231). In reflecting on the relentless efforts of the pioneer North American curriculum scholars as the driving force for re-conceptualizing the understanding of curriculum, since the late 1960s (as I discussed in parts of Chapter 1 and the present chapter), this is indeed a historic moment in education, twenty years later.

In his third theme, Aoki acknowledged a “dialectic between the first and second order curriculum worlds” (p. 231), curriculum-as-lived and curriculum-as-plan, in curriculum scholarship. Aoki shared with his audience that at the symposium of this 1985 annual CACS conference he had hosted a focus theme, “Understanding Curriculum-as-Lived,” where the first order world of curriculum was the hub. Aoki shared some remarks about the symposium, saying
that “Canadian researchers from coast to coast,” across various disciplines, “displayed fine first-order curriculum scholarship” (p. 232) and also exhibited their epistemological and ontological concerns. He also noted that the science educators in Canada who had been yielding to the second order curriculum world had also made a fascinating “national study of school science-as-lived” (p. 232). In the midst of this increasingly vibrant curriculum study, Aoki was not carried away by these uplifting and lively research waves. He shared this insight: “I feel that we are now in a position to move towards a juxtaposition of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived, which can be explored as twin moments of the same phenomenon, curriculum” (p. 232). He called for the contingency of the “explor[ation] on the tensionality in the dialectic between the First and Second Curriculum Worlds” (p. 232).

In his fourth theme, Aoki revisited his notion of hermeneutic praxis in understanding practice, as I discussed previously. He also recognized that there had been an effort in the field to “reunderstand practice” (p. 232) rather than merely understanding practice as “applied theory…, a theory applied to a situation” (p. 232). Thus, the “mundane commonplaces of curriculum practices” became a “worthy dwelling place for scholars” (p. 232). With this dynamic tensionality and vigorous debate, Aoki felt that “curriculum scholars [were] experiencing new beginnings that promise new possibilities” (p. 232). Aoki was right, a fact which becomes clear as we reflect on the vibrancy of the historical present in the North American field of curriculum studies.

3.5.2 Teaching as Indwelling between Two Curriculum Worldschemistry (1986)

Continuing to explore the tensionality of the dialectic between the first and second order curriculum worlds, Aoki in the following year (1986) published a well-articulated article in April/May issue of The B.C. Teacher. Inspired by a conversation with a Grade 5 teacher, “Miss
O” at Westwind School in Richmond, British Columbia, Aoki depicted the everyday teaching life of Miss O as “indwelling between two worlds – the world of curriculum-as-plan and the world of curriculum-as-live(d)” (p. 159). Aoki described that the world of curriculum-as-plan usually happens outside the classroom and is pre-designed by the Ministry of Education or the school district office. In this world, the roles of teachers and pupils and the subjects to be taught are prescribed and assumed outside the classroom far ahead of time. In this world, Aoki explained:

these interests, assumptions, and approaches...frame a set of curriculum statements:
statements of intent and interests (given in the language of “goals,” “aims,” and “objectives”), statements of what teachers and students should do (usually given in the language of activities), statements of official and recommended resources for teachers and students, and usually, implicitly, statements of evaluation (given, if at all, in the language of ends and means). (p. 160)

With this instrumentalist view of the planners, teachers are regarded as “installers of the curriculum” and “implementing assumes an instrumental flavour” (p. 160). Aoki further commented:

We can see...how truncated our understanding becomes when we see only a single curriculum-as-plan awaiting implementation. In this truncation, teachers are often technicized and transformed into mere technical implementers, and good teaching is reduced to mere technical effectiveness (p. 163).

The danger under these circumstances, Aoki urged, is teachers’ “forgetfulness [of] what matters deeply in the situated world of the classroom,” that is, “a forgetfulness that teaching is fundamentally a mode of being” (p. 160).
However, as Aoki pointed out, Miss O also knew that in each classroom there is another world – that of curriculum-as-lived. This world is filled with the names of her pupils, and behind each name is an array of different cultures and life stories. In this world, the language is linguistic, filled with surprises and frustrations. It is a world that is constructed by the unplanned or unplannable curricula. In this world, “environment ceases to be environment, and in its place comes into being a pedagogic situation, a lived situation pregnantly alive in the presence of people” (p. 159). In this lifeworld, both teachers and pupils are architectures collectively creating their learning blueprint in a world of curriculum-as-lived. These two worlds hold two world views for Miss O. In the curriculum-as-plan world, she is “accountable” for teaching an abstracted and yet “formalized curriculum, which has instituted legitimacy” (p. 161), and this curriculum world sustains her existence. However, this kind of “generalized knowing is like disembodied knowing” that is removed from the lived experiences of her pupils – that is, it is removed from the is-ness of the lived curriculum world of grade five children like “Andrew, Sara, Margaret and Tom,” without their names, “without freckles, without missing teeth, without their private hopes and dreams” (p. 161). In the case of a caring teacher like Miss O, Aoki said:

she knows that whenever and wherever she can, between her markings and the lesson plannings, she must listen and be attuned to the care that calls from the very living with her own Grade 5 pupils….She is asked to give a hearing to both simultaneously. (p. 161)

Teaching, as Aoki poetically articulated, is dwelling in the zone between where the tensionality resides; this is an inevitable act for a teacher. Moreover, a caring teacher like Miss O understands that “the quality of life lived with the tensionality depends much on the quality of the pedagogic being that she is” (p. 161). Teaching, for Aoki, is understanding essentially both epistemologically and ontologically as a mode of being that dwells in the tensioned zone
between two curriculum worlds.

By returning to the is-ness of curriculum, Aoki moved away from the instrumental understanding of the word curriculum-as-plan that fundamentally separates man and world. To orient educators to a world grounded in the ambivalent place of human beings where the linguistic language is spoken, and the grammatical rules may appear to be opaque at times, Aoki took us to his world and shared his professional and private moments. By juxtaposing the lived moments that happened inside/outside the classroom, professional/personal traditions and tensionality openness, Aoki’s critical-reflective style of theorizing speaks the word curriculum in multiple ways.

To shift the attention from the singular and definite meaning of curriculum-as-plan, and to further blur the mono-vision of understanding curriculum, Aoki suggested that educators attune toward the being, the lived ground of teachers and students. By heeding the moments of lived experiences of teachers and students, the past experiences as lived experiences and the ongoing experiences as living experiences, the understanding of curriculum as juxtaposed plan and lived curricula is revealed. This is where the teachers’ and students’ lived experiences become part of a curriculum, a twin moment of two curriculum worlds.

3.6 Summary Note

... in the field of curriculum, we have come under the sway of processes and products, achievement and assessment – words reflective of instrumentalism in modernity – ... under the hold of technological rationality, we have become so production oriented that the ends-means paradigm, a way to do, has become the way to do, indifferent to differences in the lived world of teachers and students.


In this chapter, Aoki’s wisdom flows naturally out of the words to his audience, to his readers. In particular, his critical stance and insightful conceptualization manifest a distinct critical-reflective style of theorizing. Following the threads of Aoki’s works during this era,
social studies is a point of departure in questioning the epistemological limitations in understanding curriculum. In addition, the methodological limitations that he felt in conducting his own doctoral research propelled Aoki in seeking different philosophical groundings. Notably, his concern regarding understanding both epistemologically and ontologically led him to be influenced by the continental philosophers, such as Jürgen Habermas, Martin Heidegger and George-Hans Gadamer. Together with his graduate students and colleagues, Aoki has contributed to what Pinar (2012) describes as a “complicated conversation” (p. 49) in the field of Canadian curriculum studies and across borders.

Reflecting on Aoki’s essays during these decades, several main concepts emerged from his strong critiques of instrumentality as the dominant way of understanding curriculum as application, as implementation. For Aoki, this understanding is cast in the technical power of science and technology. In 1974, he said: “A basic problem in implementation of programs may be found in the producer-consumer paradigm underlying the view of implementation” (p. 37). This linear view perceives curriculum as the pre-chosen ends of curricular goals. This language of curriculum speaks of education as a technical means-end where “instructing students becomes in-structuring students in the image of the given” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 418). In this understanding, students become objects, rather than subjects who speak the linguistics of humanness and diversity. While the array of curricula may appear as diverse and plural, it is ultimately “an illusion,” manifesting “a singular meaning of curriculum: curriculum-as-plan” (Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 417). This ends-means paradigm ignores the possibility of human potential, and this provision of universal education comes at a cost to humanity and its cultural diversity.

Education, as Pinar (2005) reminds us, is so very reluctant to abandon social engineering. He says:
If only we can find the right technique, the right modification of classroom organization (small groups, collaborative learning, dialogue), if only we teach according to “best practices,” if only we have students self-reflect or if only we develop “standards” or conduct the right research, then students will learn what we teach them. If only the student teacher could ask the right questions of the boys… (Pinar, 2005, p. 67).

In such an instrumentalism-embedded educational system, teachers, educators, perhaps feel an unconscious tendency to produce. This tendency, with the perspective of translating theories into applications to produce a “successful” and “rightful” teaching /learning experience, is relentless. Consequently, the role of teaching manifests itself as being “technical” in nature – attending to the “doing.”

Within a technical understanding of curriculum, teaching becomes a tool, an instrument. For Aoki, the problem of the singular emphasis on the technical in thinking curriculum is the fundamental separation of man and world, theory and practice. Instead of seeing a problem as seeking a particular solution, he takes an ontological and phenomenological approach towards curriculum and returns to the fundamental question: “What is curriculum?”

In the next chapter, I discuss Aoki’s writings from 1987 to the new millennium. To further explore the ontological-phenomenon in the is-ness of curriculum, in the next decades, Aoki’s language became increasingly poetic – a journey that Heidegger (1959/1982) described as language, the “house of being” (p. 24) – an approach toward the juxtaposition of ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutics.

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15 Ralph Tyler’s (1949) sequentially arranged a four-step formulation: What educational purpose should the school seek to attain? How can learning experiences be selected that are likely to be useful in attaining the objectives? How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction? How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated? In Tyler’s
formulation, curriculum developers or teachers first set all goals and objectives; then determine and arrange the learning experiences so that students can attain these objectives; and then, at the end, curriculum developers or teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the learning experiences in terms of goals and objectives initially set. This Tylerian logic and system neatly accommodated time-tested, ends-means, and systematic analysis, and they became dominant in shaping the ways curriculum developers, teachers and researchers approach their work. The pitfall is that this four-step formulation is only concerned with the processes of sequence uniformly, not the experience itself. Ultimately, the uniformly process without variations in detail can only comprise a byproduct through *it*-process


**xvii** “Teacher’s convention, Lethbridge, 1947 – The Marquis Hotel downtown Lethbridge holds a special meaning for me…. In the fall of 1947, … I was teaching in Foremost….and had come to the city of Lethbridge for the annual teacher’s convention…. A group of my cronies from Normal School settled in a circle around a little round table in the Marquis Hotel to seek strength, courage and sustenance to continue the tough life as green teachers. The roundtable conference had an aborted life. The beer hop spotted me as a Japanese and served notice that ‘It’s the policy of the management of the Marquis not to serve Japs.’ I don’t remember anything of the happening at the teachers’ convention – but I do have a strong indelible memory of that ten-second episode at the Marquis” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 342).

**xviii** H-1: If pre-service secondary-school social studies teachers are given Instruction Synthetic, then there will be a difference in change in attitude between the open-minded and closed-minded individuals in favor of the former. H-2: If pre-service secondary-school social studies teachers are given Instruction Analytic, then there will be no difference in change in attitude toward teaching situations between the open-minded and closed-minded individuals. H-3: If groups of pre-service secondary-school social studies teachers are given instruction in interaction analysis systems differentiated in terms of analytic and synthetic tasks assigned, there will be no difference between the instruction groups in change in attitude towards teaching situations. H4: If the change in attitude toward teaching situations of open-minded pre-service secondary-school social studies teachers given Instruction Synthetic and that of the closed-minded given Instruction Analytic are compared, then there will be a difference in favor of the open-minded individuals (Aoki, 1969, pp. 9-11).

**xix** This is the title of Aoki’s 2005 book, as edited by Rita Irwin and William Pinar.

**xv** The faculty of Education was established in 1945 as professional school on campus, the first such faculty of education in Canada (Aoki, 2005, p. 449).

**xvi** Status of curriculum inquiry: The Canadian scene is derived from Walter Werner, (1979), *Introduction, Curriculum Canada*, (p. 2).


Aoki (1986/2005) particularly pointed out sociologists of knowledge, such as P. Erger, T. Luckman and A. Schutz, ethno methodologists such as H. Garfinkel, I. Goffman, and Cicourel, and Hermeneutists such as F. Schleiermacher, H. Palmer, and Hans-George Gadamer (p. 144).


In 1975, curriculum scholar, William F. Pinar presented “The method of ‘currere’” at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, where he began drawing attention to “currere,” the Latin infinitive for the running of the course. In this paper, Pinar (1975) explains the method of “currere:” “It is regressive-progressive-analytical-synthetical. It is therefore temporal and conceptual in nature, and it aims for one cultivation of a developmental point of view that is-trans-temporal and trans-conceptual” (p. 1). Pinar further explains the method of “currere” from another perspective, “the method is the self-conscious conceptualization of the temporal, and from another, it is the viewing of what is conceptualized through time” (p. 1). He emphasizes that it is “the complex relation between the temporal and the conceptual” (p. 1) that he hopes to explore. Through the exploration into the “complex relation between the temporal and the conceptual, Pinar (1975) believes that “we disclose their relation to the Self in its evolution and education” (p. 1). By this, Pinar (1975) emphasizes the educational meaning in the temporality of pedagogical life.

Ibid. 14.
Robert Anderson (1972), *A comparison of Bales’ and Flanders’ systems of interaction. Analysis as research tools in small group instruction*, University of Alberta; Raymond Hanson (1975), *A tri-dimensional interaction analysis of the valuing process in Social Studies*, University of Alberta; Max van Manen (1973), *Toward a cybernetic phenomenology of instruction*, University of Alberta; Andrew Hughes (1975), *Knowledge organization and instructional systemic: A problem in the epistemology of curriculum*, University of Alberta; Douglas Ledgerwood (1975), *Toward a conceptualization of styles of curriculum design making in small groups*, University of Alberta; Donald C. Wilson, (1976), *Emic evaluation inquiry: An approach for evaluating school programs*, University of Alberta; Walter Werner (1977), *A study of perspectives in Social Studies*, University of Alberta; Peter Rothe (1979), *Toward an existential phenomenological approach to curriculum evaluation*, University of British Columbia (Aoki 1978/2005, pp. 107-108).

This organization was formed in 1943 in the merger of the National Education Association’s Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction with the independent Society for Curriculum Study (see Pinar et al., 1995, p. 142).


In April of 1985, Ted Aoki, Kenneth Jacknicke and Douglas Franks from the University of Alberta organized the seven annual CACS conference, entitled *Understanding school curriculum as lived*, “focused on curriculum-as-experienced by teachers and students through such approach as hermeneutics and phenomenology” (Butt, 1985, p. iii). In 1986, Aoki, Jacknicke and Franks edited the proceedings of the Seventh Invitational Symposium of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, entitled *Understanding curriculum as lived: curriculum Canada VII*. It was published by the Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia.

This title is derived from Aoki’s 1986/2005 essay.

There are selected Ph.D. dissertations supervised by Ted Aoki: Justice in education: participatory case study evaluation (Bath, 1988); A critical understanding of technology and educational development: A case study of the Korean educational development institute (Sung, 1986); The meaning of morality and moral education: An interpretive study of the moral education curriculum in Korea (Oh, 1986); Understanding the meaning of teacher competence: An interpretive study of a teacher education curriculum in Korea (Hur, 1986); Curriculum orientation with religious education programs for Catholic Secondary Schools (van Damme, 1985); A hermeneutic investigation of the meaning of curriculum implementation for consultants and teachers (Carson, 1984); Social worlds: British Columbia Social Studies Curriculum Unit “Developing the tropical world” as reflected through the writings of George Herbert Mead and Alfred Schutz (Harrison, 1984); Toward understanding the lived-world of Lebanese Muslim students and their teachers (Fahlman, 1984); Toward understanding the lived world of three

4.1 Introduction

I am reminded of Hwal Yol Jung (1987), who thoughtfully said that pious thinking like poetic thinking “is attuned to the topology of Being,” and as such is “the acme of thinking.”

(Aoki, 1990/2005, p. 400)

The communication of the existential possibilities of attunement, that is, the disclosing of existence, can become the true aim of “poetic” speech.

(Heidegger, 1953/2010, p. 157)

In 1985, Aoki retired from the University of Alberta and was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus. The following year, he returned to Vancouver and became an adjunct professor at the University of Victoria, where he formally retired in 1996. During these ten years, Aoki gave numerous public speeches and published several essays. Among many other distinctions awarded to Aoki are: Honorary Professor from the University of British Columbia in 1994, Honorary Doctorate from the University of Lethbridge in 1988, and Honorary Doctorates from the University of British Columbia in 1991, the University of Alberta in 1992 and the University of Western Ontario in 1999.

This was a period of time when diversity was an increasing reality in the Canadian classroom, and the social studies curriculum was emphasizing self-centered individualism. Aoki (1993/2005) was critical about this “centering” (p. 279) and he used Charles Taylor’s words to describe this self-centered individualism as “the malaise of modernity” (p. 285). The binary of dualism between the self and others was embedded in such a malaise and continued to trouble understanding related to notions such as multiculturalism, identity, second language, teaching and curriculum.

In turn, Aoki contextualized notions of identity, multiculturalism and curriculum with the intent to provoke the discourse of duality. Aoki continued his ontological concern related to
being and his phenomenological attunement to the “is-ness” of curriculum from the last decade; in turn, his thinking and writings became exuberantly poetic. He juxtaposed Chinese pictograms with Occidental thoughts to explicate his thinking. Instead of focusing on the “apparent” differences, both cultural and linguistic, embodied in these juxtapositions, Aoki turned his readers to the profound spaces in between. The in-between is not a third space, per se; rather it is a way of being and becoming. It is a style of thought that embraces ambiguity, is open to multiple interpretations, and I suggest this is poetic thought style.

As discussed in previous chapters, Aoki was concerned over the forgetfulness of being in education and with overcoming the technological manipulation that enframes thinking and understanding in education. He was also concerned that the instrumental view of language lacks the genuineness to address the profundity of human existence. Back in 1978, Aoki had already pointed out in Towards Curriculum Inquiry in a New Key the limitations of this instrumentalist thinking and called for an increased potential for research in art education. Thus, Aoki’s thinking over time became the discovery of the seldom claimed, silent ground of Western thought. By investigating the root problems stemming from behaviorism and rationalism and moving away from the rigidity of instrumentalism as well as the over-reification of curriculum and pedagogy and the binary of dualism, Aoki turned to recovering the neglected life force in humanity.

As discussed in previous chapters, for Aoki, understanding is a mode of being that reveals pedagogical significance. Thus, teaching is not merely a skillful act, but an embodiment of a moment in the classroom where teachers’ and students’ life experiences live in one sense of time. Teaching and curriculum become multiple intimate learnable moments that transcend the inner world (lived curriculum) and outer world (planned curriculum) and occupy a place in-between, as a way of being and becoming. Here, Aoki adds ontology to epistemology. In this
chapter, following my contextualization of Aoki’s writings, which placed their emphasis on culture, language, metaphor and pluralism, as ways of being (revealing, feeling, sensing, imagining), I examine the ways Aoki added poiesis to epistemology. Aoki’s poetic wisdom is dynamic in his creation of a place of foreignness to provoke thinking. It is an inspired journey toward understanding through reflection on significant external events and turning inward to personal consciousness, to the is-ness of live(d) experiences, especially on/to the possibility of dwelling in-between languages.

4.2 Language as House of Being

4.2.1 Dialectic of Mother and Second Languages (1987)

Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell. (Heidegger, 1949, as cited in Capuzzi, 1998, p. 239)

Language has its true being only in conversation, in the exercise of understanding: between people… Communication … does not need any tools, in the real sense of the word. It is a living process in which a community of life is lived out… All forms of human community of life are forms of linguistic community: even more they constitute language. For language, in its nature, is the language conversation, but it acquires its reality only in the process of communicating. This is why it is not a mere means of communication. (Gadamer, 1975, p. 404, as cited in Aoki, 1987b/2005, p. 239)

In 1984, Aoki was invited to present a paper entitled “The Dialectic of Mother Language and Second Language: A Curriculum Exploration” at the Ottawa Conference on Language, Culture and Literary Identity in Canada. Presenting on a topic like this in Ottawa, the capital city of “multicultural” Canada and the political hub of bilingualism (French and English), was quite significant. In his presentation, Aoki not only continued his ontological phenomenological approach, but also added hermeneutics to understanding second language school programs. From a phenomenological curriculum theorist’s point of view and with his great concern related to being, language, for Aoki (1987b/2005), is “the ground that makes possible the revelation of the life experiences of humans” (p. 235). Life experiences of humans disclose a phenomenological
concept of “Lebenswelt” – lifeworld. Connecting the concept of Lebenswelt to second language programming and curriculum, Aoki suggests, is a “relationship [that] is understood dialectically between the second language and the mother language” (p. 235).

Before taking his audience on an exploration of the ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutic approach in understanding second language curriculum, Aoki first applied a critical lens to the dominant second language curriculum orientation that is based on a technicist understanding of the world. Aoki pointed out that the problem with such an understanding is that “technicist language is used to understand language as code and...instrumentalized language is disembodied of the social and cultural crucible that alone engenders life within language” (p. 237). Along with this technicist understanding of language and the infinite attractions to new technological instruments – side-tape, television, computer, listening lab, etc. – second language programs in the educational field “reflect the ambience of the situation…the technological ethos permeates everyday existence and orders the agenda of daily life in schools” (p. 236). In turn, second language curriculum is enframed in a Heideggerian sense (as discussed in Chapter 3), by the “presence of machinery” and “the understanding of language in second-language curricula” has become understanding a “linguistic code” (p. 236). Languages in the educational world “exist as multiple codes each of which can be analyzed into atomic units and subsequently synthesize into larger units” (p. 236), Aoki commented. Thus, learning a second language under these circumstances is “understood as achievement of the vocabulary and grammatical rules of the code” and language is reduced to “a means to end, a tool to permit the expression of preexisting thought” (p. 236). Continuing his criticism of technicist thinking, Aoki added that “second-language curriculum and instruction join technocracy, the world order of technical human being given to gaining technical competence in the use of the second language” (p. 237).
Ultimately, this technocratic curriculum orientation considers that “language competence…essentially involves the learning of purely technical skills” (p. 237).

Aoki was also critical regarding the curriculum orientation in second language immersion programs. The history of Canadian immersion programs is unique in that it was actually first developed in Quebec during the mid-1960s, in the midst of the province’s “Quiet Revolution.” It was a time when Quebecers were dealing with a number of socio-political issues; first among these was education. Later, Anglophone parents began to be concerned that their children were not learning French well enough in English-speaking schools. Additionally, since the Official Languages Act passed in 1974, parents considered that their children being bilingual would mean they would have better job opportunities. After numerous meetings and consultations, French immersion program began to spread across the provinces, helped along by a growing interest in bilingualism. However, this growing interest in bilingualism was primarily based on a utilitarian purpose – that of increasing employment opportunities. Thus, “language is understood instrumentally as a tool to facilitate practical communication in job situations” (p. 237). According to this way of thinking, the main focus of immersion programs is to function in the language under study. Aoki further commented that the “overriding aim” of this kind of usually “short but intensive” immersion program is “the removal of the accent of the mother tongue, the most obvious sign of strangeness” (p. 237). In turn, language itself and these programs are alienated from the associated culture. Teaching and learning under this framework, Aoki pointed out, “become entrapped in a technical scheme of end-means, detached and deontologized” (p. 237). The separation of language from its culture makes the “acquisition of second-language competence [be] seen merely as gaining an additional tool, subordinate to the first language” (p. 238).
Aoki further described this type of immersion program metaphorically, comparing it to “taking a bath from which one emerges superficially changed, but essentially no different from the moment of immersion” (p. 238). He thought that “in a fundamental sense, immersion program has become submersion and even submission” (p. 238). Aoki was concerned about this understanding of second language that ultimately “commits an unwarranted reductionism by transforming human beings into things” (p. 238). In concluding his critique of immersion programs, Aoki reminded his audience that although the immersion program is built on “an instrumental orientation of learning merely another code” (p. 238), it is not entirely futile, because this orientation “recognizes” that “a second language is different” (p. 238). However, such recognition only remains in understanding this difference in a codified interpretation. What goes beyond this instrumental understanding is the appreciation of the “differences in culture” (p. 238). With such appreciation of differences in language and culture, Aoki emphasized, it is possible to build a dialectic relationship, “where the others as strangers can call upon us to understand them within the strangers’ own interpretive scheme” (p. 238).

At this Ottawa conference in 1984, Aoki explained to his audience what he meant by understanding bilingualism as a dialectic relationship between two worlds. In 1981, Aoki had presented a talk about understanding trans-national curriculum as a dialectic relationship (see 3.4.1). This time, three years later, he dwelt deeply on the ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutic terrain in explaining what it means to understand bilingualism as a dialectic of complementary between two worlds and what it means to understand bilingualism as a hermeneutic dialectic. He first shared German philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt’s concept that “a view of language is essentially a view of the world” (Aoki, 1987b/2005, p. 238). To
further the understanding of the “linguistic nature of the human world,” Aoki returned to a passage by the iconic continental hermeneutic philosopher, Hans-George Gadamer:

Language has no independent life apart from the world that comes to language within it. Not only is the world “world” only insofar as it comes into language but language, too, has its real being only in the fact that the world is represented within it (Gadamer, 1975, p. 401, in Aoki, 1987b/2005, p. 238).

Referring to Gadamer’s acknowledgment of the “linguisticality of the human world,” Aoki pointed out that because of this linguistic nature of the human world, “each of us is born into a concrete language of our mother tongue” (p. 238). It is the mother language “nourishing us” “with which we are at home,” and we have a sense of “belonging to a community” through a “language of sharing, a language of familiarity, a vernacular language of daily conversation” (p. 239). The mother tongue is a language “with a profound respect of the other as self” (p. 239).

Aoki also reflected on mother language in a Heideggerian (2001a) sense, emphasizing that it is not primarily we who speak language, but language itself which speaks. Even when we are not aware of it, we are always-already “thrown into language” (Heidegger, 2001a, p. 187). This means that the inherited mother tongue words that are “ready-to-hand” for us are not of our own making (Heidegger, 1962, p. 204). Ultimately, it is also the familiarity of the Lebenswelt (lifeworld) that our mother language creates which simultaneously leaves us “homeless” when we go elsewhere. Stemming from this ontological phenomenological understanding, “coming to know a second language is indeed a coming to know a way to enter a new world” (Aoki, 1987b/2005, p. 239). Learning a second language, Aoki described, to his audience, goes beyond acquiring language as “merely a preexistent tool” to access a passage; rather it is “acquiring a familiarity with the world itself and how it confronts us” (p. 239). Learners of a second language,
grounded in their own being, “do not alter their relationship to the world, but rather enrich it through the world of the foreign language” (p. 240), Aoki suggested. In turn, understanding bilingualism, especially in Canada, can be like a “communal venturing from an ontological understanding of what it means to speak two languages, enfolded as [learners’] lives are existentially as beings engaged in their own becomings as Canadians” (p. 241). Bilingualism, in this sense, is a dialectic relationship – a “wandering back and forth between language realities” (Heidegger, 1982, p. 24). What is central in this Heideggerian sense of the dialectic, Aoki (1987b/2005) noted, is “the revealing of the ‘well-spring of reality,’ the source of being from which languages comes” (p. 241). In turn, the “essence of language” is not only “linguistic” but also “existence” (p. 241).

It is through the existential linguistic essence of language that Heidegger (1982) poeticized that human beings fundamentally reside in language as the “house of being” (p. 145). Aoki reflected Heidegger’s (1982)³⁴⁵ distinctive view of language in examining its critical potential and in his questioning of being. However, Aoki pointed out to his audience that if we “speak of a dialectic of complementarity, or its popularized form ‘unity in differences’ (often used to described Canadian multiculturalism)” we neglect the “hermeneutic experience of beings rooted in [our] mother tongue” (p. 242). With this turn, Aoki leads us to dwell in a hermeneutic circle where dialectic is understood as “twofold always” and “it is a part-whole dialectic that is situated historically in the realm of mother language” (p. 242). Referring to Gadamer’s interpretation of one’s world view and of mother language, Aoki agreed that “this other world that is experienced is not simply an object of knowledge;” rather, “the other world of second language is always understood, if at all, from the familiar world of the mother language” (p.
To further explain in an ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutical sense how one might encounter the world of second language, Aoki cites Gadamer’s (1975) passage:

However, much as one may adopt a foreign attitude of mind, one still does not forget one’s own view of the world and of language. Rather the other world we encounter is not only strange, but also different in its relations. It has not only its own truth in itself, but also its own truth for us. (p. 400, as cited in Aoki, 1987b/2005, p. 242)

In such an understanding, Aoki explained, “to venture forth into the world of the second-language thus is an endeavor that entails the ‘is,’ the ‘is not’ and the ‘not yet’” (p. 242). It is a hermeneutic circle journey of “re-entering home always at a different point, thus coming to know the beginning point for the first time” (p. 242). Within this circle, Aoki described that “one who studies a second language has at every moment of study the possibility of a free movement back to one’s own life” (p. 242). With the always twofold dialectic between the mother and second language, one is “at once both here in the world of mother language and there in the world of the second language” (p. 242). Through this dialectic circle, one is able to question, to contrast the worlds of mother language and second language. Ultimately, the reflective conversation from the dialectic “allows possibilities of a deeper awareness of who one is, and of a fuller understanding of the conditions shaping one’s being” (p. 242). This dialectic understanding of two worlds, in a Gadamerian sense, “speaks of the possibilities of returning home as a changed being”:

If, by entering into foreign linguistic worlds, we overcome the prejudices and limitations of our previous experience of the world this does not mean that we leave and negate our own world. As travelers we return home with new experiences (Gadamer, 1975, p. 407, cited in Aoki, p. 243).
In so understanding, Aoki stated that bilingualism becomes a “mode of being-and-becoming-in-the-world” (p. 243). Speaking as a Japanese Nisei (second generation) and living “in tension at the margin,” being bilingual for Aoki is “not becoming like the native in a second language” (p. 243). It is rather “viscerally linked with [his] mother language in [his] ‘dwelling aright’” (p. 243). It is a continuous “probing life and life experience” and questioning between “the familiar and the unfamiliar” (p. 243). Thus, Aoki “sees” bilingualism as “a mode of being, fully engaged in a twofold dialectic” – a dialectic not only between mother and second language, but also between “self and the context of the first dialectic” (p. 243). However, this twofold dialectic is not without tensions and dilemmas, arising from the “dialectic between the self and the world, allowing the understanding of education as ‘exducere’ (a leading out and an unfolding) speaking ontologically (p. 245). That is, to speak “from within the ground of being of a person who in his being can be seen as coming into his own personal being” (p. 245). Understanding second language programs as a hermeneutic dialectic between the mother tongue and second language, for Aoki, is to “promise an understanding of education as a leading out and a going beyond the merely instrumental or immersion stage to the truly authentic” (p. 245). Aoki concluded that through this way of “understanding education as dialectic between the language of epistemology and the language of ontology” he felt that “the coming into being of this understanding of education is eminently a bilingual matter” (p. 245). In this 1984 talk at the Ottawa Conference on Language, Culture and Literary Identity, Aoki discussed how the technicist understanding of language concealed our understanding of the world(s). In turn, Aoki tactfully juxtaposed Heidegger and Gadamer’s interpretations of language and explained how an ontological-phenomenology-hermeneutic understanding of a second language might reveal the possibilities of dwelling between two worlds. It is through such understanding of our sense-making that
everyday lives in the world are orientated by way of language and the Heideggerian sense of basic existential characteristics belongs to how we commonly exist with one another and ourselves in everyday life (Heidegger, 1962, p. 219, 1988, p. 160). In the next section, I discuss the ways Aoki (1987b/2005) attuned his audience to “our own personal and cultural historicity, as historical beings” (p. 349) in speaking the notion of identity.

4.2.2 The Notion of Identity (1987)


In May 1987, Aoki was invited to speak at the Conference of the National Association of Japanese Canadians in Vancouver, British Columbia. This was nearly a decade after his early talk on the notion of ethnicity, “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity,” at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association. This time, in his speech entitled “Revisiting the Notions of Leadership and Identity,” Aoki again questioned critically the notion of identity. Taking a phenomenological approach, Aoki “work[ed] himself though three concrete episodes” (p. 351) with his audience related to his questioning of the notion of identity.

In the first episode, Aoki raised a semiotic question regarding the phrase Canadian Japanese or Japanese Canadian. Aoki reflected on his experience of being an external examiner for a doctoral dissertation entitled Ethnic and National Identity among Jewish Students in Ontario, at the University of Toronto. In the dissertation of a young Israeli scholar, the author referred to the students in his study as “Canadian Jews” (p. 351). Here, “Canadian” became a signifier for Jews and Aoki further questioned this young scholar’s “mode of naming” (p. 352):

Mr. Shanmai, I have been calling myself a Japanese Canadian, and people like me have
become accustomed to being called Japanese Canadians, not Canadian Japanese. This mode of naming seems different from the identifying label “Canadian Jews,” the mode of speaking you use to portray the identity of the youngsters you discuss in the dissertation. I ask you, “In the Canadian context, does it make a difference whether Canadian is a noun or an adjective? As some might say, ‘Is it merely a semantic matter?’” (p. 352)

By sharing his questioning of this young scholar’s mode of naming, Aoki simultaneously attuned his audience to contemplate their own mode of naming and asked: “What is it about us that allows us to call ourselves or to be called Japanese Canadians?” (p. 352).

To further expound on his questioning of the mode of naming, Aoki shared another episode about his experience helping a small study group from the Ts’el Education Administration program at the University of British Columbia. The small study group of Indigenous graduate students who were aspiring to be educational administrators asked Aoki if “the program [was] relevant to who they are as Native Indians” (p. 352). Aoki returned to the fundamental question and asked these students “Who are Native Indians?” (p. 352). To lead the students out of objectified thinking and to attune to the possibilities of being and becoming, Aoki asked the students how they might understand the questions of “Who are Native Indians?” and “Who are Native Indians?” (p. 352). Aoki pointed out the emphasis on the what-ness in the first question, saying that “beckoning and indwelling in a world of whatness, of things and objects, of names and nouns” reflects “a world of the language of having” (p. 352). A “have-language world” indicates the dominance of the subject that is “typical of Western cultures” (p. 352), Aoki commented. By contrast, the second question underlines the “associated verb ‘to be,’” invoking “a world of the language of being” (p. 353). A “being world” where the “nouns tend to conceal themselves” invites a search for “understanding of the meaning of what it means to be alive, the
meaning of life in the lived human situation” (p. 352). In discussing this experience, Aoki reminded his audience that asking “Who are Japanese Canadians?” is likely to lead to the description of “features and characteristics” (p. 352) – the signifier. If we “draw upon existential themes of our lives,” however, we return to the question of “Who are Japanese Canadians?” (p. 352). Echoing a Heideggerian concept of Dasein, the root meaning of being here dwells in there-being to suggest an un-affixed, always layered, contextual essence for humans’ being. Being a Japanese Canadian, Aoki sagely described to his audience, is “like this, and like that” (p. 352).

In the last episode, Aoki took his audience on a juxtaposed path of a continental scholar’s concept of identity and the lived stories of two Asiatic heritage musicians to dwell “beyond identity” (p. 352). Sharing a May, 1987 Time Magazine article entitled What Makes Seiji Run?, Aoki spoke to his audience about a “deep conversation” (p. 352) regarding “whether an Oriental can do Western music” between the Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa and the first generation Chinese cellist Yo-yo Ma. Ozawa, described in the article as a “provocative figure,” is the “first East Asian to succeed in a quintessentially Western Art form [yet] remains solidly Japanese outlook and temperament” (as cited in Aoki, 1987/2005, p. 352). It is in a “clash of cultures and its effect on music making” that Ozawa lives a “divided life” which symbolizes “at many levels the duality that every Japanese musician in the West faces” (p. 352). However, when Ozawa reflected on his early career experiences in Europe, he said, “I realized that what I was doing was strange only when I got to Europe;” then I “realized that the Germans were suspicious enough when an Italian performed Beethoven, let alone a Japanese” (p. 354). When Ozawa returned to his homeland of Tokyo, Japan to conduct the N.H.K. Symphony after studying with “Van Karajan in Berlin and after serving as assistant to Leonard Bernstein of the New York Philharmonic,” he “experienced standing alone on a podium in front of an ensemble of empty
chairs” (p. 354). This heart-wrenching experience reminded Ozawa of the Japanese saying, “The nail that sticks out is hammered down” (p. 354). However, when Ozawa was approached with the question “Why [he] became a Western Music musician,” he thought, it “makes my life much more interesting and much more exciting” and “maybe, there is a way to make a marriage between this Oriental blood and Western music” (p. 354). On that note, the article writer concluded that Ozawa “live[d] two lives in two worlds” (p. 352). Aoki shared that he thought the article writer’s comment on Ozawa “may be correct…but not true to the essence of Ozawa’s being” (p. 352). Aoki felt that Ozawa’s “meaningful dwelling place” is “in tensionality in the realm of between” – “between the East and West, between his Oriental blood and Western music” (p. 352). The more “exciting” and “interesting” life is dwelling aright “in the tensionality of differences” (p. 352). Referring to Heidegger’s 1957 writing, *Identity and Difference*, Aoki further explained that “the traditional notion of identity tends to truncate the situational context of our lives, leaving the possible danger of reducing our life reality to an abstracted totality of its own” (p. 352). This understanding of identity as wholeness “seduces us to forgetfulness of the possibilities for a fuller life, of our living in differences” (p. 352), Aoki reminded his audience. In turn, Aoki asked his audience to question into being, to “move beyond the sense of identity to dwell within a twofold of identity and difference” (p. 355) and to dwell in between the differences of two nouns – Japanese Canadian. Branching out from here, Aoki next turned to the questions of *How might we, the hyphenated Canadians, “dwell aright in thoughtful living with others?”* and *How might a curriculum be truly inviting for the teachers and students to interpret the existential dimension of their school life and to “strive for the secret places of the soul?”* (Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 365).
4.2.3 Striving for the Secret Places of the Soul (1989)

To me, an educated person, first and foremost, understands that one’s ways of knowing, thinking, and doing flow from who one is…an authentic person is no mere individual, an island onto oneself, but is a being-in-relation-with-others…is at core, an ethical being. Such a person knows that being an educated person is more than possessing knowledge or acquiring intellectual or practical skills, and that basically, it is being concerned with dwelling aright in thoughtful living with others.

(Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 365)

Two years later, Aoki was invited to speak at the Alberta Teachers’ Association Seminar on March 4, 1989. In his speech, “Inspiriting the Curriculum,” Aoki (1989/2005) asked an intriguing question of his audience: Can a curriculum truly invite? To engage with the audience to probe deeper, Aoki first reflected on his early career as a teacher at a Hutterite school near Calgary in 1945. Being a novice Grade 1 teacher, Aoki recalled that, “following the reading curriculum,” he “use[d] a primer, We Work and Play” (p. 357) without noticing that he “was teaching an ethic…that separated work from play” (p. 357). Aoki recognized that he “sublimated work and deemphasized play” and never really combined “work and play together” (p. 357). Another primer that Aoki followed in reading class was “We Think and Do” (p. 357), and he “naively thought… reading was mere ‘doing,’ that reading was a skill that could be acquired or not acquired” (p. 357) through tactic strategy. When reflecting on this experience, Aoki shared his concern with the audience: “How was I, as a novice teacher, to know that understanding ‘reading as skills’ stemmed from an understanding of ‘language’ as a mere tool of communication?” (p. 357). Moreover, Aoki questioned, “How was I to know that this instrumental view of language led inevitably to an instrumental view of reading, reducing it to mere skills and techniques, transforming reading to a half-life of what it might be?” (p. 357). In turn, he pointed out that he was “being caught up unconsciously in a technological ethos that...overemphasiz[ed] ‘doing’” (p. 358). The pitfall of this ethos, Aoki explained, was teaching
a “hidden curriculum” of one understanding of “thinking” that “thinking’ is primary and ‘doing’ is derivative” (p. 358) and “understanding people, teachers, and children not as beings who are human but rather as thing beings” (p. 358). Ultimately, teaching through this ethos reflected an understanding of “thinking as theorizing and doing as practicing” (p. 358) and the primer We Think and Do became a “mundane version of what could be entitled ‘We Theorize and Practice’” (p. 358). This understanding is also mirrored in teachers’ education that regards “teacher preparation in education curriculum and instruction courses as theorizing and the practicing of theories as practicum” (p. 358). It is “a way of life” that seems to be “caught up totally in the linearized form of ‘from theory into practice’” (p. 358). Sharing a comment from American humanistic scholar Urie Bronfenbrenner’s 1986 work entitled Alienation and the Four Worlds of Childhood, Aoki (1989/2005) pointed out that the problem with this linearized way of life manifests itself in “many forms of alienation” (p. 359) in society. This alienation not only “point[ed] to a number of societal problems in the United Sates that bring despair” (p. 359), it also indicated “the unravelling of the social fabric that has been taking place since World War II, or even earlier” (p. 359). Aoki cited Bronfenbrenner’s comment that this alienation is “a disconnectedness that brings about the diminishing of the soul of the family, the community, the peer group, and the school” (p. 359). It is also a “disconnectedness that diminishes the soul of each person,” creating what Christopher Lasch understood as “a person in whom whatever soul is left secondary to the body, a self that is no longer a being that is human, but a diminished being on the way to becoming a thing” (Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 359). In turn, Bronfenbrenner was concerned about “the transformation of North American schools into what he calls ‘academies of alienation’” (Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 359). Now, Aoki exhorted his colleague audience, “the time is ripe… to embrace a more edifying and inspired sense of theorizing” (p. 359).
To help his audience imagine the possibilities of moving toward an inspited curriculum “with the soul” (p. 359), Aoki mentioned some remarks by 1988 men’s world figure skating champion Brian Orser. When Brian was asked by the interviewer how “his skating seemed to reflect well the shift in mood of the music,” Brian responded, “When I skate well, …I become the music…My skating is the music” (p. 360). This remark made by Orser, Aoki commented, “… provides a sense of what it means for a curriculum to be inspited – a quality of body and soul intertwining in their fullness” (p. 360). Aoki made a connection between Orser’s remarks and the B.C. music curriculum, citing in the latter, a “twofold attunement” that is “provided in two strands” – one that is a “study about music, wherein music is held at some distance as an object and studied abstractly” and the other which “calls for experiencing or living music” and which recognizes the being-ness of music and allows for “the potential to sink into the lived world of music” (p. 360).

Aoki pointed out to his seminar audience that these ideas drawn from Bronfenbrenner’s calling for a soulful curriculum and Orser’s “being-ness in the becoming” are the gates that open to a “layered world of curriculum and pedagogy” (p. 360) that would allure curriculum developers to an understanding of the question of attunement. “Multifold are the ways a person relates to the universe” (p. 360), explained Aoki. He went on to share German theologian and hermeneutic scholar Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher’s metaphoric illustration of how people with different world views relate to a cathedral. A theoretician, Schleiermacher noted, “like an architect of edifices, experiences the cathedral conceptually and theoretically” and for the theoretician, “the cathedral is as an object to be subordinated to his intellect, mainly in the form of analysis” (Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 360). By contrast, a practicing carpenter “walking into the same cathedral” will likely “look for whatever needs making and fixing” and “will be bent on
making the cathedral serviceable for practical purposes (p. 361). When “a true worshiper enters
the cathedral, the person likely experiences the cathedral existentially and poetically in a
fundamental sense” and “seeks the meaning of what is it to live and to be human” (p. 361). For
this person, the cathedral is not merely an object for intellectual engagement or for practicing of
technical skills; rather, it is “an embodied spiritual dwelling place wherein the fourfold of mortal
self, divinity, earth and heaven gather together and shine through one” (p. 361).

After sharing Schleiermacher’s illustration of how people might relate to a cathedral in
multiple ways, Aoki took a linguistic turn, asking his audience to “substitute school for
cathedral” (p. 361) in Schleiermacher’s analogy. One potential view considers the school as
“given primarily to ‘rational thinking’” – that is “a school where the curriculum emphasizes
intellectual skills” and “the curriculum likely will be a thinking curriculum” (p. 361). Through
this view, teaching is “seen essentially as mind building,” as represented by “Rodin’s sculpture,
‘The Thinker,’ symbolic of the Age of Enlightenment” (p. 361). The second way of viewing
school is utilitarian-orientated and considers the school as “given primarily to ‘doing,’ a school
that emphasizes practical skills” (p. 361); curriculum building in such a school is guided by the
“post school workplace” (p. 361). The third view envisions the school as “given primarily to
being and becoming, a school that emphasizes and nurtures the becoming of human beings” and
merges the “togetherness of ‘doing’ and ‘being’ enfolding in ‘becoming’” (p. 361). In the midst
of togetherness of doing and being, Aoki noted poetically, teaching is “understood not only as a
mode of doing but also as a mode of being-with-others,” and both teachers and students are
“seen as being simultaneously an individual and a social being” (p. 361). Whereas the first and
second view of school are “grounded in a fragmented view of persons (body and mind),” the
third view sees “teaching as a tactful leading out…into a world of possibilities” always “being
mindful of the students’ fitness as mortal beings” (p. 362). Thus, this third view “restores the unity of body and mind, body and soul” (p. 362).

So, can a curriculum truly invite? Aoki asked his audience this thought-provoking question. Drawing from his concept of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-live, Aoki commented that “the curriculum-as-plan must wait at the classroom door for an invitation from teachers and students” and that teachers and students are “likely to find a live tension” between the two curricula that allow them to say “‘we live curriculum,’ in much the same way that Brian Orser was able to say, ‘I become the music’” (p. 362). While suggesting the possibility of an inviting curriculum, Aoki added another layer to the meaning of music and reminded his audience of Plato’s words: “Education in music is most sovereign… rhythm and harmony find their way in to the secret places of the soul” (as cited in Aoki, 1989/2005, p. 364). A soul-reclaiming curriculum – an inspired curriculum – is “excitingly satisfying,” Aoki said enthusiastically. If we speak an inviting curriculum as a soul-reclaiming one, then in a broader sense, “a truly educated person,” according to Aoki:

speaks and acts from a deep sense of humanity, conscious of the limits set by human finitude and mortality, acknowledging the grace by which educator and educated are allowed to dwell in the present that embraces past experiences but is open to possibilities yet to be. Thus, to be educated is to be ever open to the call of what it is to be deeply human and heeding the call to walk with others in life’s ventures (p. 365).

In the next section, we will listen to Aoki heeding the call of a Korean student’s prosaic words to her beloved teacher and dwelling more deeply on the meaning of pedagogy that “come[s] into being of a clearing” which opens up the “pedagogic possibilities” (p. 394). Also, his further questioning on, What it is to be in one’s becoming? Finally, his turn to Heidegger’s
concept of Kehre, “an attempt to think the unthought,” that poetically allured his audience to listen to an Asiatic teaching wisdom regarding the “sound of pedagogy in the silence” (p. 395).

4.3 Poetic Thinking

4.3.1 Listening to the Sound of Pedagogy in Silence of the Morning Calm\(^{xlvi}\) (1990)

In its poeticity and its lingusticality, Anji’s story allowed us to follow the open hand that gently gestured towards the topos of pedagogical Being, that pedagogical relationship that reverentially knows its attunement to Being.

(Aoki, 1990a/2005, p. 400)

Yet Being – what is Being? It is it itself. The thinking that is to come must learn to experience that and to say it. “Being” – is not God and not a cosmic ground. Being is the farther than all being and is yet nearer to man than every being, be it a rock, a beast, a work of art, a machine, be it an angel or God. Being is the nearest. Yet the near remains farther from man. Man, at first clings always and only to beings.

(Heidegger, 1947, p. 92)

The story of the “morning calm” is a poetic one…When the horse tribesmen finally arrived on the Korean Peninsula, they were fascinated by the spectacular scenery of the sun arising out of the East Sea early in the morning through the clouds. They exclaimed, “This is the land where we should settle!” Korea was named “Chosun” for centuries. In the ancient Chinese document, Chosun (朝鮮) means “the land of morning splendor,” most likely named for the fresh morning splendor of the East Sea. Chosun is also often translated poetically as “Morning Calm.”

In the early summer of 1990, Aoki was invited to speak at the International Conference on Korean Studies, sponsored by the Academy for Korean Studies, in Seoul, Korea. In his speech entitled “The Sound of Pedagogy in the Silence of the Morning Calm,” Aoki thoughtfully embedded the ancient poetic name of Korea in his speech title. Opening this poetic talk, Aoki (1990/2005) shared a heartfelt letter\(^{xlviii}\) from a Korean student whose “deep esteem for her teacher shimmers,” and asked his audience to “listen to pedagogic being” in Anji’s story (p. 390). Anji Yoo, a “noted poet” and a graduate of Seoul National University, happened to be the
younger sister of Hae-Ryung – one of the visiting scholars from the Korean Educational Development Institute in Aoki’s graduate seminar class at the University of Alberta. In the class, Aoki recalled, “I asked [Hae-Ryung] to bridge the Pacific by translating her sister’s story in English” (p. 390). The reading of the letter of Anji to her teacher, Mokwolnim, Aoki described to his audience, became the “sound of pedagogy” and was “in a way of homecoming” (p. 390). Aoki explained that this translated letter of Anji’s has been a “treasured story” for the “graduate students in curriculum and pedagogy at the University of Victoria, the University of Alberta, and at Louisiana State university (p. 393).

After reading Anji’s letter in memory of her late teacher, Aoki connected phenomenologically the story of Anji to three educational themes. First, he asked his audience to “linger” in Anji’s story of “pedagogical theme” (p. 393). Dwelling in Anji’s story, Aoki pointed to one of Anji’s comments about her esteemed teacher: “thou have left us because of thy deep concern for our future” (p. 393). The significance of this comment, Aoki noted, is that this “leaving seemed vastly different from a leaving that emanates from a situation wherein a teacher lacks concern for students” (p. 393). Yet, turning to the Western tradition, “‘pedagogy,’ in its Greek origin, meant leading the young or leading the less mature” (p. 393). Aoki raised the question, “Within the understandings of pedagogy as leading, how shall we understand ‘leaving’ or ‘taking leave’” (p. 393) in Anji’s story? Aoki related this question to the authority of the teacher. He indicated that in the Western culture, teaching is often “understood as delegating or allocating power assumed to reside in the teacher” (p. 394). By contrast, in Anji’s story, the teacher’s authoritative power seemed to reveal itself differently. Aoki felt that the pedagogical authority in Anji’s story seemed to
flow from somewhere else altogether – from the wisdom of having lived well, from the being that deeply understands what it is to live truly, a poet who not only wrote and sang poetry, but who also lived piously and dwelt poetically on this earth, on this land of the morning calm. (p. 394)

In this way, authority is not associated with power; rather it is understood as “the wisdom that comes from having lived well as a very human being” (p. 394), Aoki commented. For a teacher like Mokwolnim, power-sharing is not a concern. As a pedagogue, such a teacher knows that “at times, he must take leave…he must withdraw, such that in the very event of withdrawal, there may inhere a pedagogic creativity” that is a “coming into being of a clearing that is vibrant with pedagogic possibilities” (p. 394). This withdrawal acts as a pedagogic tactic, Aoki explained, which allows students to “confer in the silence of the pedagogue’s absence” and acts as “an opening wherein the student can truly learn what it is to stand, what it is to be in one’s becoming” (p. 394). Taking his audience to dwell more deeply in Mokwolnim’s “pedagogic knowing,” Aoki described the teacher as “being open not only to the pedagogic world that [is] itself poetic, but also to the student’s poetic living of her life” (p. 395). In turn, Aoki poetically contemplated that the “the tone I hear of Mokwolnim’s pedagogy emerges from the silence at the brink of his lived language” (p. 395). The silence of withdrawal by the teacher out of concern, Aoki remarked, “knows it is the student’s own path that allows a coming into her own as a poet” (p. 395). This is a pedagogy that “knows deeply what it is to shepherd the mystery that is life” (p. 395).

After unfolding the pedagogical theme from Anji’s story on pedagogical leave-taking, Aoki took his audience on another pedagogical journey of “belonging together” (p. 395). This time, he sojourned with Heidegger’s notion of Kehre – an “attempt to think the unthought” (p.
Quoting from Heidegger’s (1968) publication, *What is Called Thinking*, Aoki shared two passages in relation to thinking and teaching:

Most thought provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking (p. 6, as cited in Aoki, 1990a/2005, p. 395).

Teaching is even more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn… If the relation between the teacher and the learners is genuine… there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official…It…is an exalted matter to become a teacher – which is something else entirely than becoming a famous professor…We must keep our eyes fixed firmly on the true relation between teacher and taught (pp. 15-16, as cited in Aoki, 1990a/2005, p. 395).

Aoki pointed out that Heidegger’s injunction that “we must keep our eyes fixed firmly on the true relation between teacher and taught” means “we need to think in a way we have never thought before” (p. 395). Aoki further explained that in an ontological-phenomenon-hermeneutics sense, “thinking the is-ness of the true relationships between ‘belonging’ and ‘together’ in ‘belonging together’” (p. 396).

Echoing Heidegger’s deconstructive approach that emphasizes a critical process in examining the source of commonly accepted concepts, Aoki pointed out to his audience that for many of us the “habitual way” we “understand ‘belonging together’ is ‘belonging together’” – that is, “enframed in the primacy of togetherness” (p. 396). In this way, belonging is secondary as “a fitting of elements into an order – an order that is of man’s making” (p. 396). Through this way of thinking, “‘belonging together’ is a belonging in the totality of sameness, reflecting representational thinking characterized by representation of a thing in terms of its categories, held together in a nexus” (p. 396). In this understanding, “belonging together falls within a
metaphysical frame” (p. 396) of which Heidegger was critical. The danger of this framework is
the concealment of our seeing and hearing, an existential malaise that Heidegger (1947)
described in the Letter on Humanism as the “oblivion of Being” (p. 95). Aoki (1990a/2005)
discussed Heidegger’s concern over “our own historical situation” (p. 396), which
overemphasizes the development of science and technology – a manifestation of what Heidegger
called calculative thinking. What is lost in calculative thinking, Aoki pointed out, is “our
hearing; we become deaf to the call of Being, so caught up are we with the matter of the essence
of technology” (p. 396). How might we think differently to “be released from the hold of this
metaphysical totality that reduced ‘belonging together’ to the eminence of togetherness in
belonging together?” (p. 396).

Asking his audience to “step out” of their habitual way of thinking, Aoki called upon
Heidegger’s (1969) words:

To think metaphysically is to stop thinking halfway...Where are we? In what
constellation of man and being are we? ... We do not dwell sufficiently as yet where we
in reality already are. (pp.33, 40, as cited in Aoki, 1990/2005, pp. 396-397)

Aoki (1990a/2005) further explained that Heidegger “call[ed] upon us to move away from the
constellation wherein the subject thinks its object” (p. 397) and to “dwell sufficiently where we
already are” (p. 397). Dwelling where we already are may not be easy, if we are “thoughtlessly
blind or deaf to near where we already are” (p. 397). The way to escape metaphysical thinking
according to Heidegger is to become attuned to the “experience of Kehre, what Albert
Hopstadter (1979) calls ‘a reversal with a surprising turn’” (p. 17, as cited in Aoki, 1990a/2005,
p. 397). Kehre, as a linguistic turn, is “a leap that allows a break away from metaphysical
thought in understanding ‘belonging together’” and a listening to “the call of Being” in “letting
things appear,” Aoki (1990a/2005, p. 397) clarified. The transformation of leaping from calculative thinking to letting things appear where they already are is what Heidegger described as an event of appropriation. In this event, Aoki explained, “belonging’s homage is loosened” as “a listening to the call of the active nature of letting-belong-together,” thus “making possible recovery of belonging in its fuller sense” (p. 397). Aoki cited the commentary of Joan Stambaugh, a well-known translator of numerous works of Heidegger, regarding the word *ereignis* to clarify this complex thinking of Heidegger’s in relation to understanding belonging. *Ereignis* is a “common word in the German language meaning simply ‘event’” (Aoki, 1990a/2005, p. 397); Aoki shared Stambaugh’s explanation of “how in Heidegger’s language, *ereignis* opens itself up to two parallel understandings”:

> It is abstract in its being distant from everyday life yet being so close to us we cannot see or hear it; and it is concrete in its etymology, which shows that “*ereignis*” is rooted in “*eigen*” (to own), offering us the notion of coming into one’s own, that is, coming to where one truly belongs (Aoki, 1990a/2005, p. 397).

Through Stambaugh’s commentary, Aoki tactfully revealed that belonging together resides in the being-ness of belonging, and that this being-ness as the event of appropriation “appropriates man and Being in their essential togetherness” and ultimately “rests not in togetherness but in belonging” (p. 398).

Aoki then linguistically turned the metaphysically beholden “belonging together” to the being-ness in “belonging-together.” He reminded his audience of Heidegger’s statement regarding the “thinking of the yet unthought” (p. 398), and referred to the work of Heideggerian scholar, David Krell, who situated Heidegger at “the outmost point in the history of the Occidental or Evening-land…descrying the land of dawn” (p. 398). By the phrase “the land of
dawn,” Aoki explained, “is meant a source…that allows thinking of the yet unthought in Western thought” (p. 398). Sharing the stories of affiliation between Heidegger and some Asian scholars and later scholars who saw “possibilities of interweaving texts of the East and the West” (p. 399), Aoki encouraged his audience to “cultivate dialogue” that is reciprocal and that “may help us open ourselves to the pretextual real that welcomes the belonging together of the language of the East and the language of the West” (p. 399). Dwelling in the event of appropriation in thinking pedagogy that may “be let into the texture of the dialogue” where it may “be allowed to partake in thinking pedagogy in ways yet unthought, [may] possibly [allow] us to become more pious in our thinking” (p. 399). In the last “petal of thought” (p. 399), Aoki returned poetically to the story of Anji to illuminate the concept of “pious thinking” (p. 400) and Heidegger’s “piety of thinking” to illuminate the possibility of an interwoven path between East and West. Pious thinking, described by Heidegger as “piety of thinking,” is like “poetic thinking” that is “attuned to the topology of Being” (p. 400). Different from the metaphysical way of thinking, poetic thinking does not “surmount the earth in order to exploit and conquer it” (p. 400), Heidegger warned us. Rather, it “brings man onto the earth and makes him belong to the earth; it brings him dwelling on earth” (p. 400). Poetic thinking is dwelling on earth “made possible not so much through logicality” (p. 400); rather,

the taste of life and for life comes to its own as a gift through the grace of the piety of thinking that is truly of the earth – the earth that knows the sun of the dawn, the calm of the morn, the silence of its mystery. (p. 400)

In the silence of life’s mystery, the morning calm, Aoki took his audience to dwell in the pedagogic topos of Anji’s story. Now, “I am left with a petal of thought,” said Aoki:
that the appropriate topos for such piety of thinking is the silence of the morning calm.

Anji Yoo, a pedagogue that she is, has led me by her hand to the brink of this silence.

And at this moment in the shimmering presence of her absence, I stand — midst the silence — alone but not alone. (p. 400)

In the next section, I discuss how Aoki’s poetic thinking might help us to understand multicultural curriculum as tasting a curriculum of multi-flavored nourishment.

4.3.2 Tasting Multicultural Curriculum as Multi-Flavored Nourishment\textsuperscript{lix} (1990)

Can we stomach all this talk — happy talk and serious talk — when we partake our word of interest, “multiculturalism”? (Aoki, 1990b/2005, p. 379)

Life is abundant, and stories and interpretive inquiry are a way of focusing on some particulars of that abundance in order to recognize some of the possibilities of meaning that lie always in the seemingly tangled messiness of lived experiences. (Leggo, 2007, pp. 193-194)

In the fall of 1990, Aoki gave a talk at the Alberta Teachers Association’s Multicultural Education Council’s Annual Conference at Barnet House in Edmonton, Alberta, a decade after his 1979 talk, “Reflection of a Japanese Canadian Teacher Experiencing Ethnicity,” at the Biennial Conference of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association. This time, Aoki once again approached the conference theme of Multicultural Education with a thought-provoking touch.

Opening his talk, “Taiko Drums and Sushi, Perogies and Sauerkraut: Mirroring a Half-Life in Multicultural Curriculum,” he acknowledged at the conference that “we have been nourished by many flavoured foods for our thoughts and bodies” (p. 377). In probing deeply linguistically, aesthetically and philosophically for this nourishment, he sagely connected his audience to this “engathered” moment in “multiflavoured nourishment” to an “Oriental meaning of what it is to be nourished” (p. 377). He “offered a reading in English” of a Chinese character — “囍” (double happiness) — “as an attempt” to dwell in the midst of cultures. Fluent in the
Japanese language and understanding the shared roots of Japanese and Chinese characters, Aoki knew that at the heart of Chinese philosophy resides its language. The saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” illustrates the essence of Chinese characters. Instead of employing an alphabetical system, Chinese characters are based on pictures or conventional signs. The understanding of the philosophical meaning of the Chinese character is quite different from the understanding of the alphabetically-based language. Each Chinese character is an ideogram. In other words, it is a written character that is often composed of several signifiers to convey the complex relationships or configurations (Gestalten) of the philosophical meaning of a word. The word 喜, Aoki explained to his audience, is a composition of 吉 (wellbeing), 土 (plants) and 口 (mouth). The combination of wellbeing, plants and mouth means happiness – 喜. Two of them, 喜, means double happiness. Aoki interpreted the word as “double happiness is a dwelling in the midst of life where people engathered partake in the nourishing gifts of the earth” (p. 377). Aoki skillfully showed his audience that a philosophical meaning of a Chinese word is connected with the complex relationships or configurations of its respective ideogram representation. In this pictogram, contrary to Descarte’s (1596-1650) predominate notion of dualism and either/or in the Western landscape, all elements are subjects and it is their relational existence that gives the complete visual/meaning of the pictogram. Therefore, a world is in a word that includes many ways of being, where a word has multiple meanings.

After attuning his audience to a world in a word, Aoki asked:

*What is it about this word “multiculturalism” that is powerful enough to gather us together for serious thoughts at a conference as such (p.378)?*

Referring to a speech entitled “Words on Words” given by Vaclav Havel at a literary awards reception hosted by the German Booksellers’ Association in October 1989, Aoki shared how a word “in the flux of historical time” can have “many twist and turns” (p. 378). In Havel’s speech,
Aoki pointed out, Havel focused on the word “socialism.” Havel commented that it is a word “whose meanings for Czechoslovakians” once “rang thought with a call for revolutionary and emancipatory change” and later “became a totalitarian, ideological, political slogan” for people like himself who “experienced life in jail, and, in recent times, for a Czechoslovakian, “socialism had become a laughable word” (p. 378). Havel “exclaimed, ‘What a weird fate can befall certain words” (1989, p. 6, as cited in Aoki, 1990b/2005, p. 378). Aoki further shared Havel’s (1989) “thoughtful” reflection on “words”:

No word… comprises only the meaning assigned to it by an etymological dictionary. The meaning of every word also reflects the person who utter it, the situation within which it is uttered, and the reason for its utterance. The selfsame word can at one moment radiate great hopes; at another, it can emit lethal rays. The selfsame word can be true at one moment and false the next, at one moment illuminating, at another deceptive. On one occasion it can open up glorious horizons, on another it can lay down the tracks to an entire archipelago of concentration camps. The selfsame word can at one time be the cornerstone of peace, while at another, machine-gun fire resounds in its every syllable (p. 6, as cited in Aoki 1990b/2005, p. 378).

Sharing Havel’s thought-provoking words, Aoki paused and asked his audience, “Are the bread-and-butter words for Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, words like ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘ethnicity,’ in a bit of turbulence?”

Revisiting the Hodgetts’ 1965 National History Project and the following 1968 book by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto entitled What Culture? What Heritage? Aoki pointed out that the “curriculum efforts of the early 1970s involving Canadian multiculturalism” (p. 379) “lamented the softness of the whatness of Canadian cultural
and historical studies in school curricula” (p. 379). Aoki also reflected on what was going on during that time:

In the West a few of us were claiming we were open to the emerging political consciousness reflected in the writings of people like Ivan Illich (*Deschooling Schools*), Paul Freire (*The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), Jürgen Habermas (*Knowledge and Human Interests*), Mike Apple (*Curriculum and Ideology*), and Bill Pinar (*Reconceptualizing Curriculum*) (pp. 379-380).

Aoki further explained to his audience that he and his colleagues (see 1.3.4) “had the opportunity to explore the multicultural and ethnic content in Canadian social studies programs” and “were concerned about whose voices were being heard or neglected” (p. 380) (see 1.3.4). In their 1977 book, *Whose Culture? Whose Heritage?* Aoki and his colleagues were critical about “how multiculturalism was understood” as a “museum approach” that was “like a museum display, [where] the interesting cultural curios were arrayed as object of study” (p. 380). Although this approach in a way “reflected the manyness of cultural ethnic identities in Canada,” Aoki stressed, this manyness assumed a structured arrangement of “many-colored people, language, habits and customs” as cultural identities (p. 380). What was concealed in the manyness is the “way it tends to reduce life to a half-life” (p. 380). In turn, multiculturalism in school curriculum emulated a “flavour” – as embodied in Aoki’s speech title, “Taiko Drums and Sushi, Perogies and Sauerkraut” – on a Heritage Day or a festival. Cultural identities fell into a “viewer – viewed, subject – object separation” (p. 381) that students may study.

Rejecting the “objective meanings” that the museum approach in multicultural curriculum promotes, Aoki – returning to Heidegger’s thinking – said, “Objective meanings hide lived meanings. The latter becomes silent and man becomes heedless of this silence” (p. 381). It
is in the man becoming heedless of this silence that “occurred the oblivion of Being” (p. 381), Aoki pointed out. Encouraging his audience to think “beyond mere manyness to cross-culturalism,” Aoki poetically asked his audience to “slide away from the crossing” over to the between of cultures, and to “sink into the lived space of between – in the midst of many cultures, into the inter of interculturalism” (p. 382). The inter place of interculturalism is in the “midst of difference,” a “place alive with tension” (p. 382). To move his audience “into the midst of differences” (p. 383), Aoki shared with them the story of a child, Lucy, who lived “in the midst of two language worlds” (p. 384).

Lucy Colby, an ESL (English as Second Language) instructor at Malaspina College, Nanaimo, British Columbia, recalled a story of her “early experiences as a Ukrainian Canadian child (p. 384). In her story, titled “Experiencing Language: Who Am I Who Speak Two Languages?” she recalled that as a child she “lived in a Ukrainian community within the larger English-speaking community in Niagara Falls, Ontario” (p. 384). Lucy considered herself as speaking a “quasi interlanguage” of Russian and Ukrainian, which she had learned from her parents. She was comfortable with the languages she had learned at home, and she “married English with these two languages” (p. 384). Lucy’s “birth certificate reads: Ludmilla Nikifortchuk” and her “driver’s license reads: Lucy Colby” (p. 384). “English is the language in which I am most fluent” and “is the language I live in the most” (p. 384), said Lucy. It is like what Maurice Merleau-Ponty described: “I may speak many languages, but there remains one in which I live” (p. 384), Lucy claimed. However, one experience left Lucy with her “first sense of language defining who [she is]” (p. 385). It was during a grocery shopping trip, while Lucy and her father were “having a lot of fun” playing games in the corner of a Loblaw’s store (a big supermarket chain in Ontario), that she suddenly saw her teacher, “Miss Buck, whom I adored”
Lucy was “over taken by acute embarrassment” and she “tried to steer [her] parents into another direction” (p. 385). She did not succeed, and Miss Buck “stopped to chat with us as I squirmed” (p. 385); she then discovered her parents “spoke broken English” (p. 384), Lucy recalled. Lucy’s father did not say anything to Lucy, but she remembered “a few days later, my father talked to me about pride in being oneself and how one cannot hide one’s origins even if it is convenient” (p. 385). Lucy realized that she was “trying to keep [her] two language worlds separate” and the “colliding of [her] worlds caused tensions” (p. 385) for her. However, her father’s words led her to unfold in her own way and to “recognize that [she] lived between two language worlds” and “had an authentic dwelling place there” (p. 385). The story did not end here. Lucy remembered that when she “brought in the annual note from [her] parents to be excused from class on January 7th for the celebration of Ukrainian Christmas, Miss Buck greeted it with much enthusiasm and interest” (p. 385). Miss Buck later invited and helped Lucy and another Ukrainian girl in the class to lead a discussion about the celebration of their tradition. Lucy also performed a dance. Lucy felt “special and proud as my classmates admired my costume with its long colourful ribbons from the crown” (p. 385). At that time, “at least a month had passed since we met her in Loblaws” (p. 385), said Lucy, but Miss Buck “picked up the pedagogical good of the grocery store encounter” (p. 385). Miss Buck knew the “tension in me when I was trying to keep my language worlds separate,” but a caring teacher like her “allowed for my further edifications” (p. 385), Lucy recalled. As Lucy reflected on this experience, she thoughtfully expressed:

Both Miss Buck and my father walked back along the path to meet me and my living tension. They gave me the support and guidance I needed to live in my world between the two language worlds (p. 385).
Sharing the story of Lucy, Aoki let his audience to dwell in “what it is to be pedagogic in the midst of intercultural lived experiences” (p. 385). In dwelling in the midst of the intercultural lived experiences of Lucy, Aoki noted that there is a “deep sense of teaching, not so much as a mode of doing, but more so as a mode of being” (p. 385). Teaching as a mode of being – “human to the core” – is “inspired by the thoughtful care the teacher has for the child” (p. 385), Aoki affirmed.

Lingering “in the midst of the story, the question of the conference,” Aoki said, is: how shall we understand “multiculturalism?” (p. 386). Perhaps not “as manyness of cultures,” not “as cross-culturalism” (p. 385), Aoki remarked, but as a “quest for inspi...riting multicultural curriculum and pedagogy, which calls for our openness to the historicity and multiplicity of meanings of the word “multiculturalism” (p. 385). That is, to dwell in the being-ness of the lived experience of pedagogic good.

To dwell further in the being-ness of the lived experience, in the next section, I discuss the event that Aoki invited his readers to, a concert of a trumpet player, Bobby Shew, to think curriculum poetically by hearing it on a jazz note.

4.3.3 Hearing Curriculum on a Jazz Note (1991b)

I begin with the Chinese character for “poetry,” a character that refuses linearity but promotes its own polyphony. In the presence of this word, I asked: “What does it mean to dwell poetically?” (Aoki, 1991b/2005, p. 374)

In February 1991, Aoki was invited to present a keynote speech entitled “Sonare and Videre: A Story, Three Echoes and a Lingering Note,” at Ensemble ’91, the Annual Conference of the British Columbia Music Educators’ Association at Hotel Vancouver in Vancouver, B.C. In his talk to the music educators, Aoki continued to push boundaries to think the unthought in provoking the instrumental understanding of the wor(l)d curriculum. This time, he used auditory
terms and the juxtaposition of a Chinese word and Ancient Greek mysticism in provoking curriculum thoughts. The story that Aoki (1991b/2005) recalled was about an event when he was Chair of the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. In the winter session of 1981, he “borrowed” a visiting guest jazz trumpeter, Bobby Shew, from the Music Department at the University of Alberta for a couple of hours to “speak to, sing to, or play to” (p. 367) two questions at the Department of Secondary Education curriculum seminar. Bobby Shew listened intensely to Aoki’s two questions, “When does an instrument cease to be an instrument?” and “What is it to improvise?” (p. 367). Bobby Shew responded: “Even we musicians don’t talk too much about these things. They’re philosophical questions you ask. Sounds like fun” (p. 368). Aoki explained to Bobby Shew that the field of curriculum had been “under the sway of discourse that is replete with performative words…words reflective of instrumentalism in modernity” and that some curriculum scholars “were exploring ways of breaking out of such instrumentalism” (p. 368). Maybe, Aoki said, “if we can come to know how an instrument can cease to be an instrument” that “might provide us clues for a way out” (p. 368). In regard to the question about “improvisation,” Aoki told Bobby Shew that “in education, and in curriculum particularly, under the hold of technological rationality, we have become so production orientated that the ends-means paradigm, a way to do, has become the way to do” (p. 368). In turn, Aoki asked, “could improvisation be a way to create spaces to allow difference to show through?” (p. 368). With a big smile on his face, Bobby Shew said, “I’ll be there” (p. 368).

Aoki continued the story, describing vividly to his audience how, on the day of the seminar, “students and staff crowded the seminar room” and Bobby Shew “strode in with his trumpet, [and] blew a few licks to announce that he and his trumpet were here” (p. 368). Bobby Shew started telling the seminar audience that he usually introduced “a new student to the world
of trumpet playing” with “all lip and scat-singing work” in the first few lessons (p. 368). He would only “allow [student’s] trumpet and lips to meet” when he “felt that the trumpet in joining the lips would become part of the body” (p. 368). This was the embodied trumpet – “trumpet, music and body must become as one in a living wholeness” (p. 368). Aoki and his colleagues were impressed by Bobby Shew’s pedagogy. A pedagogy of the “embodied instrument” ended the understanding of instrument only as an object that requires the mastery of technical skills. Instead, it calls for the mode of being that is “lived bodily” (p. 368) in music. Bobby Shew then “resorted to his trumpet” and made “a few renditions of improvisations,” Aoki said, “no two alike” (p. 368). Bobby Shew spoke of improvising thoughtfully, describing how he and his fellow musicians respond not only to each other, but also to whatever calls upon them in that situational moment, and that for him, no two situational moments, like life lived, are exactly alike….Exact repetition, thank God, is an impossibility (p. 368).

Aoki shared this “inspirited curriculum seminar” with his audience and he poetically used an auditory term – “echo” – to reflect on the pedagogical meaning of this momentous curriculum seminar. In the first echo, Aoki pointed out that Bobby Shew’s inspirited words and performance opened up “a sonorous clearing” (p. 369). Heidegger described the necessity of a clearing (Lichtung) in which anything at all can appear, to be unconcealed where things show up in the light of our understanding of being. Invoking this Heideggerian sense of clearing, Aoki said to his audience that “we might recognize instrumental words in curriculum” and called for educators’ awareness to language in which the technological ethos is embedded. Echoing Heidegger’s critique of technology in modernity, Aoki reminded his audience:

The danger in speaking this language is that we become the language we speak. And in so becoming, we might become forgetful of how instrumental language disengages us
from our bodies, making us disembodied, dehumanized beings, indifferent to the nihilistic drying out of inspiritedness. (p. 369)

To escape instrumental language, Aoki leapt to the terrain of music and asked his audience to consider “a new curriculum language” (p. 370) – “improvisation” instead of “implementation” (p. 370). Implementation is a curriculum developers’ buzz word of which Aoki had been very critical since his early works critiquing instrumentalism-embedded understanding and calling for a new key in understanding curriculum (see 3.4.2). Inspired by Bobby Shew’s thoughtful comments, Aoki pointed out that “curriculum improvisation rings differently” (p. 370). He further commented that, in curriculum implementation, teachers are asked “to be mainly installers, primarily interested in fidelity to the curriculum to be installed,” whereas curriculum improvisation asks teachers “to shift from being installers to being improvisers, sensitive to the ongoing life and experiences of themselves and students in situation” (p. 370). Moving away from goals and marks as priorities in learning, “the quality of the curriculum-as-lived,” Aoki stressed, becomes “a leading concern” (p. 370).

Lingering on Bobby Shew’s pedagogy, Aoki invited his audience to listen to his second echo, “Polyphonic Curriculum Responding to the Call for Curriculum Integration in ‘Year 2000.’” Aoki described a current that was running through British Columbia curriculum discourse. At that time, any curriculum that did not “mention ‘Year 2000’ risk[ed] being labeled ‘irrelevant’” (p. 370). Year 2000: A Curriculum and Assessment Framework for the Future, a discussion paper, was published by the British Columbia Ministry of Education,¹ and it promoted the integration of multiple curriculum strands. Aoki was critical about the interpretation of the word “integrate,” and asked, “Is integration always good?” (p. 370). Aoki pointed out that when we “hear” the word integrate, it usually “feels warm; it feels inherently good somehow and we
get the sense that integrating things leads to a harmonious, tranquil world” (p. 370). However, harmony in the Western tradition, said Aoki, has been largely influenced by early metaphysicist Plato’s thinking. Plato “understood it, [as] a fitting together, a con-c(h)ord, an integration of sounds – a sonic univocity” (p. 370). Harmony, in this way, is concealed “as a natural goodness, thought to be in accord with all that which is valued and true” (p. 370). Aoki returned to Heidegger’s warning regarding our habitual way of understanding belonging together that is enframed in the primacy of togetherness (see 4.3.1), and questioned whether “such an understanding of ‘integration,’ of conjoining, of belonging together, is a reflection of our caughtness in our own creation” (p. 371). In this understanding of integration, “a metaphysical notion of oneness, a harmonic oneness,” as “good as it may be,” is concealed in an “integrated totality” (p. 370). The tranquility in a harmonic oneness may not all be “as good as it may be.” Aoki sagely invoked Zen scholar Daisetz Suzuki’s view of harmony in the “quietest sense”:

It is not a sense… of tranquility that Zen sees… in Nature. Nature is always in motion, never at a standstill… To seek tranquility is to kill nature, to stop its pulsations, and to embrace the dead corpse that is left behind. Advocates of tranquility are worshippers of abstraction and death (p. 370).

Is our understanding of curriculum integration as a harmonic oneness advocating tranquility? Are we, as educators, the worshippers of abstraction, embracing objective thinking as the dead corpse that is left behind? Aoki left these questions hanging in the air for his audience to consider. To return to Nature – what Suzuki described as that which is always in motion, where differences reside – Aoki took his audience to listen to music teacher Edwin Dumas’s interpretation of the “contra-ness of five lines” of a Bach fugue. Sharing Edwin’s fascinating “notion and sounds of the contrapuntal,” Aoki pointed his audience to a “sonic realm in which five lines coexist in
polyphonic tensionality, whose openness within its own space contrasted sharply with the closedness of synthetic, integrated harmony” (p. 370), an integrated harmony that is understood in the dwelling of the polyphonic tensionality.

Before moving to echo three, “Sonare and Videre,” Aoki provided an “interlude” to his audience to “linger a while and listen to a few conversation pieces” – juxtaposed short sayings about listening, the ear, and the world of sound” (p. 372) from J. E. Berendt, David Levin, Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger. These included:

- We understand only half of the world if we…comprehend it only by seeing (Berendt, *The Third Ear*).
- Everything comes down to the ear you are able to hear me with (Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*).
- We do not hear because we have ears… We have ears because we are hearkening to a …need to listen to the Song of Earth…The need to hear the Song of Earth requires that our hearing be a sensuous one which involves…the ears (Heidegger, cited by Levin, as cited in Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 372).

In the third echo, Aoki further connected his audience to the juxtaposed metaphor *Sonare, Videre* and curriculum. Aoki “confessed” to his audience that “over the years of schooling and teaching I have become beholden to the metaphor of the I/eye – the I that sees” (p. 373). Enchanted by the language of “images,” “speculation” and “visions” curriculum workers have “become enamoured of the metaphor of *videre* (to see), thinking and speaking of what eyes can see” (p. 372). Aoki extended a reminder to his audience that language in the Western world has “come to over emphasize and overly rely upon visuality, thereby diminishing the place for other ways of being in the world,” and that this “foreclose[es] the horizon where we live as
teachers and students” (p. 373). Aoki continued, “Time is ripe for us to call upon sonare to dwell juxtaposed with videre” to become “more fully sonorous beings than we are” (p. 373).

To further open up this foreclosing horizon, Aoki etymologically, metaphorically and phenomenologically dwells in the wor(l)d of poetry. Calling upon the metaphors of sonare (to hear) from the “sound of the beat and rhythm of the earth” in the ancient Greek’s geo-metron to dwell juxtaposed with videre (to see) in the Chinese character of poetry 詩 (p. 373), Aoki sought space for “a way of composing curriculum that allows for polyphony” (p. 375). Heeding what Heidegger (1971b) described as the “mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals” (p. 177), Aoki dwelt poetically in “an Occidental reading of an Oriental word” (p. 375) of “earth, measure, temple, mouth, echoes” (p. 375) as a human being in the world.

In the next section, I discuss in what ways Aoki’s works gave primacy to the lived ground of curriculum that calls for self-identified subjectivity leading to a style of theorizing as poetic dwelling, as human-in-the-world.

4.4 Theorizing as Poetic Dwelling

4.4.1 Dwelling in the Midst of Double Imaginaries (1996)

Poetry first of all admits man’s dwelling into its very nature, its “presencing” being. Poetry is the original admission of dwelling…. [T]o be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.

(Heidegger, 1977, p.143)

If living on earth as humans, experiencing being and becoming, matters in education, it behooves us to transform the language of school life such that multiple meanings of the word curriculum can prevail.

(Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 420)

In April 1996, Aoki gave a keynote speech at the Fine Arts Council Conference at the University of Alberta. Aoki was introduced to the stage by the performance of Senegalese

Within me, the sounds of Davis Thiaw’s drumbeats sound and resound… the earthy rhythmic beats continue to pulsate in the thunderous rolls and in fingertip whispers, dancing to and fro, insistently, echoing vibrantly within me and beyond me. Held in awe by the drumbeats that linger, I find myself indwelling this moment earthily, spiritually and poetically (p. 413).

To deepen this earthy, spiritual and poetic dwelling, Aoki again took his audience to the Chinese ideographic wor(l)d of 詩 – poetry. Indwelling ideographically in 詩, Aoki explained to his audience that this ideogram, 詩, “linguists tell us, is both whole and fragmented” (p. 413).

Fragments of thoughts – 土 (earth), 寸 (measure), 寺 (temple), 口 (mouth), 言 (telling) – are “juxtaposed into a composition that yield meanings cumulatively” as “poetry” or “poetic” or “indwelling inspired within earth’s rhythm” (pp. 414-415). This ideographic writing, Aoki pointed out, is “writing thoughts and ideas” (p. 415), a formatted writing, whereas calligraphic writing is artistic. Distinct from the hard pen, practicing Chinese calligraphy is like dancing with brush and ink on absorbent rice paper. Calligraphic writing is to attune to the flow of water and ink on the soft brush – it requires the writer to go with the flow. Each stoke is an ideographic line of movement – like a river following the watercourse way of nature, making elegant curves. A Chinese calligraphy master’s brush moves like the clouds in the sky or the water eroding the landscape. As the brush moves through each stroke, the interdependence of the ideographic lines of movement curves the completion of the words, a poem, expounding a deeper philosophical meaning through the expression of the characters of the writer as artist. Each stroke is different, and no calligraphy is exactly the same. With these different expressions of the writer, the
configurations of each ideogram can be “enraptured in a world of sculpturing in space with brush and ink,” said Aoki (p. 416). Aoki attuned his audience to the “doubled imaginaries – the ideographic and calligraphic 詩” which constitute a “vibrant tension of in-between, the seemingly same word refusing to fuse” (p. 416). Not seeking for “clarity,” dwelling poetically in the tension of in-between is, in Aoki’s emphatic words, “a pleasant confusion!” (p. 416).

Connecting these “doubled imageries” (p. 416) as dwelling place to curriculum theorizing, a decade after the first appearance of curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-live(d), Aoki revisited this notion. Again, Aoki was critical about the “linear language of ‘curriculum and instruction’ of ‘curriculum implementation’” (p. 418) and the “singular meaning of the word curriculum” (p. 417) (see 3.3, 3.4.2, 3.4.3). On the notion of curriculum-as-live(d), Aoki “touched on the split character of live(d) in ‘live(d) curriculum,’ of ‘curriculum as live(d) experiences’” (p. 418). Aoki explained to his audience, “the word experience is a hybrid, including the notions of ‘past experiences’ (lived experiences) and ‘ongoing experience’ (live or living experience)” (p. 418). A layered, nuanced curriculum lived “concretely” (p. 419) in a situated classroom of teachers and students goes “beyond mere ‘past’ and ‘ongoing’” (p. 418). Revisiting Miss O and her students (see 3.5.2), Aoki attuned his audience toward the being, the lived ground of teachers and students.

Heeding the moments of lived experiences of teachers and students, past experiences as lived experiences and ongoing experiences as living experiences, reveals an understanding of curriculum as juxtaposed plan and lived curricula. This is where the teachers’ and students’ lived experiences become part of a curriculum, a twin moment of two curriculum worlds. This landscape, an imaginary curriculum realm to which Aoki poetically attuned his audience, is the in-between space of these juxtaposed worlds where “curricular is replete with a multiplicity of
curricula” (p. 419). Aoki then moved metaphorically to the word “rhizomean” (p. 419) to give the in-between curriculum landscape a new meaning/image, “not only to signify the multiplicity of curricula but also to recognize that textured web of connecting lines, like rhizomean plants, shoot from here to there and everywhere” (p. 419). Referring to Giles Deleuze’s (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987) interpretation of multiplicity, Aoki reminded his audience that “multiplicity is not a noun” and “what [it] counts are not the element, but what there is between” (pp. 419-420). The between exists, Aoki, emphasized, as a “site of relations which are not separable from each other. Every multiplicity grows in the middle” (p. 420).

Through this contemplation of Deleuze, Aoki shifted the focus from the binary of planned curriculum and live(d) curriculum to the ambiguous space in-between that is conjunct with “and / not and” (p. 420). A space that is “textually accented with a mark: /, a graphically tectonic space… may allow generative possibilities” (p. 420). The interplay between planned curriculum and live(d) curriculum is a site of creativities “where newness can come into being” (p. 420). It is an “inspired site of being and becoming” (p. 420), said Aoki. By juxtaposing the inspired site of World Figure Skating Champion Brian Orser’s (see 4.2.3) and jazz musician Bobby Shew’s (see 4.3.3) being and becoming, Aoki further explained to his audience in Elysia Dywan’s (1993) words that the inspired site of being and becoming is a dwelling place “on the ambiguous nature of the human condition” (as cited in Aoki, 1996/2005, p. 421). In the landscape of “generative although ambiguous, ambivalent space between this and that, between planned curriculum and live(d) curriculum” (p. 421), Aoki took his audience to see:

… inspired hybrid brush writing that occurs in that space of ambivalence between ideographic writing and calligraphic writing.

… inspired dancing that happens in that space between dancing about an event and
dancing as performative.

... inspired singing as that creative singing in the space between singing a song and live(d) singing.

... inspired acting as inaction in that space between acting by script and live(d) acting.

... inspired painting as that generative creation in that space between painting an object and painting as living experience. (pp. 421-422)

Such spaces are not a physical place per se. To move away from “our Western epistemological imaginary that centers on naming things” and loosen the grip of our habit of “dwell[ing] in a noun-orientated world” (p. 420), Aoki linguistically traversed an ambivalent passage of an East Asian word 無 to explain the spatial, temporal and vibrant character of the in-between space – “‘wu’ in Chinese, ‘mu’ in Japanese,” translated in English as “‘nothing’ or ‘no-thing’” (p. 420). Aoki pointed out that, in the anglicized word, there is an inscribed “thing” in nothing or no-thing. The philosophical meaning of the Chinese word 無 is complicated; it can be traced in many Buddhist Dharma, especially in the school of Zen, and can be grappled with as “unclassifiable” in that you can’t put your finger on it. However, in returning to the origin of the word, it may reveal its essence. In the traditional Chinese character composition, there is an uncommon class of phonetic loan characters. These characters borrow the character for one word to write a homophone (a word that is pronounced the same as another word but is different in meaning). The original meaning of the character 無 is “dance,” and the early ideogram pictured a person with outstretched arms holding something as the imagery of dance. To gaze at the East Asian word 無 in its essence is like dancing in-between “the fold of a discursive imaginary that can entertain ‘both this and that,’ ‘neither this nor that’ – a space of paradox” (p. 317). This is the space, Aoki remarked, “where all humans as artists creatively indwell” (p. 422). This is the space
that “behooves us to transform the language of school life such that multiple meanings of the word curriculum can prevail” (p. 420).

To further move away from the instrumentalist lexicon and to generate new possibilities, in the next section, I discuss the ways in which Aoki dwells deeply in a graphically tectonic space of /.

4.4.2 Dwelling in Language, Culture, Curriculum and Metonymic Moments (2000)

In journeying in/through metonymic moments, our boldness trembled and quaked a bit, transforming both ourselves and our understandings of the words. (Aoki, 2000/2005, p. 328)

...theming is hermeneutic...returning to the lived ground of human experience with the story...a place where emerging from the silence may be heard, the movement of melody and rhythm...the place is where we already are...a place so near yet so far that we have forgotten its whereabouts. (Pinar, 2005, in Aoki, 2005, p. 4)

At the turn of the millennium, Aoki and his former colleague, Ken Jacknicke (who succeeded him as Department Chair at the University of Alberta), presented a paper entitled “Language, Culture, and Curriculum...” at the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies’ President’s Symposium. In opening the speech, Aoki asked his audience to “read” the title of the presentation. In the first reading, Aoki (2000/2005) said, “likely by habit, we see three master signifiers – ‘language,’ ‘culture,’ and ‘curriculum’” (p. 321). To attune his audience closer to the graphically tectonic space, Aoki asked for a second reading that is:

drawn into spaces: first, the space between “language” and “culture” where…. [the] comma urges us to pause a moment, then the space between “culture” and “curriculum” where we locate the word “and” claiming a conjoining, and then, the space marked “…suggesting “more to come” and “incompleteness” (p. 321).
Next, Aoki turned to Canadian singer-songwriter and poet Leonard Cohen’s poem “The
Anthem” to let his audience dwell deeper in the graphically tectonic space. In Cohen’s words,

There’s a crack, a crack in everything;

Heeding Cohen, Aoki re-read the presentation title:

language …culture …curriculum… (p. 321).

Inspiriting Cohen’s poem, Aoki further took his audience to “dwell in five living metonymic
moments” to experience “what it may be like to be enlightened, living in the spaces of between,
marked by the cracks in the words” (p. 321).

The first metonymic moment is “midst curriculum-as-plan/curriculum-as-live(d)” (p.
321). Juxtaposing Cohen’s poem and the word curriculum, Aoki “graphically marked”
curriculum-as-plan/curriculum-as-live(d) and “attuned” his audience to the “crack” in between
the two wor(l)ds “where pedagogy is located in the vibrant space in the fold between” (p. 322).
The second metonymic moment resided “midst presence/absence” (p. 322). Referring to an East
Asian thought, Aoki “contextualized the Chinese characters” 有/無 to “question the modernist
imagery that...privileging presence, erased absence” (p. 323). Aoki explained that 有 in English
can be translated as “presence” and 無 as “absence.” 有/無 as a “non-essentialist” site of both
“presence’ and ‘absence’” denies “the privilege of either ‘presence’ or ‘absence’” and “marks
the space of ambivalence in the midst of which human dwell” (p. 323).

In the third metonymic moment, Aoki attempted to open up to the third space “Midst
Representational/Nonrepresentational Discourses” (p. 323). Returning to Cohen’s poem, Aoki
attempted to crack an opening for the word “ethnography” and “ethnographic writing” (p. 323).
Aoki made a “graphic marking” with different emphasis on the word ethnography –
ETHNOgraphy/ethnoGRAPHY (p. 324). Aoki pointed out to his audience that the former “with emphasis on Ethnos (ethnic cultural identity), can be read as writing about ‘ethnos,’ an object of study already present awaiting uncovering and discovering” (p. 324). The discourse in ETHNOgraphy is that language became “secondary to thought” because “language is understood as a tool to represent the already present but hidden from view” (p. 324). The latter emphasis on GRAPHY – to write – “suggests that ‘ethnos’ (i.e., ethnic identity) is an effect of writing” and writing “performs in the formulation of ‘ethnos’” (p. 324). The discourse within such interpretation is that “language is no mere communication tool” and “the very ‘languaging’ participates in creating effects” (p. 324). Such interpretation, said Aoki, is nonrepresentational. By graphically marking the different emphasis on the word ethnography as ETHNOgraphy/ethnoGRAPHY and interpreting between representational and nonrepresentational discourse, Aoki connected his audience to what postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha describes as a “third space of ambivalent construction” (p. 325).

Moving the audience towards different world views, the fourth metonymic moment is “Midst Western Knowledge/Aboriginal Knowledge” (p. 326). Aoki literally “cracked” the word kno/wing to illuminate different readings: “‘What is it to know?’ or ‘Differing ways of knowing” (p. 326). Recalling the colonial history of North America, Aoki pointed out that “Western ideology dominated for five centuries as the only valid source to ‘knowing’” (p. 326) and the two world views – Aboriginal and Western – are divergent. Western knowing emphasizes “physical presence or objective reality,” a knowing that focuses on the “outer space” (p. 326). By contrast, Aboriginal knowing “places a premium on the spirit, self and being” that emphasizes “inner space” to “support inclusiveness and connectedness through the life force in all living things” (p. 326). This “inwardness” (p. 326) is also suggested in the Aboriginal languages. Referring to the
word “mystery” (Muntou) in the Cree language, Aoki pointed out that it “connotes a higher power and a connection to the greatest mystery of all, life” (p. 327). “As we Westerners come to more fully understand Aboriginal knowing,” Aoki encouraged his audience to “move into the cracks and see curriculum as a living entity” (p. 327).

In the last metonymic moments, Aoki linguistically dwelt in the midst of “Translation/Transformation” (p. 327). Being critical of Western individualism, Aoki returned to his own heritage to translate/transform the word individualism. Aoki shared with his audience that according to the Japanese linguists regarding the English word “individualism,” “apparently no such word existed in the Japanese lexicon” (p. 327). In the Japanese Kanji (the adopted Chinese ideographic characters that are used in the Japanese writing system) 人 (Hito – person), “the graphic strokes signify that...a person is a twofold of self and other” (p. 327). On the other hand, the English word “individual,” Aoki explained, is “an entity unto itself, a self ‘in-divisible,’ a totalized self” (p. 327). In an attempt to translate the word “individual,” Japanese linguists “moved into the inter-textual space between individual and 人 and “coined the word 個人 (Ko-Jin)” (p. 327). 個 is a phono-semantic compound word, 为主线 (person) and 固 as phonetic (Ko). Aoki explained to his audience that the ideogram 固 can also be seen as a signifier that signifies “a bounded boxable whole, an entity called the ‘self,’ attached” (p. 327) to the person – 人. It is radical combination, yet one which is always “haunted by traces of non-individual” (p. 328), Aoki commented. In this “hybrid form” of “an inert-linguistic and inter-cultural space of difference” of 個人, Aoki took his audience to indwell in the space between translation and transformation – a “signification that is ever incomplete and ongoing” (p. 328). Theorizing, for Aoki, is like poetic dwelling in the midst of interplaying the formless live(d)
curricular and the formally planned curriculum, always seeking meanings and significations to “living moments of life” (p. 328).

4.5 Summary Note

Poetry connects us with wonder and mystery. Poetry is a way of knowing and being and becoming. (Leggo, 2005, p. 442)

Bridges on the Pacific Rim are not merely paths for human transit; nor are they mere routes for commerce and trade. They are dwelling places for people. (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 438)

In this chapter, I discussed the significance of Aoki’s notions of language, identity, multiculturalism, curriculum and dwelling in-between to explicate the poetic wisdom expressed in Ted’s Aoki’s later works from the late 1980s to the turn of the millennium. I arranged these discussions under the theme of language as house of being, poetic thinking, theorizing as poetic dwelling, to suggest the connections between Heidegger and Aoki’s works during this period of time. In this chapter, Aoki continued to push the boundaries of instrumentalist thinking and the binary of duality. In questioning and provoking the instrumental rationale in thinking, Aoki, in his writings, reflected much of Heidegger’s critical position of constantly pointing out the conceptual assumptions and philosophical blind spots in the wor(l)d of metaphysics. Escaping metaphysical thinking and its language and vice versa, Heidegger viewed language in relation to Being. Language, in turn, is “the house of Being.” One reach Being by dwelling poetically in the fourfold of the earth, under the sky, before the divinities, and among the mortals. That is, for Aoki, to return to the ambivalent ground of humanness. Dwelling poetically, returning to the poetic language that illuminates the turning inward, poetic dwelling as letting-dwell escapes representational thinking and refuses the technological objectification of things which arises from factical life. Heeding Heidegger, Aoki persistently broke down walls to loosen the grids in
instrumentalist thinking. Meditating on fragments from the Japanese conductor, Seiji Ozawa; the world skating champion, Brian Orser; the Korean poet, Anji Yoo; the former Czechoslovakian president, Vaclav Havel; the jazz trumpeter, Bobby Shew and others, Aoki’s later works became increasingly philological and poetic, especially in revisiting notions such as curriculum and identity. By juxtaposing Eastern thought and language, Aoki’s later works dwelt deeply in the poetic realm of in-between as the very essence of thinking and listening. Language became more the center of this thinking. Ultimately, Aoki “cracked” the in-between space and opened up the possibilities in thinking by returning to the poets’ vocation in seeing the worlds in a word. Seeing such opening is not merely enchanted with the eyes, as Aoki reminded us; rather it is standing with it, in the midst of multiplicity. For Aoki, there is no elevating moment toward the goal of a comprehensive rationale absolute in understanding curriculum, teaching, identity, culture and multiculturalism. Rather, there is the lived ground of curriculum that calls for the self-identified subjectivity, theorizing as poetic dwelling, as man being-in-the-world.

xliv There was a Canadian immigration policy change that occurred in 1978 on “skilled workers” where the “business” class was added. This policy took effect in the late 1980s. In 1986, the “investor” class was added to the “skilled workers” policy and these two policy changes resulted in more Asian immigrant families coming into Canada.

xlv It is referring to the mid-1960s “discontent over the linguistic and cultural inequities … among members of both the French and English-speaking communities, especially in Quebec. The 1960s were marked by concerted political, social, and in some cases, militant action in the French community of Quebec, to redress the perceived imbalance in power between the English and French and to recognize the majority status of French in that province. This period in Quebec history is referred to as the “Quiet Revolution” (Genesee, pp. 3-4).


xlvi This program was originally established in 1984 as a program of study leading to a Master of Education in Administration. This program is currently under the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. Ts”kel means golden eagle in the Hal’qemeylem language. Ts”kel students are engaged in interdisciplinary research
on social and educational topics related to schooling, Aboriginal community development, and historical and theoretical work that has a direct relationship to First Nations health and welfare. Information is derived from http://edst.educ.ubc.ca/programs/tskel-program/.

xlvii This title is derived from Aoki’s 1990/2005 essay.


Chapter 5: Point of Returning

5.1 Return to Research Questions

[T]o be alive is to be appropriately tensioned and that to be tensionless, like a limp violin string, is to be dead.  

(Aoki, 1987/2005, p. 360)

Generative tensionality merges Aoki’s intellectual works that emanate from his life history. In answering the first question that I put forth in this dissertation: What are the main concepts explored in Aoki’s lifetime of work, and can we associate them with his life history? I became aware that tensionality – an inseparable part of Aoki’s life – serves, too, as a generative intellectual provocation for him.

Growing up in a small town and feeling early in life like “a mixed-up hybrid kid” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 304), being a Japanese Canadian, living in-between two cultures, two languages and two histories, and attending two simultaneous schools, Aoki’s life, since early on, was not without tensions. Tensions from living in-between two worlds deepened for Aoki when he visited Japan for the first time. In Tokyo, amongst the “black head” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 334) Japanese, watching the school students marching in the street with wooden guns, as a thirteen-year-old, Aoki sensed that his double-schooled hybridity in Canada had made him an ahistorical being in Japan.

Being and becoming an unwanted stranger in his own Canadian homeland at the age of twenty-three, during the 1941 Canadian War Measures Act, invoked after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, intensified Aoki’s lived experiences in a tensioned world in Canada. Being a Japanese Canadian and understanding ethnicity was a deeply lived experience through tensions and dilemmas for Aoki. What does it mean to be Japanese Canadian? for Aoki, involved conceptualizing the notion of ethnicity. To wrest the meaning of one’s being from the
concealment in the notion of ethnicity, I found Aoki’s theorizing that dwells in the tension between the inner dialogue of individual being and social being. The concept of ethnicity can never be projected as a straight forward, objectified, stereotypical textbook image of minorities. To conceptualize the notion of ethnicity, Aoki (1979/2005) turned to the ground of his own lived experience to disclose what he calls “experiencing ethnicity as experiencing subjectivity” (p. 333). The experience of “being” a Japanese Canadian within his own historical situation is the way he came to understand what it means to be ethnic in Canada.

In researching Aoki’s early intellectual exploits during the late 1960s and 1970s, it became clear to me that Aoki’s concerns over the universal concept of ethnicity and the understanding curriculum through an instrumentalist rationality that grounded school-based curriculum development at the time, constitute the two central themes of Aoki’s early works. In 1964, Aoki became a faculty member at the University of Alberta for his reputation in teaching social studies. A year after, Hodgetts launched the National History Project, a nationwide in-school investigation which was influenced by the enthusiasm of the government’s political agenda of promoting a national consciousness as a part of the Canadian Centennial celebration. This later became the Canadian Studies movement which had two dramatic impacts on education. It enhanced the scholarly debate over the concept of Canadian identity and it stimulated Canadian school-based curriculum development in the 1970s. Amongst this debate over the concept of identity, Aoki and his colleagues’ 1977 report “Whose Culture and Whose Heritage” and his 1978 collective works, Canadian Ethnicity, highlighted the position of Aoki’s early thinking – his concerns about how ethnicity was prescribed in social studies school curricula. In his 1977 report, Aoki questioned the underlying political “ideological interests and assumptions” (Aoki, 2005/1991, p. 380) in Hodgetts’ (1968) study report “What Culture? What
Heritage?” While many Canadian social studies curriculum developers intended curriculum as the means of social efficiency, Aoki and his curriculum colleagues raised a critical question for social educators to consider – whose culture and whose heritage was prescribed in social studies curricula and represented by Canadian social studies. This question incited the instrumentalist thinking that was imbedded in the objectifying museum approach of the ethnic content in Canadian social studies programs.

Furthermore, in reviewing Aoki’s 1977 article, “Theoretic Dimensions of Curriculum: Reflections from a Micro-perspective,” I saw a strong indication of Aoki’s critical stance toward the Canadian Studies project, specifically with regard to Social Studies. Also, his promotion in of theorizing curriculum during school-based curriculum development activities was indicated in his early scholarly work.

I have come to ascertain that the lived experiences of being and becoming a Japanese Canadian teacher as an unwanted stranger in his own country, Canada, and his deeply felt limitations related to the tightly controlled orientation and language of empirical-analytic research in education had become the nurturing ground for Aoki’s intellectual interest in the exploration of “Being” and the life world of students and teachers.

In reviewing Aoki’s 1969 doctoral dissertation, I found that in this early intellectual endeavour Aoki already began to pay attention to the study of the act of teaching in situation. I believe Aoki’s guiding research question in his dissertation, which focused teachers’ attitudes – their beliefs and disbeliefs – also contributed to Aoki’s later emphasis on lived experience. Although, his doctoral dissertation was based on the empirical thinking and language of the day, I believe the significance of this early scholarly work is that it provides a glimpse into the beginning of Aoki’s lifelong endeavours to broaden our understanding of situational dynamics in
the classroom. More specifically, it was the beliefs and disbeliefs of teachers – their inner attitudes – that concerned him. Furthermore, it was through the process of discussing Aoki’s main concepts in my dissertation, I have come to see that the central theme to which Aoki repeatedly returned in his scholarly works is that lived experiences often contributes to one’s inner attitudes. In addition, the deeply felt limitations he experienced, related to the tightly controlled orientation and language in empirical-analytic research, I consider, ultimately propelled him to push the methodological boundaries so as to enable “direct testing for interaction” (Aoki, 1969, p. 101) in educational research.

In keeping Aoki’s research in “direct testing for interaction” (p. 101) as an alternative research possibility in my periphery, I began to make the possible connection between phenomenology and Aoki’s work. The “research attitude” of phenomenologists “to the things themselves” (Aoki, 1978/2005, p. 90) echoes much in Aoki’s research emphasis on the word “directly.” It was through a phenomenological ethos that research became a mode of inquiry. It was through a phenomenological passage that Aoki began his exploration of new directions in curriculum, abandoning the concept of “testing” and embracing the investigation and description of phenomena as experienced. Research, as putting forth an inquiry “to the things themselves,” I have learned, was the eminent ethos throughout Aoki’s scholarship.

If research is about attending “to the things themselves” for Aoki, I asked, In what ways Aoki reflected on the pervasiveness of instrumentalism in educational thinking at the time? Aoki was concerned about Ralph Tyler’s 1949 sequentially arranged four-step formulation that was cast in instrumentalism, especially since it had become the dominant way of understanding curriculum. In reviewing Aoki’s 1974, 1975, 1978, 1979 works, I found that he repeatedly pointed out that the fundamental problem in curriculum program implementation in Social
Studies is found in the producer-consumer ends-means paradigm. This paradigm ignores human potential and that universal education comes at a cost to humanity and cultural diversity. I also share Aoki’s concern about this singular view of curriculum and his advocating that instrumental reasoning based on science and technology reflects an internal crisis in Western reasoning, in understanding curriculum.

Aoki saw that commitment to technological progress is a contradiction to the commitment to the improvement of personal and situational life. The crisis of curriculum development in North America is the obsessive pursuit of growth and development in science and technology and such curriculum development in instrumental reasoning replaces substantive reasoning. The trend among modern scientists is that researchers can only communicate in the language of science, like following an instruction manual with data analysis – but data analysis cannot replace the subjective human dimension. Turning people into things sets the trap of assimilating people into power, class, and gender. It was during the late 1970s, Aoki and his graduate students at University of British Columbia and University of Alberta reached out to the continental philosophy, especially phenomenology and critical theory. In reviewing the state of social studies in British Columbia in 1979, Aoki, was asking questions about the possible ways of approaching the phenomenon of social studies in British Columbia and about descriptive knowledge, phenomenological or otherwise, to push thinking beyond instrumentalism and seeking modalities of thought and practice.

I agree with Aoki, that in such an instrumentalist educational system, teachers and educators perhaps feel an unconscious relentless tendency to produce. Consequently, teaching becomes technical in nature. The ministry of education or the school district office *enframe* the worldview of curriculum into curriculum-as-plan, where the roles of teachers and students and
the subjects are prescribed and anticipated far ahead, apart from the classroom. The language spoken is about goals, aims, and objectives, rather than statements of intent and interest. According to Aoki’s critique, teachers in this scheme of things are regarded as “installers of the curriculum, where implementing assumes an instrumental flavour” (p. 160). Curriculum becomes a tool, separating human and world, theory and practice.

What is curriculum for Aoki? I asked. In reviewing Aoki’s 1985, 1986 works, I found Aoki (re)turned to the lived ground of teachers and students – isness of curriculum-as-live(d) – and I recognized the maturation in Aoki’s theorizing through a phenomenological ring. However, tensions and dilemmas between the curriculum-as-plan and the live(d) curriculum of students and teachers are sharp. After a nineteen-year career as a teacher and administrator in the Alberta public school system, Aoki had come to know it first-hand. Tension between two worlds, again, for Aoki, became a generative site for his “theorizing” teaching. Teaching as dwelling in-between two worlds, Aoki reoriented the emphasis on the whatness of curriculum-as-plan to the attunement to the isness of teaching that is rooted in the live(d) curriculum of students and teachers.

I further recognized, in reviewing Aoki’s 1980s and 1990s works, that the thematic approach to offer the interpretive analysis of the live(d) experience became central and the phenomenological-hermeneutic ring sounded strong in his “theorizing.” In “theorizing” multiculturalism and bilingualism within a Canadian context, I became aware of Aoki’s phenomenological-hermeneutic ring in speaking and thinking issues at hand poetically. Speaking from his own live(d) experience or sharing the stories of his students, Aoki revealed the polyphonic sounds of pedagogy in-between cultures, languages and histories. The once heart-wrenching stories of a young man’s struggles in a tensioned world became the rich soil for
nurturing generative intellectual seeds. The once lived grief became the intellectual gift in conceptual advancement. Tensionality from momentous life events became a reflective point that provoked Aoki’s thinking and enriched his intellectual odyssey that traversed ontological, phenomenological and hermeneutical passages. In a decisive move to phenomenology as a leap of faith, Aoki’s scholarship manifested a bridge as a gathering place in speaking two ways of knowing. Curriculum as metonymic moments unfolds the poetic wisdom through Aoki’s theorizing that dwells in the midst of doubled imaginaries. Aoki, as a curriculum theorist his scholarship actualizes in his lived experience. Moreover, a significant part of Aoki’s lived experience – being a schoolteacher – serves as a formative element of his emphasis on pedagogy and the “concrete world of the practical” (Aoki, 1986/1991/2005, p. 232) in speaking curriculum.

In responding to my second research question: *In what ways does Aoki draw upon the phenomenological tradition, especially Martin Heidegger’s writings, in forming his critical reflective and poetic style of theorizing?* I first returned to Aoki’s conceptualization of ethnicity in his 1978 work and I extended this discussion by integrating Aoki’s lived experience through tensionality with the conceptual theme of understanding as mode of being.

In reviewing Aoki’s 1978 work, especially his emphasis on “Being,” I became aware that the significance of this early work is related to a Heideggerian style of phenomenological attempt to bring to light the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience. The process of reviewing and re-telling Aoki’s vivid and detailed descriptions of his life history and organizing them thematically, allowed me to delve into the Heideggerian style of phenomenological approach in interpreting Aoki’s lived experience. This process made my ontological-existential analysis of Aoki’s 1978 work possible. To further explicate Aoki’s early stand point of his thinking and his concerns over questions of ethnicity, I began with the
acknowledgement of Aoki’s determination to rise above thinking ethnicity instrumentally and his shared concern with Heidegger – the forgetfulness of Being.

By comparing the narrations of Aoki’s life history with Heidegger’s (1962) expression of Dasein in Being and Time, I became aware that Aoki’s conceptualization of ethnicity resonated with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology of Dasein, which is a phenomenological-hermeneutic interpretation that reveals thinking semantically in “attempting to bring into fuller view reflection upon experiencing what ethnicity has been like” (Aoki, 1979/2005, p. 333). In reviewing Aoki’s 1978 work, I also noticed that he upheld what Heidegger deems as knowledge is more than just concepts disconnected from the lived experiences. Instead, knowledge is revealed through a succession of life experiences that unfolds through a particular way of being – Dasein, human existence and its essential in-the-world being. I recognized that, for both Heidegger and Aoki, theoretical knowledge is a secondary derivative of being-in-the-world. I also recognized Aoki’s heeding of Heidegger’s assertion that temporality is an important key to interpreting the meaning of Dasein, as Aoki skillfully baited out his life events to search the meaning of being. Through a Heideggerian style of ontologico-existential interpretation of Aoki’s lived experience, I learnt that the specificity from the lived world from which Aoki originated his inquiry was intended to “ontologically analyze our everyday ways of experiencing our lives and the world” (Magrini, 2014, p. 72). I also realized that Aoki’s interpretation and my interpretation of Aoki’s lived experience performed the “‘hermeneutic of facticity’” as an act that opens up a curriculum landscape to a life that is “‘interpretive’ and educational in an original sense” (Magrini, 2014, p. 72). It is only through temporality that the meaning of being can be communicated. It is through Aoki’s unique style of theorizing that Aoki unveils Heidegger’s understanding of Dasein’s temporality.
I have also come to appreciate Aoki’s phenomenological “theorizing” as mode of being, a way of seeing that sees behind or beyond what resides often directly before us. In reviewing Aoki’s further explication of the ontological-existential meaning of *Dasein*, I recognized that Aoki theorized “seeing” with a phenomenological move. For Aoki, seeing does not only mean perceiving with the bodily anatomical eyes, neither does it mean the mere non-sensory perception of the objective presence. Such “seeing”, described by Aoki, “may reveal more fully within my lived human condition self-imposed or socially imposed distortions, … a historical being engaged in his own personal and human becoming” (p. 347). I also recognized that stemming from Heidegger’s interpretation of the Greeks’ poetic understanding of *phusis*, this phenomenal basis of “seeing” the ontological-existential possibilities of a double vision of the Sakura-Rose as a Japanese Canadian, Aoki divulges understanding as a disclosive ability to what Heidegger described as being-in-the-world, the fundamental constitution of *Dasein*.

I became persuaded that understanding, for Aoki, is not restricted to the problem of method. It is a “narrative inquiry of lived experiences” that discloses the existential texture of the beings we have come to be” (Aoki, 1991, p. xi). Resonating much with Heidegger, understanding, for Aoki, is a mode of being rather than a mode of knowledge. It was through Heidegger’s (1962) work of *Dasein* in Being and Time that deepened my understanding of Aoki’s curriculum-as-live(d) philosophy. It was through the study of Aoki’s use of self-reflective narrative inquiry in reconceptualizing the notion of ethnicity as grounded in lived experiences that I concretized my understanding of Heidegger’s work of *Dasein*. It was through this reciprocal process of studying Aoki’s narrative inquiry and Heidegger’s work of *Dasein* that I actualized what Aoki (1981/2005) described “conversation as a bridging of two worlds by a bridge, which is not a bridge (p. 228).
If the phenomenological move, for both Heidegger and Aoki, is an attempt to bring to light the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience, *What might be their interpretations of technology in modernity?* I ask. In reviewing Aoki’s critique of the singular, technological rationale in thinking curriculum-as-plan as the fundamental separation of human and world, theory and practice, I found echoes of Martin Heidegger’s (1977) questioning of technology. For Heidegger, “Technology is not equivalent to the essence of technology” (p. 4) in modern times. In reviewing his 1953 essay, *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger began with the everyday account of technology in modern time — the vast array of instruments, machines, artifacts and devices that humans invent, build and ultimately exploit. In so understanding, technology is merely a tool that humans control. Heidegger (1953/1977) depicted this everyday account of technology as providing only a limited, over-exercised “instrumental and anthropological definition” (p. 44). His primary concern was about the deeply embedded instrumentalist worldview in modern science embodied in technology. Aoki shared this concern. Also, by revealing the essence of technology only through the mode of the measurable and the manipulable, he argued that it reduces beings to no-beings. For Heidegger (1953/1977), the essence of technology is the danger it poses to human beings via a power that humans themselves do not control. Therefore, he warns that “as long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will to master it” (p. 32). Ultimately, Heidegger turned to the Greek and brought *technē* into presence. This turn for me is Heidegger’s phenomenological attempt to bring to light the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience.

In further summarizing my point of Heidegger’s critique of technology in modernity and to his responding to the calling of *technē*, I refer here to Heidegger’s turn to the poetic realm of
German poet, Friedrich Hölderlin. Heidegger talks about dwelling on an old wooden bridge that spanned the Rhine river for hundreds of years. Later a “monstrousness” (Heidegger, 1953/1977, p.16) of technological production, a hydroelectric plant, was set beside it. This poetic thinking and dwelling of humans in the world as openness to the being-ness of being is evident, I recognized in both Heidegger’s and Aoki’s thinking. Instead of seeing a problem as seeking a particular solution, Aoki took an etymological and phenomenological approach toward curriculum as an opening up. Aoki returned to the live(d) ground of students and teachers — the is-ness of curriculum.

In reviewing Aoki’s works from the 1980s and 1990s, I found Aoki’s poetic style of theorizing that recognized the plurality that resides in humanity. Continuing his intellectual interest in the exploration of “Being” and the life world of students and teachers, Aoki’s ontological-phenomenological inquiry reveals the is-ness of curriculum-as-lived. To expound the is-ness of curriculum is to move further away from the dominant instrumental understanding of curriculum-as-plan that fundamentally separated mankind and world, theory and practice. By juxtaposing the lived moments that happen inside/outside the classroom, professional/personal, tensional/open, Aoki (2005) spoke the word curriculum through multiple Heidegger passages.

One of the passages that I became aware of was Aoki’s rendering to the audible that has been silent in speaking instrumentalism and curriculum – a phenomenologist’s task in bringing forth what has been hidden from our everyday view of the world. By asking a jazz trumpeter, Bobby Shew from California, to play, speak, and sing to the question, “When does an instrument cease to be an instrument?” (p. 367), Aoki attuned educators to the sounds of curriculum that have been in silence. I also recognized that Aoki’s work continued to push boundaries in thinking the unthought to provoke the instrumental understanding of the word curriculum toward
a phenomenological-hermeneutic inquiry. While Aoki wrote that the language in the Western world has come to “overly rely upon visuality, thereby diminishing the place for other ways of being in the world” (Aoki, 1990, p. 373), I noticed that Aoki’s language also became increasingly poetic.

This prompted me to ask again, if the phenomenological move, for both Heidegger and Aoki, is a phenomenological attempt to bring to light the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience, What might be their thinking on the relationship between language, poetry and Being? In reviewing Aoki’s works from the 1980s and 1990s, I found, Aoki etymologically, metaphorically, phenomenologically and hermeneutically dwells in the wor(l)d of poetry, which heeds Heidegger’s 1971, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, interpretation on the relationship between language, poetry (Dichtung), and Being. Heidegger considers that the potential of language is when language is spoken in poetic terms and it is “nothing but the elementary emergence into words, the becoming-uncovered of existence as Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1988, p. 171). Dichtung, for Heidegger (1971), is the unique way of language to poetically unfold meaning “as illuminating projection” (p. 72). Poetically unfolding meaning brings humans into nearness with their ontological-phenomenological personhood. Heeding Heidegger’s interpretation of the relationship between language, poetry and Being, I recognized Aoki’s (1990/2005) calling upon the metaphors of sonare (to hear) from the “sound of the beat and rhythm of the earth” in the ancient Greek’s geo-metron to dwell in juxtaposition with videre (to see) in the Chinese character of poetry 詩 (p. 373), is seeking a space for “a way of composing curriculum that allows for polyphony” (p. 375). Heeding what Heidegger (1971) describes as the “mirror-play of the simple fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals” (p. 177), Aoki (1990/2005) dwells poetically in “an Occidental reading of an Oriental word” (p.
375) of “earth, measure, temple, mouth, echoes” (p.375), as a human being in the world.

I became aware that, for Heidegger, genuine thinking is never a pursuit achieved through man-made assembling of abstraction from reality. It is humanity’s most essential manner of being human. For Heidegger, when poetic thinking takes place, Being and thinking are one. In reviewing Heidegger’s 1959 essay, On the Way to Language, Heidegger states, “we might perhaps prepare a little for change in our relations to words.” Thinking through enframed language, like in metaphysics, has limitations. Poetry is the way to return to the nature of language, the house of Being where the reciprocal relationship between Being and human is fulfilled through language. In Heidegger’s 1947 essay, “The Thinker as Poet: Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens,” which translates directly as “From the Experience of Thinking,” he uses a traditional cabinetmaker apprentice to illustrate this reciprocal relationship between Being and human. It is this ancient attunement with the experience itself where the artist hears and feels the essence of nature. Heidegger (1977) suggests that we should not “push on blindly with technology” nor “curse it as the work of the devil” (p. 330). The way forward, as Heidegger suggests, is not to end technology, but to dwell in it differently, poetically. More so, what is needed in the modern age is to transform a calculative way of thinking into poetic ways of being, being with, being-in-the-world.

Moving away from the rigidity of instrumentalism, the over-reification of curriculum, and the binary of dualism, I became aware that Aoki (2000/2005) is particularly attuned to the place in-between, whether inside or outside the classroom, Western or Eastern knowledge. Instead of focusing on the “apparent” differences culturally and linguistically, Aoki (2000/2005) points to the profound spaces in between. He suggests “indwelling in the zone between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived” (1986/1991/2005, p. 163). To attune to the
possibilities of the in-between place, Aoki (1996b/2005), heeding Heidegger’s “ontological essentialism,” metaphorically builds a bridge “as a site of being” (p. 317). Instead of rushing to cross over the bridge to “overcome the tensionality,” Aoki imagines, ponders, dwells and lingers on the bridge, the space in between, “dwelling aright within” (Aoki, 1986/1991/2005, p. 163) the tensionality.

In questioning and provoking the instrumental rationale in thinking, I found, Aoki, in his writings, reflects much of Heidegger’s critical position of constantly pointing out the conceptual assumptions and philosophical blind spots in the wor(l)d of instrumentalism. By returning to the ontological ground of humanness, articulating the particularity in phenomenon and dwelling poetically in the hermeneutic imagination, Aoki persistently breaks down walls to loosen the grids in instrumentalist thinking. There is no elevating moment toward the goal of a comprehensive rationale absolute in understanding curriculum for Aoki. Rather, there is the live(d) ground of curriculum that calls for the self-identified subjectivity, theorizing as poetic dwelling, as human being-in-the-world. To wrest from concealment, to bring to light the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience is only possible in dwelling in-between tensionality as a generative pedagogical provocation.

5.2 Research Contribution

In this research, I discussed Aoki’s interwoven, complex, dynamic and poetic style of theorizing. By tracing Aoki’s intellectual formation and life history, I suggest, Aoki’s unique style of curriculum theorizing and pedagogy is distinctively Canadian. In her work, “A Topography for Canadian Curriculum Theory,” Chambers (1999) points out that “Canada – as a place – is often absent from the topography of curriculum theorizing” (p. 137). Chambers explains that the history of colonialism with Canada situated between geopolitical themes,
Canadians are often led to think of what is happening over “there” – in England, France and the United states of America – as always having been more important than what is happening “here” in Canada. In turn, the “school curriculum was a colonial curriculum in that home was either somewhere else or not worth consideration” (Chambers, 1999, p. 137). The notion of home and “who we are” are particularly ambiguous for Canadians to answer. Therefore, Chambers (1999) presents four challenges for Canadian curriculum theorists. These four challenges that Chambers put forth almost a decade ago are still haunting the field of Canadian curriculum studies today. In the following, I use these four challenges in a heuristic sense to illustrate how the four challenges helped me to contemplate the significance of Aoki’s scholarship in the field of Canadian Curriculum studies.

For Canadians, the “classic existential question – “who am I?’” (p. 137), Chambers (1999) suggests, can only be answered by questioning: “Where is here?” “How do I find my way around here?” “How can I survive here?” “Who were the people here before me?” (p. 137). Writing from the place where he live(d) and probing the question, “what does it mean to be a Japanese Canadian?” Aoki (1978/2005) turns to the ground of his own lived experience to disclose what he calls “experiencing ethnicity as experiencing subjectivity” (p. 333). The experience of being a Japanese Canadian within his own historical situation is the way Aoki came to know “what it means to be ethnic” in the time and space where he was born and has lived. Also, by sharing the place-stories of his own survival and alienation, Aoki theorizes curriculum from a “varied physical, imaginary, and sociopolitical landscape” (Chambers, 1999, p. 137) of Canada. In turn, Aoki’s ontological-phenomenological approach of curriculum theorizing responds to Chambers (1999) first challenge – “writes from this place, of this place, and for this place” (p. 145) – for Canadian curriculum theorists.
By thoughtfully juxtaposing English, Japanese and Chinese words in his works to heighten the meaning of the words in each language, as well as blurring the lines between the binary of East/West, Aoki (1990/2005) theorizes as poetic dwelling in the midst of “double imaginaries” (p. 303). By questioning the meaning of being and exploring the polyphony of the language as the house of being, Aoki traverses the ontological-phenomenological hermeneutic terrain. By sharing a heart-felt letter of a Korean student, Aoki (1990/2005) interprets pedagogy through “listening the sound of pedagogy in the silence of the morning calm” (p. 400). By dwelling the metonymic moments of hearing a concert of a Jazz trumpet player and by tasting a mouth-watering nourishment at a multicultural conference, Aoki poetically creates a language that speaks curriculum and interprets multicultural curriculum as a linguistic hybrid. Aoki’s poetic style of theorizing finds and interprets “its poeticity and its linguisticality” that opens “towards the topos of pedagogical Being” (Aoki, 1990/2005, p. 400). It is in the presence of Aoki’s refusal of linearity and his relentless pushing for the possibility of polyphony and with his provoking question: “What does it mean to dwell poetically?” (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 374), that Aoki responds to Chambers second and third challenge – to identify language and interpretive tools of our own – for Canadian curriculum theorists.

Aoki writes and interprets the stories of his own live(d) experiences, struggles, differences and multiplicity, in which he theorizes from the “particular places and regions where [he] live[d] and work[ed]” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147). As I reviewed in Chapter 2, 3 and 4, Aoki often speaks of the issues at hand from where he lives and works and how these topos are inscribed in his theorizing. Writing “topography for Canadian curriculum theory” (Chambers, 1999, p. 147) is how Aoki responds to Chambers’ fourth challenge.
In addition to articulating Aoki’s unique style of theorizing that is specifically within the field of Canadian curriculum studies, in this Aoki-focused research, I believe, I researched the specificity and situated-ness of a scholar’s intellectual life history that responds to Chambers (1999) first challenge, to “write from the place” (p. 145). This intellectual life history can contribute to the knowledge in the field of curriculum studies nationally and internationally, as it “privileges the meanings of lived experiences for situated personhood that goes beyond the totalizing abstraction of identity politics” (Pinar, 2009, as cited in Wang, 2009, p. 38). By situating Aoki’s main concepts in a particular intellectual movement within a Canadian context that is interwoven with political, historical, theoretical and intellectual traditions, I believe it responds not only to Chambers’ (1999) first challenge, but it also finds a “language of our own” (p. 145) to address Chambers’ second challenge to Canadian curriculum theorists. By tracing Aoki’s particular life and intellectual events and interpreting Aoki’s main concepts through Heidegger’s passages, I believe it can contribute to Chambers’ third challenge in finding and creating “interpretive tools that allow Canadian curriculum theorists to write and interpret who Canadians are and what we know” (p. 146).

I engaged in the study of a scholar’s work that is inseparable from his life and I illustrated how the formation of a scholar’s concepts is intertwined with politics, culture, and history. Thus, I suggest that the research of a scholar’s intellectual history can be a passage to understand curriculum studies within a situated time and place. Through the study of the live(d) experiences, the histories of the present circumstance, to probe the situatedness of a pivotal curriculum scholar’s life and work within a historical, societal and intellectual context, I believe this dissertation can enrich the understandings of the present situations in which we find ourselves, in the field of curriculum studies. This dissertation may also hint at the intellectual histories and
national distinctiveness for the advancement of knowledge in the field of Canadian curriculum studies. I also believe it responds to Chambers’ (1999) fourth challenge that calls for writing an intellectual “topography for Canadian Curriculum theory” (p. 147).

Aoki’s scholarship is not only relevant to a particular era in Canadian curriculum studies. Within the rich and diverse intellectual trends of contemporary Canadian curriculum studies, Aoki’s works continue to influence and inspire scholars and teachers. In a 2018 publication, *Loving Language: Poetry, Curriculum, and Ted T. Aoki*, curriculum researcher and poet, Carl Leggo acknowledges how Aoki’s poetic style of theorizing inspires and encourages his own form of poetic inquiry. For Leggo (2018), poetry revitalizes our curriculum studies by “helping us imagine new ways of attending to language, new ways of knowing and becoming, and new ways of inquiring about living experiences” (p. 14). Sharing fragments of his poems and anecdotes, Leggo displays a dynamic way of reflecting, re-interpreting, re-writing and re-thinking Aoki’s scholarship. The significance of Leggo’s scholarship, which extends from Aoki’s writing and thinking from a place of ambiguity and ambivalence, is that it supports a new way of speaking in contemporary Canadian curriculum studies.

In a 2018 collective works of Canadian curriculum scholars, *Canadian Curriculum Studies: A Métisage of Inspiration / Imagination/ Interconnection* (Hasebe-Ludt & Leggo, Eds.), Katie Tremblay-Beaton (2018) takes on Aoki’s notion of teaching as dwelling in-between two worlds in speaking “Understanding Teacher Identity with(in) the Music Curriculum” (p. 20). As an Ontario middle-school music teacher, Tremblay feels the tensionality born of the “conflict of theory and practice” (p. 20) in her every day teaching. Writing autobiographically, she examines her experience as a teacher for its “latent and manifest meanings” (p. 21). Although, Tremblay feels herself embracing educational reforms promoting informal, student-centered pedagogy, she
recalls a song-writing competition where she “morphed from a supportive educator who privileges positive student engagement to a teacher who was critical of mistakes and driven by the desire to win” (p. 21). The tug of war between the traditional prominence of “direct-instruction in music education and the current emphasis on “student-centered pedagogy” (p. 20) compels Tremblay to search for a “new way of thinking about music” education (p. 21). Living in the tensionality between two worlds, Tremblay finds, is not only to “value [herself] as a teacher based on [her] students’ ability to perform the curriculum-as-plan,” but also a reminder not to “let go of the curriculum-as-lived-experiences that has and will continue to form [her] identity as a musician and teacher” (p. 23).

In 2013, Contemplating Curriculum: Genealogy/Time/Places (Hasebe-Ludt & Hurren, Edt.), a group of scholars contributed an anthology that invites once again to “contemplate notions of intertextuality in an Aokian spirit of curriculum and currere” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2013, p. xiv). This invitation calls for curriculum scholars to contemplate on their own curriculum intertext of place/language/pedagogy and to engage with their own “curricular theorizing and pedagogical imagining” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2013, p. xiv). Responding to this invitation, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook (2013), a Canadian curriculum scholar, draws from Aoki to “provoke curriculum theorizing as a digital form of Denkbild” (p. 176) and to “contemplate a Canadian curriculum theory project (p. 172). Engaging with Aoki’s calling on “currere in recurring movement” (p. 172), Ng-A-Fook reflects on his own engagement with Pinar’s teaching on currere and traces the “genealogical topographies” (p. 173) of currere. In his reflection, Ng-A-Fook emphasizes Pinar’s (2004) refined conceptual framework of currere that is an autobiographical methodology to “study relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction” (p. 35, as cited in Ng-A-Fook, 2013, p. 174). In turn,
Ng-A-Fook (2013) takes four photos as “autobiographical snapshots” and he seeks to understand the graphic representations of narrative sign-postings, as an aesthetic and graphic materiality of curriculum theorizing” (pp. 174-175). In provoking curriculum theorizing as a digital form, Ng-A-Fook uses the image of a “Totem Pole of Canada” as a Denkbild (denken, to think; Bild, image) to contemplate on its topographical meaning. By juxtaposing the image of the “Totem Pole of Canada” with the image of “provoking curriculum studies” – as “aesthetic Denkbild,” Ng-A-Fook advocates Aoki’s summons to “frame our experimentations with curriculum theorizing, as currere” (p. 181). In the same volume of Contemplating Curriculum: Genealogy/Time/Places, Wanda Hurren (2013), another Canadian curriculum scholar, in her work, “Cultivating an Aesthetic Sensibility in Curriculum Spaces,” takes up Aoki’s “invitations to linger…around ideas and notions that held some form of aesthetic component: Japanese kanji, word equations, stories, legends, song lyrics, haiku, jazz music, foods, artwork” (p. 130) to create her curriculum theorizing with “aesthetic sensibility” (p. 130) in art-based research. The significance of Hurren’s work and art-based research is that they contribute to the intellectual diversity in Canadian curriculum studies.

Aoki’s scholarship serves, also, as a provocation for contemporary curriculum scholars. In reading of Aoki’s works on the notion of multiplicity that resides between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-live through Deleuze’s rethinking of Bergson’s ontology, Jason Wallin, in his 2011 publication, “What is? Curriculum Theorizing: for a People Yet to Come,” argues “the conceptualization of difference that dominates the contemporary curriculum landscape is inadequate to either the task of ontological experimentation or the creation of new ways for thinking pedagogical life” (p.287). Wallin (2011) writes that contemporary theorizing has “only [begun] to imagine a style of thought capable of encountering the curriculum in terms of its
unthought, non-identitarian potentials” (p. 286). Drawing from Aoki’s work (1993a/2005), “Legitimating Lived Curriculum: Toward a Curricular Landscape of Multiplicity,” Wallin asserts Aoki’s concern that the “contemporary curriculum landscape is fettered to a structural image of pedagogy” and such an image dictates “how a pedagogical life should go” (Wallin, 2011, p. 286). This structural logic – curriculum-as-plan coupled with pedagogy as “implementation” or “instruction” (Aoki, 1993a/2005, p. 418) – “presupposes the existence of a pedagogical image of life prior to difference” (Wallin, 2011, p. 286). The danger of the presupposition is that “identity is a preexistent presence – a presence we can represent by careful scrutiny and copy” (Aoki, 1993a/2005, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 286). In turn, this “identitarian thought in curriculum theory” affects the “pedagogical practice” controlling the “flows of desire which situate what is possible according to the transcendent image of the curriculum-as-plan,” Wallin explains (pp. 286-287). Also, Aoki’s states that the apparently diverse curricular landscape – mathematics, science, language arts – is “an illusion because ‘they’ [i.e. discipline-based curricula designed by a provincial authority] are manifestation of a singular meaning of the [word] curriculum” (Aoki, 1996a/2005, p. 417, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 287). Wallin (2011) suggests that Aoki’s statement can be expanded to imply that it is not only multiplicity in curriculum creation and research that is imbedded in a singular meaning, but also it implies that the multiplicity in identities is imbedded in a singular meaning. Wallin asserts that the concept of difference is “overdetermined by quantitative terms of more or less, or rather, by difference in degree” (p. 287). Expanding on Aoki’s critique of the “inadequacy of thinking difference” (Wallin, 2011, p. 287), Wallin draws from the philosophical thought of Deleuze (1991) through Bergson’s ontology (2004) in speaking multiplicity in two tendencies – differing in degree and differing in kind. In Bergson’s decomposition of the concept of multiplicity, differing in degree reveals a
spatial and quantitative tendency whereas differing in kind reveals a durational and qualitative tendency (Wallin, 2011). Using a lump of sugar as an example, Wallin (2011) explains that this lump of sugar “might be quantitatively extensive and actual, differing in degree from other extant lumps” (p. 287), but this for Bergson is only “one way of approaching its potential” (p. 287). Drawing again from Deleuze (1991), Wallin explains that “[the lump of sugar] also has a duration, a way of being in time that is…revealed in the process of its dissolving” (p. 32, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 288). This way of being in time “shows how this sugar differs in kind not only from other things, but first and foremost from itself” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 32, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 228). In turn, Wallin (2011) suggests that Bergson’s decomposition of space and duration articulates difference not as a “degraded secondary movement, but rather, the character of substance itself” (p. 288). In so thinking, Bergson’s ontology reveals “a difference in kind unfettered from some generalized sense of Being” (Deleuze, 1991, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 288). Wallin concludes that the apparent multiplicity of curriculum-as-plan is ultimately difference in degree. Returning to curriculum theorizing with the interpretation of Deleuze’s rethinking on Bergson’s ontology, Wallin (2011) deepens Aoki’s articulations on multiplicity. To further expand on Aoki’s (1996a/2005) work on curriculum-as-live as “a multiplicity of curricula, as many as there are teachers and students” (p. 426, as cited in Wallin, 2011, p. 294) Wallin (2011) suggests it “posits a multiplicity of solutions for the actualization [of] the virtual” (p. 293). Virtual is defined by Wallin (2011) as “unthought” or “not yet” (p. 294). Different from curriculum-as-plan that is akin to an “ends-means” (Aoki, 1991c/2005, p. 170) instrumentalist possible, Wallin (2011) “deploy[s] the unthought within Aoki[’s],” curriculum-as-live and he suggests it is a “curriculum capable of actualizing mutant subjectivities…no longer requisite upon the molar categories of students and teachers” (p. 293). In turn, Wallin (2011) suggests
thinking curriculum-as-live(d) becomes the conceptualization of the “actual-virtual character of currere” that is “between what is and what is not yet” (p. 294).

These selected contemporary teachers and scholars’ works reflecting on Aoki’s scholarship continue to provoke, to influence, to inspire and to enrich the intellectual trends of contemporary Canadian curriculum studies.

5.3 Future Research Suggestions

In this research, while I articulated in some depth Aoki’s main concepts and the ways they are connected to Heidegger’s thinking within an ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition, two central themes emerged in my study that might guide future research. First of all, my intention is not to claim that Aoki is a Heideggerian scholar. However, as I discussed, phenomenology and hermeneutic traditions contributed greatly to Aoki’s thought, and, one might argue, to the advancement of north American curriculum studies, especially in Canada. In Pinar’s 1992 collection of phenomenological writing in curriculum studies, he pointed out the phenomenological movement was “growing in Canada” in the late 1960s and 1970s, and “its influence [became] increasingly felt in the United States” (vii) and he also called scholars’ attention to the “marginalized” status of phenomenology in the North American curriculum field” (vii). Thus, further research into the intellectual life histories of curriculum scholars, such as Max van Manen, David Smith and David W. Jardine, will not only provide a more comprehensive understanding of these particular intellectual traditions within the Canadian context, but also serve to underscore the importance of phenomenology and hermeneutics in the North American education.

Also, I relate Aoki’s curriculum philosophy and concepts to an ontological-phenomenological-hermeneutical style of theorizing that calls upon one’s reflective insight to
wrest the ontological-existential theme that gives meaning to the lived experience in relation to educational practices. By this, I hope to present some ways that might allure educators to be inspired by Aoki’s unique style of theorizing as it is inspired by Heidegger’s philosophy. The study on Heidegger’s forms of phenomenology in relation to educational thought and practice emerges as a theme that can lead to a direction for future research, especially in our tumultuous times when human feel alienated from our world, from our fellow humans and from the environment due to the saturation of so-called advanced technology, in the world. In addition, I agree with Peters’ (2009) comment that “Heidegger and his forms of phenomenology have been a neglected figure in the field of philosophy of education in the English-speaking world” (pp. xi-x, as cited in Magrini, 2014, p. 62). Thus, studies on Heidegger’s fundamental ontology and his works as they relate to educational thought can be a specific line of research in education.

Outside of the themes that emerge from my research, as indicated in section 5.2., there are new lines of scholarly works, in music, in art, in language and literacy, and in media education, that are inspired/provoked by Aoki’s thinking. In two of Aoki’s (1993a, 1993b) later works, he draws from Gilles Deleuze’s (1987) interpretation of the word “multiplicity,” not as a noun, to depict “a curricular landscape of multiplicity which grows in the middle” (Aoki, 1993a, p. 205) between curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-live(d). Extended works on Aoki’s thinking in relation to Deleuzian philosophy can also be a new line of research, as exhibited in the work of Jason Wallin (2011). Furthermore, most of Aoki’s works are in the form of speeches that directly relate to teachers’ concerns about their “practical” practice, but from a different perspective. Therefore, “at a fundamental level, fundamental perspective, found in the lived practical world” (Aoki, 1977, p. 52) of their own, might be a line of research for teachers to continue to explore. To pursue “rigorously the theoretic of the practical” to “come to grips with
the meaning of the practical” (Aoki, 1977, p. 52) lived experiences of their own as an inquiry might be helpful for teachers in rethinking their practice, as I discuss in Tremblay-Beaton’s (2018) work, in section 5.2.2.

Through one of Heidegger's passages, Aoki (1993/2005) restates “the most thought-provoking thing about our thought-provoking times is that we are not yet thinking” (p. 298). Here, I heed Aoki in Heidegger and reflect on the twilight in the curriculum realm where intellectual traditions and cultures interplay. I believe that personhood and live(d) experiences of both educators and students are not just innocuous educational experiences, but are a crucial site of contact in engaging a dialogue for curriculum questions and intercultural relations. I hope this intellectual history of a prominent Canadian curriculum scholar invites other scholars to engage in studies that contribute to an understanding of the field of Canadian curriculum studies in all its particularity.
**Postscript**

The primacy of language, for Aoki, is legendary and his later writings on the im/possibilities of language suggest Aoki’s intellectual interest movement towards a post-structuralist opening. In the 2005 Postscript/Rescript of *Curriculum in a New Key*, Aoki was busy provoking curriculum landscape with the Chinese ideographical writing 道 Tao (the way). Drawing from the configuration of the Chinese word 道 Tao (the way) and reflecting on the metonymic events in the field of curriculum studies, Aoki lured the readers to dwell in the “linguistic semiotics of curriculum and pedagogy” (Aoki, 2005, p. 449). Reflecting on the language shifting and intellectual advancement in speaking and thinking curriculum and pedagogy, Aoki recalled, particularly, the effort of Max van Manen (one of Aoki’s doctoral students at the university of Alberta) who “brought to us the language of hermeneutics and phenomenology” and “sought opportunities to explore new understandings of teaching as lived experience” (p. 449). It was through van Manen’s “calling for attention to ‘intentionality’ understood in terms of ‘subjectivity conscious of objects’” (p. 449), Aoki acknowledged, “our language began to shift to include both curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-live(d)” (p. 449). It was also “at this time that we learned of the efforts of William F. Pinar, then of the University of Rochester, New York” who drew “our attention to ‘currere,’ which emphasized movement in the flux of pedagogical life” (p. 449-450), Aoki remarked. In particular, Aoki felt a “kinship predominantly in the textured context of phenomenological discourse” (p. 450) in Pinar and Reynolds’s 1992 book *Understanding Curriculum as Phenomenological and Deconstructive Text*. 


Interested in the “textured context of phenomenological discourse” (p. 450), Aoki contemplated the “linguistic semiotics of curriculum and pedagogy” (p. 449) in the Chinese graphic character 道 Tao (the way). The configuration of the word 道 shows the moving sign / crossroads (⻍) enclosing a head (首). By reading these two combined conventional signs, one may loosely capture the meaning of the word the way – 道. Following this sense, the configuration of the ideogram, the moving sign enclosing a head, suggests not only the relationship between the “head” and the “movement,” it also depicts a going and pausing, a rhythmic, relational movement. Thereby, this combined self-other ideogram transcends a confined word into a complex interpretation. Opposite from the notion of dualism, either / or, all elements are subjects and meaning resides in the relational existence of this AND that. In turn, 道 Tao, for Aoki, as a signifier that signifies the way, is a “person in movement, in a way a form of ‘currere’” (p. 450).

Through contextualizing the graphic word 道 Tao, Aoki enchanted his readers into “experiencing reconfiguration of the word ‘way’” with Lao Tze’s Tao Te Ching opening phrase “sensitivity of metonymic context:” “the way described / not the way” (p. 452). Aoki dwelt in the word curriculum as currere – a word / no word.

In 1995, Aoki (2015) do you mean 2005? revisited Lao Tze’s Tao Te Ching of lines 3 and 4 and reflected on the juxtaposing of the Chinese words 有 無 (presence absence) in the “intercultural space between the Orient and the West between Western modernist and far Eastern non-modernist figurations” (p. 453). The lines 3 and 4 read as: 無名夫地之始; 有名萬物之母 (Absence of name is the condition of Heaven and Earth; Presence of name is the mother of Thousand Things). How might this far Eastern non-modernist figuration of 有 無 (presence absence) lend a hand to us, the Western modernist, in thinking? Referring to Maxine Greene’s
1988 (American educational philosopher) article, “Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representation,” Aoki shared Greene’s concern about the “hegemony of representative discourse erasing the non-representational” (Aoki, 2015, p. 454). Aoki explained what Greene meant by representation was referring to the “modernism discourse grounded in the metaphysics of presence, which presumes the preexistence of reality, often hidden in the deep” (p. 454). To reveal the hidden from the metaphysics of representational presence, Aoki responded to Greene’s calling for a “retexturing [the] acknowledged metonymic figuration” (p. 454) of 有 無, presence / absence. Dualism, Aoki emphasized, “clings to the ground of metaphysics” (p. 454) that hinders us to see, to contemplate, to consider the “spatial sites of differences, entangled in ambiguity and aporia” (p. 454). Spatial sites of presence / absence become the “cursive figuration” of the “generative possibilities” that often invoke the “is not” (p. 454).

Invoking the “is not” to find openings for the cross-cultural “language, graphic, film, sounds,” interplay and erode a watercourse way that is “always in movement” (p. 455) within the linguistic and aesthetic constraints of the official boundary that is inhabited in the curriculum spaces. Aoki shared a few doctoral students’ dissertations, for which he served as a committee member, that invoke the “signifying figuration” (p. 455). Interested in “semiotic realms” of “film images and linguistic discourses,” Aristides Gazetas in his 1997 dissertation “Imagining Selves: The Politics of Representations, Film Narratives and Adult Education,” explored the “postmodernists efforts in re-understanding ‘self and other’” (Aoki, 2015, p. 455). By examining “five metonymic images of self and other” and attending to the interpretation of the post-structuralism scholars, “Jacque Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Baudrillard, and Jean-Francois Lyotard,” Gazetas “displace[d] the identity centered image of self and other” (Aoki, 2015, p. 455). The “boldly insisted” discussion formulation that are “necessary illusions,
linguistically and culturally constituted” in Gazetas dissertation led Aoki to a “moment of thought in which [he] could see in the postmodern articulations,” as a “reflection of Taoist (Zen) metonymy of presence / absence” (p. 455).

Lingering in the liminal space of linguistics, Aoki shared his thoughts on Patricia Palulis’s 2001 dissertation, “Tarrying in Metonymic Sites of Pedagogy: The Space of Language and the Language of Space.” By “rereading and rewriting” and “including the post-structuralist discourse of signification,” Palulis “allowed language to constitute meanings and subjectivity” (Aoki, 2015, p. 456), Aoki recalled. Palulis’s dissertation residing in the “doubled sense of performativity in the space of language and the language of space” recognized the “limitation of the conventional understanding of language in language program” and her dissertation invited Aoki and his colleagues to “question the notion that a dissertation is essentially an assertive representation” (p. 456).

In 2002, Anne Bruce completed her dissertation, “Abiding in Liminal Space(s): Inscribing Mindful Living / Dying with(in) End-of-Life-Care” (Aoki, 2015, p. 457). Studying with the School of Nursing, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia, Bruce’s focus was on “palliative care in nursing” (Aoki, 2015, p. 457). By contextualizing Taoist meditation, Zen hospice in the “midst metonymy of life and death,” Bruce had “transform articulation of nursing theory and practice” (p. 457), Aoki emphasized. Moreover, Bruce’s articulation of “nursing in a metonymic context,” beckoned Aoki to “consider as a way to reconstitute the discourse within which we define teachers, teaching, and teaching / learning” (p. 457).

Dwelling in the midst of metonymic context, figuration / graphic / film / sounds, self / other, life / death, 有 / 無, presence / absence, Aoki “provoke[d] semiotic signs where linguistic and cultural signs in interludic play” (p. 457). Referring to the passages from post-structuralist
philosophers, such as Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Baudrillard, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, Aoki revealed the impossibility of knowledge that is constructed through systematic structures. The way forward is not to shy away from the impossibility, rather to see it as an opening to celebrate, to dwell, to liberate in the midst of the im/possibilities. “*Currere* in recurring movement?” (p. 457) Aoki ended his postscript with an open question that invites curriculum scholars to continue to speak the language of im/possibilities to generate newness in the field of curriculum studies.
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