

Antoinette Oberg: A Real Teacher...and An Organic but not so Public Intellectual...

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It is still an exalted matter, then, to become a teacher
—which is something else entirely than becoming a
famous professor....

(Heidegger, 1993)

Antoinette Oberg's major contributions to Canadian curriculum studies cannot be read solely in academic periodicals or easily located through an ERIC search. Her gift to our field is much more enigmatic, and is to be found primarily in her work guiding and bearing witness to student travellers, and in the spaces she has created inside academic institutions for students to conduct their inquiry. It is not that Antoinette Oberg holds no regard for professorial responsibility to bring her intellectual work to the public domain; rather, it is that Antoinette Oberg is more interested in what makes a real teacher and a meaningful life than in what makes a famous professor and a successful career.

A Real Teacher...

Teaching is even more difficult than learning...because
what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher,
in fact, lets nothing else be learned than — learning.

(Heidegger, 1993)

After teaching in classrooms and earning a M.Ed. (University of Washington) in the early 1970s, Antoinette Oberg completed a Ph.D. in Curriculum Studies (University of Alberta, 1975). Her primary curricular interest has always been teaching, the oft neglected, less glamorous, sibling of the historical twinning of curriculum and instruction. A significant aspect of Antoinette Oberg's contribution to curriculum studies in Canada has been the numbers of teachers and emerging scholars that she has mentored over the past three decades: Antoinette has supervised 170 graduate students (92 M.Ed., 57 M.A. or M.Sc, and 21 Ph.D. students), and served on supervisory committees for over 185 students (90 M.Ed. projects, 65 M.A./M.Sc. theses, and 30 Ph.D. dissertations). For at least two decades, Antoinette Oberg was one of the few faculty members able to offer graduate students at the University of Victoria guidance in conducting qualitative or interpretive inquiry. Thus on many supervisory committees she played a more, rather than less, significant role than might otherwise have been the case. As well, she has assisted graduate students beyond her own faculty and university, serving as external examiner on ten M.A. theses and ten Ph.D. dissertations. Canadian curriculum scholars such as Renee Norman (University of British Columbia), Jim Paul (University of Alberta), and Olenka Bilash (University of Alberta) have benefited from having Antoinette Oberg as their external examiner.

Even with her commitment to teaching, and the institutional recognition she has received for her abilities (a term as the Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre at the University of Victoria; a member of the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning; and recipient of the 1995 Alumni Teaching Award), Antoinette Oberg has expressed no interest in becoming an expert in teaching, that is in codifying a set of procedures that could be described as her method (and like Isadora Duncan denies there is a method to her teaching) so as to convert her practical expertise and research interest in teaching into a form of academic legitimacy.

Many professors, both male and female, find great comfort in the borders of propriety that circumscribe professor-student relationships. Such boundaries—derived primarily from middle-class social relationships that over time have been codified as “professionalism”—keep students, and their inquiry, at what is valued as an *objective* distance. While remaining intensely private about her life both within and outside the institution, Antoinette continues to challenge the traditional boundaries between professor and student, between research and life, inviting students to query who they are, where they are, how they are constituted, and what their interests are. As she works with students, Antoinette's expressed interest is in “*What do I do?*” And, “*What is the effect of what I do, on others? And on myself? And the institution?*” And she asks, “*What can I do with, or for, graduate students that will assist their*

inquiry, and the sense they are making of it?" And, finally she also asks, *"What ought I do?"* This particular question arises continually as she, and her students, are confronted by the escalating difficulties of conducting interpretive inquiry within institutions who have responded to calls for accountability, and the ever present threat of litigation, with increasingly bureaucratic and restrictive policies for teaching (including evaluation) and conducting research. This expansion of institutional authority into the daily life of the professoriate is occurring at the same time as ever more conservative notions of what constitutes curriculum, and legitimate research in curriculum studies, are coming into play. These very difficult and penetrating questions—What do I do? What can I do? What ought I do? And, What is the effect?—Deepen the inquiry of Antoinette's students, and her own. Asking these questions of students, which inevitably invites them to query their lives in relation to the topic they are investigating, crosses the boundaries between the public and the private, and leads supervisor and student into an organic relationship. This affinity is guided by the inquiry rather than framed by codified notions of professional conduct, or long-standing academic traditions for mentoring student apprentices in research. What makes it legitimate for Antoinette to create, and re-create, these organic, and thus authentic, kinships with graduate students, through probing deeply into the topic that lies in front of both her and the student, is that she probes equally deeply with similar questions in her own inquiry. However present Antoinette's inquiry into her own teaching may be to herself, or apparent it may, or may not, be to the student, her inquiry is neither the focus nor the topic of her interactions with students. The students' work, and how that can be advanced, remains central to her classroom teaching and her work as graduate supervisor.

What Antoinette brings to her interactions with her students (and to her research as well) is her deep curiosity about, and interest in, the world and the word. She brings the same adventuresome spirit that she brought to flying a private plane, and to piloting and living aboard a 55-foot sailboat for over a decade. The eldest daughter of an inventive engineer and astute businessman, Antoinette has learned to combine curiosity and invention, to design and create, as well as, to deconstruct and reconstruct engines, bilge pumps, diesel stoves, abstract ideas, complex theories and nagging practical problems. And the creativity she brings to her teaching and research is aesthetic as well as technical. Perhaps Antoinette has inherited the creativity of both her parents, as her mother is a gifted photographer with public exhibitions to her credit. A trained pianist and a singer, Antoinette brings her aesthetic sensibility to her living and her work, and it most often her students who benefit. But perhaps what students benefit most from is Antoinette's long-standing interest in various forms of bodywork that invite attention to the lived body. She brings this practiced discipline of being physically, emotionally

and intellectually present in the moment to herself, and to others, into her teaching and into her encounters with graduate students. Antoinette also performs a kind of radical honesty with others, in that she does not let being “kind” or “nice” prevent her from asking the question, or making the comment, that her highly attuned attention to the situation suggests is called for.

Antoinette has often described her work with graduate students as bearing witness to their inquiry. Witnesses have experiences, which they later recount as what they observed and heard. Antoinette meets with her students regularly, having read their most recent writing. She responds to their writing, and then listens to them speak. And then she asks the questions, and observes students’ response. And in these questions, there is not a sniff of arrogance or judgment. And if students ask Antoinette a question, she follows the advice of her father: only answer the question asked. I find this inordinately difficult to do: when graduate students ask me a question, I often assume it is an invitation to expound upon some topic or to direct them to several books and articles that could answer their question, neither of which are necessarily what the student needs or the situation calls for. By only answering the question she is asked, Antoinette maintains the focus on the student’s inquiry. Antoinette Oberg is highly skilled at solving practical and complex problems, and if students ask directly for advice, they couldn’t receive more thoughtful and creative solutions to difficult situations. So when graduate students feel lost, confused or frustrated with their research, as a result of Antoinette’s watchful, discerning attention to them and their work during a supervisory session, they leave her office with the insight and fortitude to keep moving forward with their inquiry.

And while Antoinette (Oberg et al., 2004) describes her work with students as guiding and mentoring and bearing witness, my experience is that her work with students is motivated by love—love of learning, love of living and love of the other. Once when Antoinette and I were working late into the night on a conference presentation we were to give the next day, I asked her a question that I can no longer recall and her answer was simply, “Well, I love you.” It was that simple, and it was that true. And in this love I know I’m not alone.

A (not so) Public Intellectual...

That I claim Antoinette Oberg’s contribution to curriculum studies is not to be found (solely) in the public record is not because she hasn’t published. As a traditional intellectual, Antoinette Oberg has published two dozen articles in refereed curriculum studies journals such as *Curriculum Inquiry* (Oberg, 1982; Oberg & McElroy, 1994); *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (Oberg, 1985c; 1987); *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* (Oberg, 1989); *Phenomenology + Pedagogy* (Oberg, 1985b; Oberg

& Blades, 1990); *JCT: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Curriculum Studies* (Chambers, Oberg, Dodd & Moore, 1994; Oberg, Scott, & Caplan, 1996); and most recently, the electronic journal, *Educational Insights* (Wilson & Oberg, 2002). As well as writing the entry on “curriculum decision” for the *International Encyclopedia of Curriculum* (Oberg 1985a; 1990b), Antoinette has also published in *Peabody Journal of Education* (Oberg & McCutcheon, 1987) and *Theory into Practice* (Oberg, 1990c).

Antoinette Oberg’s earliest research interests, and publications, were concerned with teachers and the curriculum (Oberg, 1985a; 1990b). Antoinette sought to understand specifically how teachers make decisions when they are teaching, the rationale or ground for those decisions, and their effect on curriculum (Oberg, 1975; Oberg, 1980; Oberg, 1987; Oberg & Field, 1987; Oberg with Chambers & Field, 1986). By the mid1980s, Antoinette Oberg’s (1985b; 1985d) interest in qualitative research, particularly human science research was evident. She (1989) invited teachers to reflect on their practice orally in research interviews and in journals submitted for course assignments. In these descriptions, teachers often used narratives to describe how they conducted and made sense of their living curriculum. Following the traditional model of educational research, initially Antoinette was interested primarily in what teachers’ reflections could tell her, as researcher, about teacher thinking and curriculum decisions. Eventually Antoinette’s inquiry shifted away from what she could learn about teaching from teachers, to what teachers could learn about teaching from themselves, with her guidance. In the mid1980s and early 1990s, Antoinette became attuned to questions of power in research. Action research (Oberg, 1990a; Oberg, 1990b; Oberg & McCutcheon, 1987) made it legitimate for teachers to study their own teaching practice, and to assume intellectual and practical direction for the research. At that time many educational researchers employed teacher reflection and action research as a means for improving either (a) particular technical aspects of teaching or (b) the general social and political conditions of education and society. Antoinette’s research led her down a different path. Through her teaching graduate courses and supervising graduate students, Antoinette noticed that teachers’ reflections generated descriptions of lived experience, which often in themselves laid open the ground of practice, and of increasing interest to Antoinette, the ground of living. Thus, phenomenology and hermeneutics (for e.g. Chambers, et al, 1994; Oberg & Blades, 1990), which enabled Antoinette to theorize the teachers’ descriptions of their lived experience and interpret the significance of those texts, became of increasing interest. Antoinette avoided a way of proceeding whereby she simply turned over responsibility for the inquiry to the graduate student, and yet, she grew increasingly dissatisfied with a mode of inquiry where she retained primary responsibility for interpreting (other) teachers’ descriptions of their lived experiences. Antoinette (1991) experimented with arranging

and juxtaposing fragments of teachers' narratives of their lived experiences, with little, or no, explicit interpretation. Much as in traditional storytelling, the audience was to discern the text's significance from the arrangement of the narrative fragments, rather than from an explicit exegesis from her as "author." Antoinette has retained, and varied aspects of this strategy in writings and performances up to the present.

By the early 1990s, Antoinette Oberg (Oberg & Artz, 1992) made the phenomenological turn from the mainstream preoccupation with the results of teaching to an interest in teaching itself. This turn was also a hermeneutic one in that her work, rather than descriptive and monologic, became increasingly critical and dialogic. To become critical, and remain ethical, Antoinette shifted the spotlight from the practice of other teachers onto her own (Oberg & Artz, 1992). In teaching curriculum studies and interpretive inquiry courses, and in supervising graduate students, Antoinette continued to press students' in their inquiry with the question, "What is taken for granted here?" In public and in publications, Antoinette turned this question on her own practice (Oberg & Artz, 1992; Oberg & Underwood, 1992).

Her reflective dialogues with teacher collaborators often resulted in further descriptions of practice. These rich and often critical texts remained, however, primarily centred on the results of teaching, rather than its formation, her real interest. Through collaboration with graduate students, such as Lonnis McElroy (Oberg & McElroy, 1994), Antoinette engaged postmodern and post-structural discourses to deepen her interest in language (her undergraduate degree was in Far Eastern Slavic Languages and Literature), particularly how language constitutes the subjectivity of the teacher, while simultaneously constraining what it is possible to say and understand about teaching. These new discourses deepened Antoinette's intuitive sense, and rational understanding, that any text about teaching, either students or her own, was as rich in absences as it was in presences. The postmodern preoccupation with play and playfulness found its way into Oberg's writing and presentations (Oberg, Scott, & Caplan, 1996). As Antoinette's work took up the question of subjectivity and its formation, she turned to her own subjectivity, particularly her relations to self and other: other students (Oberg & Artz, 1992; Oberg & Underwood, 1992), as well as, kin; her sisters (Oberg et al, 1993) and her father (Oberg & Haegert, 2000; Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Hurren, Leggo & Oberg, 2002).

Antoinette has given over thirty workshops to professional, academic and political groups on topics ranging from discipline-based curriculum issues, student teacher supervision, graduate student supervision, qualitative research (for e.g. Oberg, 1985d), ethics in teaching university teaching (for e.g., Oberg & Cassels, 1997), and ethics in teaching and conducting human research (for e.g., Oberg, 2003a; 2003b).

In keeping with her own shifting research interests, her recent workshops have focused on arts-based educational research including performance as dissemination (Oberg & Graham, 2003).

For the past quarter century, Antoinette Oberg has had significant influence on school-based practices, particularly in British Columbia. Her views on curriculum theory and practice have reached a wide audience through professional consultation with individual school staffs, entire school districts, professional groups such as British Columbia Teachers Federation, BC Primary Teachers Association, the B.C. Principals and Vice-Principals, and bodies responsible for educational governance such as the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents, the B.C. School Trustees Association, and the Ministry of Education (particularly during the mid-1980s and the preparation of *A Legacy for Learners: Report of the Royal Commission on Education* submitted by Commissioner Barry Q. Sullivan on 15 July 1988, of which Antoinette Oberg was a part).

For the last two decades, Antoinette's publications have concerned themselves with explicating her own practice mentoring graduate students (educators) in conducting ethical, quality research that is significant for the researcher and for education generally. Specifically she has been interested in how to best guide and accompany beginning researchers as they take up questions of significance to themselves, in ways that are both ethical and congruent with the substantive nature of the inquiry (Oberg, 1989; Oberg et al., 2004). Antoinette's research has been paying attention to, and tracking, what she does with graduate students in these engagements, and the effect of her work on the students and on herself. These published papers, and the conference presentations from which they were derived, were more often than not, constructed as dialogues where the result, if not the aim, was that Antoinette herself did not remain what she was. In that sense, each publication was both an inquiry and a transformation in the sense that Gadamer (1975) intended when he wrote:

To reach an understanding with one's partner in a dialogue is not merely a matter of total self-expression and the successful assertion of one's point of view, but a transformation into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were. (p. 341)

Over the past three decades, Antoinette has given over sixty conference presentations; almost half of which have been done with graduate students and colleagues (some of whom were former graduate students). Antoinette's intention with these presentations is a particularly Gadamerian enterprise. First with the students and colleagues with whom she presents, there are on-going dialogues about what might constitute the public sessions, both in content and in process. These dialogues have taken place over a series of weeks, and even months, prior

to the session. In one particular collaborative effort (Chambers, et al, 1996), Antoinette and a group of her students met regularly in Victoria and stayed in touch with me through email. More than once—to facilitate a real-time planning session mediated by telephone—we held conference calls, me in the warmth of my University of Lethbridge office, and the Victoria group piled into someone's car with a 12-volt speaker phone (a piece of equipment from Antoinette's live-aboard boat). Periodically, the Victoria gang had to turn on the car engine to warm up the vehicle so we could continue the conversation.

Antoinette's interest in planning conference sessions (or published articles) is not about "total self-expression" or "successful assertion of her own point of view." Rather Antoinette's aim appears to be congruent with Gadamer's; to organize an event whereby the audience has an authentic opportunity to take up the very topics and questions with which she is grappling, so that both presenters/writers and audience may enter into "a communion in which they do not remain what they were."

As Antoinette Oberg says, in her paper in this issue of *JCACS*, such an approach is risky. While often she succeeds, at least on one occasion, the success was minimal. At a session entitled "Beyond Reflection as Technique: What Becomes Topical," Antoinette and I (1992) set out to conduct a spontaneous dialogue about our teaching in front a CACS/CSSE audience. The speaker before us was particularly well known, and the session had drawn a very large audience. In preparing ourselves for the session Antoinette and I had written piles of notes and an outline, but our aim was to conduct a live, non-scripted, example of how we had been engaging one another dialogically about teaching. When we were to begin, I was the first to speak. Then, as we had planned, Antoinette interrupted me to interject questions (difficult, probing questions) as well as incisive and insightful comments. The audience grew increasingly uncomfortable as they interpreted Antoinette's actions as rude and uncalled for interruptions of the speaker. And I became flustered under the gaze of a large uncomprehending, and I sensed increasingly skeptical, audience. Rather than responding to Antoinette, as I would have done in one of our private dialogues, I became intellectually immobilized and linguistically paralyzed. I feared that the audience was concluding that while Antoinette was abrogating all proper conference propriety, I was losing whatever command of the English language and rational thought I may have possessed. I was never so happy to have a conference session over. At the wine and cheese reception later than afternoon, a colleague walked up to me and said, in reference to the session, "What the f*** was that?" That session illustrated (all too painfully for me, although Antoinette seemed quite unfazed) the difficulties of breaching the norms of academic discourse and the impossibility and perhaps undesirability of improvising the dialogic work that we engaged in with our students, and with each other, in front

of an audience.

In the last decade, Antoinette has taken an autobiographical turn in elucidating her practice, and her thinking about that practice and its effects on her students, herself and on institutional life generally. In her most recent conference sessions and publications, Antoinette renders her work poetically or narratively, as well as theoretically, and she joins with co-presenters to perform texts in a fashion similar to a reader's theatre. Antoinette's public presentations continue to resist expectations to frame her inquiry in third person objective voice, intentionality obscured with passive voice and opaque nominalizations. I see her continuing to frame her inquiry in the first person and the active voice, and continuing to seek the dialogical and the pedagogic in her public work.

An Organic Intellectual...

Gramsci saw the role of the intellectual as a crucial one in the context of creating a counter hegemony. He identified two types of intellectuals - traditional and organic. Traditional intellectuals are those who *do* regard themselves as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group and are regarded as such by the population at large. They *seem* autonomous and independent. The second is the organic intellectual who grows with the dominant social class. Gramsci wrote, "there is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded" and that everyone, outside their particular professional activity, "carries on some form of intellectual activity... participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought". Gramsci wrote that, "The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence ... but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator..." [Gramsci, 1971 p.10 cited in Burke, 2004]

Antoinette Oberg's publications, and other forms of public intellectual work, tell only a part of the story. As mentioned above, much of Antoinette's intellectual work has grown organically from her relations with others—students, colleagues and other intellectuals, as well as friends and family—and has arisen in response to the practical matters of everyday living and the difficulties of moral conduct in the context of the hegemony of institutional life.

Perhaps one of Antoinette Oberg's most important contributions to curriculum studies happened organically, its origins in her institutional life. Soon after her arrival at the University of Victoria in the mid-1970s, Antoinette designed and developed the Curriculum Studies Graduate Program at the University of Victoria. The core of this program focuses on curriculum studies as a field, offering such traditionally labeled courses as curriculum foundations, development, implementation and evaluation, along with qualitative research. In the early 1990s she re-

framed Qualitative Research as Interpretive Inquiry and began using the other core courses as a place where students encountered diverse theoretical perspectives (such as feminism, ideology critique, phenomenological and hermeneutical critique, postmodernism, post-structuralism, Foucauldian analysis, discourse analysis, quantum physics, fractal theory, autobiography, and narrative theory). Students admitted to this general curriculum program developed their expertise in particular curricular topics, such school-subject disciplines, through electives in other departments. Thus the Curriculum Studies Program provided a programmatic shell within which graduate students from a broad range of educational settings (schools, colleges, hospitals, government, museums, community-based organizations and private practices) with varied practical interests (such as teaching, administering, healing, creating, performing, counseling, writing, supervising, storying, transforming, and evaluating) could find an institutional home where they could conduct their self-directed, often interdisciplinary, inquiries.

The framework of this program was such that being the only faculty member in Curriculum Studies, during the 1970s, 1980s and much of the 1990s, Antoinette could offer the core of the program herself, while students developed topic-specific background through electives courses from other departments, and were assigned supervisors, from those other departments, whose interests and expertise matched the student's own. At Antoinette Oberg's initiative and design, the Curriculum Studies graduate program initially offered options for both full and part-time M.Ed. students. But in the 1980s, the program expanded to include a Master of Arts (in 1982) and doctoral studies (in 1989) through special arrangement. With Antoinette Oberg as my supervisor, I was the first student to complete a doctorate in Curriculum Studies at University of Victoria.

Antoinette Oberg developed and operated an extensive summer school program in Curriculum Studies. For three decades, the University of Victoria offered a wide range of curriculum courses and electives over the seven-and-one-half week summer session. This meant that part-time masters students could complete their coursework in three summers, a move that extended access to graduate studies in curriculum to educators throughout British Columbia, and as far away as the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the Prairie provinces, all the way to eastern Canada.

In the early 1980s, the framework of Curriculum Studies at the University of Victoria was influential in the design of graduate programs at smaller institutions like The University of Lethbridge, where faculty numbers and student enrolment were initially low. Since that time, based upon her lengthy history in the delivery of quality graduate study for educators, Antoinette Oberg has been called upon—either individually or as part of a team—to provide external evaluation of graduate programs at

Nipissing, ON (1990; 1995); Brandon, Manitoba (1992); the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta (2001,) and the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia (2004).

Antoinette Oberg has forged extensive and long-standing professional, academic and research relationships through her membership in learned and professional societies: such as the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction; Australian Curriculum Studies Association; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; American Educational Research Association; Phi Delta Kappa; Canadian Society for Hermeneutics and Postmodern Thought; and CSSE (Canadian Society for the Study of Education) where she served on the executive in 1978-79. The Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies was the learned society where Antoinette Oberg made her most extensive and sustained service contribution. In the mid 1970s, she served as Executive Assistant for the organization of which she would later be Secretary-Treasurer for two years, 1976-78; and then President the following year; and past-President the year after than. She has retained membership in many curriculum studies organizations to the present, serving in various capacities such as a member of the AERA Lifetime Achievement Awards Committee for Division B (Curriculum Studies) in 2000, and chair of the committee the following year.

Through such memberships and service contributions, as well as conference attendance, Antoinette Oberg has become a part of a large network of diverse scholars who provide rich contributions to the curriculum field. This network has benefited the graduate students and faculty at the University of Victoria immensely. Through these collegial relations, Antoinette has been able to arrange adjunct professorships for such eminent scholars as William Pinar and William Doll (Louisiana State University), Noel Gough and Annett Gough (Deakin University, Australia), and Ted Aoki (Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta) all of who have taught courses and sat on graduate supervisory committees at the University of Victoria. Antoinette attracted to the Curriculum Studies summer program many national curriculum scholars such as Magda Lewis (Queen's University), Lous Heshius (York University), David Jardine (University of Calgary), David Smith and Max van Manen (University of Alberta), Jacques Daignault (University of Quebec at Rimouski), and international curriculum scholars such as James Macdonald (University of North Carolina at Greensboro before his death), Dwayne Huebner (Professor Emeritus, Yale School of Theology), William Schubert (University of Illinois at Chicago), William Reid (Visiting Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Texas at Austin) Tom Barone (Arizona State University), and Gail McCutcheon (Ohio State University). The regular participation of scholars such as these endowed the Curriculum Studies program and its summer school

offerings with a national and an international reputation as an innovative, interdisciplinary and high quality graduate program. Just as Ted Aoki, while Chair of the Department of Secondary Education, made things happen at the University of Alberta, Antoinette Oberg, as Coordinator of the Curriculum Studies program, made things happen at the University of Victoria and for UVIC students. Antoinette took full advantage of the visiting scholars she brought in, and often much of her summer was taken up hosting and moderating research forums on topics such as “ethics and autobiography” (in 1999 with Bill Pinar, Bill Doll, Petra Munro) and “narrative inquiry” (in 2003 with Noel Gough, Peter Cole and Pat O’Riley). Besides the beauty and climate of Victoria and the high caliber of students in the graduate program, it was Antoinette’s grace as a host that made summer school a special experience for both students and faculty. Antoinette would personally introduce each visiting scholar to their students on the first day of class; she held barbeques for students and faculty; and she hosted dinner parties for visiting faculty. Over the years, Antoinette also organized and hosted visits from curriculum scholars such as Bill Pinar, Terry Carson, and Deborah Britzman, and Visiting Landsdowne Scholars such as Decker Walker (Stanford University, CA) in 1983, and Tom Barone (Arizona State University) in 2000.

One of Antoinette’s great gifts, and contribution to curriculum studies in Canada, has been her willingness and ability to create networks of people, who once together make things happen. While the communities themselves are organic, Antoinette’s behind-the-scenes organization and efficiency is crucial to both their emergence and their maintenance. What makes this a great gift, I believe, is her moral conduct. Antoinette does not weave these human webs, nor organize these happenings for personal gain.

When acting morally such questions [about personal gain], purely and simply, are not asked. If they are, the action becomes something other than moral. You can ‘rationalize,’ with benefit, many of your actions, but you cannot rationalize moral acts without emptying them of their moral content. (Bauman, p viii).

It is very difficult to speak about someone’s life, ideas and contributions to a field as if that person were a fixed, static entity. Antoinette Oberg has had several reiterations and incarnations as teacher, researcher, intellectual and university administrator or perhaps *animatrix*. The difficulty with the above summary is that the events seem eventless, her life appears a seamless garment, the line drawn, as Grumet (1988) wrote, between the public and private is invisible, but it is not so. This summary omits the many personal, as well as, professional events and people—a few of which I know, and most of which I do not— that have significantly

affected Antoinette's institutional life and her inquiry. What is omitted is her resistance to the increasing bureaucratization of schools, universities, and all forms of institutional life (as a response to requirements that they maintain legitimacy in a time when the authority of public educational institutions has been, and continues to be, significantly reduced). What is omitted is Antoinette's continued work in the face of such bureaucratization and her strategic refusal to do (overt) battle against the system. I have left out the story of how Antoinette Oberg has continually set her own agenda, and then sought creative ways to enact that agenda without squandering her energy by directly confronting those who would oppose it or resist it.

Although Antoinette's most recent public work is autobiographical and narrative in character, it ironically reveals very little (at least to me) about the particularity of those things that shape her intellectual and institutional life. Antoinette's approach of selecting carefully what to reveal in public stands in stark contrast to other women academics, such as Laurel Richardson, who have documented for public consumption and critique, in peer-reviewed journals, their move away from the mainstream to the margins of the academy, and the effects on their personal and institutional lives—their shift from traditional public intellectuals to more organic ones.

Reminiscent of the title of the first novel of Canadian writer, Anne Michaels, Antoinette Oberg describes her writings as "fugitive pieces" (personal communication). An inveterate journal writer, in the vein of Anais Nin or Simone De Beauvoir, Antoinette's oeuvre of written work is comprised mostly of electronic and hand written journals, memos, addresses, informal talks, performances with students, impromptu notes to varied audiences including to graduate classes, lectures and extensive email correspondences. The forms of the writing include reflections, meditations, narratives, vignettes, anecdotes, poems, haiku, drawings, and complex, shifting critical analyses. The topic of this work is what Antoinette is thinking and doing, what is happening in the moment, and the sense that she makes of it. For this to be the major body of work for an academic is unconventional. To assess Antoinette's contribution, and to interpret the significance of her presence in curriculum studies, in Canada in particular, would require access to all of those fugitive pieces and an intensive and extended dialogue with their author. And even then...

Without such purview, one must follow a faint and fragmented, and perhaps cryptic trail through the public domain to ascertain the significant shifts in Antoinette's intellectual work, the catalysts for those shifts, and their impact on the field. The trail is there but following it, and interpreting it, reminds me more of travelling by snowmobile on those old Dene or Cree trails—through the boreal forest, thousands of years old, on a route that seems to follow an ancient compass and life rhythm—than cruising the bibliographic superhighway of academic bios

which make carousing through a particular individual's public record via the Internet a relatively easy task. In her most recent writing on her teaching, research and institutional life, Antoinette (Oberg et al., 2004) likens herself to a lone wolf, roaming the borderlands tracking "the unfolding/ of the pattern/ of my relationships/ in the university/ as teacher/ and researcher" (p. 36). I have followed Antoinette tracks but I am not sure that I have found her, nor that it was her tracks, or her tracks alone, that I followed; perhaps sometimes I have confused her tracks with my own. But perhaps the story, the Antoinette Oberg that I narrate here, is more than was previously known and that may be helpful to others who search. But it also possible that in the future, Antoinette Oberg (2004) will be less elusive, she will sing and tell the story, in public, that needs to be told.

My new stories tell
of a way of living
that has become a way of being
with more harmony
and less resistance,
with less elusiveness,
more singing.

In conclusion, it is worth remembering that many real and important teachers, from time past, and from societies outside the Western literary and scholarly tradition, leave little or no paper trail. It may be that Antoinette Oberg's contribution to curriculum studies in Canada is more about her presence as a living, evolving body than as a body of texts. And it may be that telling the story of Antoinette Oberg and her intellectual work, and assessing her contribution to curriculum studies in Canada, is a task left to others.

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