

# A COMMON COUNTENANCE?

## PART III

Between 1891 and 1921, Canada's population increased by about four million, or more than 80 percent; most new residents arrived from Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Despite such strong British ties, many Canadians worried about American "cultural penetration," indicated "by the fact that in 1907 a single American weekly newspaper sold more copies in Canada than all domestic periodicals combined."<sup>2</sup> Americanization was not the only concern of the period: tensions between Eastern and Western Canada, "conflict between capital and labor" as well as "discontent among farmers became acute problems."<sup>3</sup> Catholic-Protestant tensions overlapped with French-English ones,<sup>4</sup> tensions that spilled over into the schools, themselves assigned the challenge of "Canadianization," e.g. assimilating immigrants to "Anglo-Celtic institutions," instilling what Tomkins terms "Anglo-conformism," which, he thinks peaked during World War I, an event that "proved to be a major catalyst of Canadian nationalism and of further industrialization, urbanization and other social change."<sup>5</sup>

To reduce dependence on U.S. child health and welfare expertise,<sup>6</sup> in 1920 Dr. Helen MacMurchy, a "fervent nationalist and first chief of the new federal Division of Child Welfare, set about preparing materials that emphasized the rearing of the Canadian child by Canadian parents in the Canadian home in the Canadian way."<sup>7</sup> In 1921 appeared the first edition of *The Canadian Mother's Book*, a free-of-charge practical guide covering "every major aspect of motherhood and child rearing which, over the next sixty years, achieved a distribution of more than six million copies in both official languages and in several other languages as well."<sup>8</sup> Around this time, Tomkins reports, "mental health was finding a place on the agenda of school reformers, to the consternation of some conservatives."<sup>9</sup> While these "more scientific approach[es] to child-rearing "greatly enhanced infant survival," they also threatened the imposition of a "systematic, regimented scientific approach, exemplified by breast feeding at set times, ... turning the infant, as both advocates and critics noted, into a 'little machine'."<sup>10</sup> This metaphor replaced the earlier "Froebelian image of the child as flower or plant."<sup>11</sup> Forty years on – in 1961 – an analysis of various editions of *The Canadian Mother's Book* found that this "second trend in child rearing, reflected in an increasing emphasis on psychological security and greater personal happiness for the child" also meant that "parenthood became more self-conscious and uncertain."<sup>12</sup> Science, it seems, did not provide the surety it promised, at least when it was substituted for feeling and instinct in parenting.

The range of science's soon extended from childhood to parenthood to pedagogy and, later, curriculum. Scientists sought to study – and thereby intervene in – rapidly shifting social conditions "through empirical methods which foreshadowed

modern social science with its emphasis on technique and ‘value free’ scholarship.”<sup>13</sup> Scientists saw “pedagogy as rational science,” whereas “realists saw it as experimental,”<sup>14</sup> a dubious distinction, as certainly science is experimental. Tomkins contrasts both realists and experimentalists with “idealists,” for whom “education was an expression of primary values rather than a means to an end; realists emphasized means,” adding: “Idealists tended to see schooling as educative, pursuing intrinsic objectives that promoted mental development, while realists prized extrinsic socializing objects.”<sup>15</sup> (Again the distinction seems dubious, as “mental development” is surely social, and socialization cannot occur without mental development.) Tomkins suggests “that both groups shared a good deal of typically Canadian progressive conservatism in educational matters.”<sup>16</sup> Still working with these distinctions Tomkins asserts that “rational pedagogy made the curriculum rather than the student the first consideration in planning the course of study,” while “Hegelians” (e.g. Idealists) posited the “chief goal of the curriculum” as the “transform[ation of] children into civilized human beings by having them study and master subjects representative of their cultural heritage.”<sup>17</sup> And heritage was felt to be imperiled.

“After 1892,” Tomkins summarizes, “as Canadian intellectuals sought new ways of explaining nature and society and criticized the evils of a business civilization, their educational concerns focused on the perceived erosion of moral and academic standards in a changing curriculum.”<sup>18</sup> That shared enemy – the “evils of a business civilization” – appears to bring together what Tomkins had (in that previous paragraph) kept apart. After emphasizing that “philosophical idealists exalted pastoralism, classical education, Christian ethics, and a cultural imperialism that assumed the moral superiority of British values,” he then asserts: “Idealists continued to pin their faith on a rational pedagogy, which emphasized the cultivation of morality and character.”<sup>19</sup> In the preceding paragraph, recall that “rational pedagogy” was aligned with science, not with philosophical Idealism, the latter positioning the teacher as “a moral tutor purveying a curriculum based on eternal moral principles and absolute standards of culture.”<sup>20</sup> Perhaps the distinction is not as sharp as Tomkins appeared to draw; perhaps some saw the juxtaposition of the two justified, as a “perusal of requirements, reading lists and examinations for degrees in pedagogy at the University of Toronto reveals the important place according philosophy and psychology in advanced educational studies at the time.”<sup>21</sup> Herbartianism<sup>22</sup> – the belief that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny - found its way onto such examinations, providing “evidence of the attention that some Canadian educators were giving to another form of rational pedagogy,” a fact he attributes to “the influence of American educators,”<sup>23</sup> adding: “Unlike their American counterparts, few Canadian educators appear to have undertaken any sustained study of Herbartian theories.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, Tomkins tells us later that: “By 1915, Ontario was producing its own teachers’ manuals which had a strong Herbartian flavor.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, “Idealist educational theory, with its emphasis on the deliberate transmission of a coherent body of knowledge and belief, may help to explain

the limited influence in Canada of John Dewey's experimentalist ideas,"<sup>26</sup> an assertion that seems overstated given Tomkins' statement two pages later (reported in the next paragraph) and Christou's subsequent historical research.<sup>27</sup>

"Although the formalism and moralism of rational science had obvious appeal for Canadian educators," Tomkins writes, "the experimental ideas of William James, G. Stanley Hall, John Dewey and other American educators attracted increasing attention."<sup>28</sup> Hall promoted child study in Canada through a series of lectures delivered in Toronto in 1894; a year later a child study section was established in the Ontario Educational Association.<sup>29</sup> Frederick Tracy, Hall's ex-student and professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto, published a work on adolescent psychology; Tracy and other Canadian educators were also acknowledging John Dewey for his leadership in the scientific child study movement. Dewey's thinking had been circulating in Canada as early as 1889 when J. A. McLellan of the Ontario Normal School "adapted and published" Dewey's *Applied Psychology*; in 1895 the two men co-authored *The Psychology of Number*.<sup>30</sup> "For Dewey," Tomkins summarizes:

No studies were intrinsically endowed with liberating or cultural powers per se, for any subject, according to how it was taught and learned, could have cultural value. Dewey's response to Spencer's question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" was that knowledge was essentially social. Like Hall, Dewey thought that education must be transformed to meet the needs of a new urban industrial society and to enable the school to assume the educative functions of traditional agrarian life. These ideas owed much to the work of Francis W. Parker, whose work was already known in Canada.<sup>31</sup>

While both Dewey and Hall can be cast as progressive, for serious students of their work their differences appear more striking than their similarities.

Tomkins continues his discussion of Dewey – apparently unmindful of his contradictory statements concerning his influence in Canada – by informing us that "quite apart from his collaboration with McLellan, Dewey seems to have been well known in Canada, apparently having made his first visit in 1901 when he spoke in St. Thomas, Ontario, on 'Education and Everyday Experience,'" Tomkins resolving the contradiction by asserting that Dewey's ideas apparently "had little practical impact before the progressive period of the 1930s, and even then their effect was limited."<sup>32</sup> Again Tomkins qualifies and provides detail: "Among Canadian educators, J. W. Robertson and Loran de Wolfe in Nova Scotia may have come closest to an intuitive grasp of Deweyan theory, and agricultural education may have been, at its best, the most successful application of Dewey's ideas before 1920."<sup>33</sup> Then Tomkins turns to William James, "another American theorist, [who] advocated scientific psychology as a theoretical guide to school practice. His *Talks to Teachers* became widely used in Canadian normal schools."<sup>34</sup> But "more influential in Canada than either Dewey or James was Edward Lee Thorndike" whose, in Tomkins' characterization, "view of education as a scientific means of social improvement marked him as a true progressive

even as his social philosophy marked him as a conservative.”<sup>35</sup> That combination was “consistent with a Canadian educational tradition that could be traced to Ryerson’s time.”<sup>36</sup> Even so, “Canadian educators proved typically cautious in abandoning the old psychology and were slow to broaden the curriculum, especially at the high school level, according to the dictates of Thorndike’s findings.”<sup>37</sup>

What did appeal to Canadian teachers, Tomkins tells us, was Thorndike’s “pioneer studies of individual differences and his related work on human intelligence, mental testing, classroom grouping and retardation.”<sup>38</sup> Canada’s “leading exponent of experimentalism and testing” was the University of Toronto’s Peter Sandiford, who had done his doctorate under Thorndike at Columbia in 1910.<sup>39</sup> Tomkins then cites C. K. Clarke, a psychiatrist who made one of the earliest uses of intelligence tests. Both he and Sandiford were closely associated with the mental hygiene movement.<sup>40</sup> Less influential in Canada than in the U.S. was the school survey movement.<sup>41</sup> Like other Canadian educators, J. H. Putnam perceived no contradiction in putting social efficiency methods in service to “traditional curriculum goals,” ignoring “the fact that, in basing their curricula on traditional textbook subject matter, Canadian educators also made the course of the study the deciding factor,” adding: “Their past-oriented curricula were no more child-centered than the adult-centered, future-oriented school program advocated by American pedagogical scientists such as Franklin W. Bobbitt.”<sup>42</sup>

A number of “new initiatives” were promoted by or through various national voluntary organizations; Tomkins cites the Dominion Educational Association, formed in 1892.<sup>43</sup> The Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, formed in 1910, appears to have been a governmental organization, given that its establishment occurred “with the unanimous concurrence of the provinces,” if located “within Ottawa’s jurisdiction because vocational education was ‘a matter of economics rather than scholarship’.”<sup>44</sup> The Commission’s chair, J.W. Robertson, became principal of “Macdonald College of McGill University, a new institution designed for instruction in the three ‘fundamental mothering occupations’ of farming, home-making and teaching.”<sup>45</sup> In addition to promoting vocational curricula, Robertson also urged that curricular attention be accorded to health, to foster “the harmonious growth of the powers of body, mind and spirit,” the training of the senses, the formation of “habits of obedience, courtesy diligence and thoroughness,” e.g. the inculcation of high ideals and proper standards of conduct and character.<sup>46</sup> These aims anticipated several of those that would later be articulated in the United States as the “cardinal principles of education,” enunciated in 1918 by the National Education Association’s Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education.<sup>47</sup>

Tomkins returns to immigration, in particular its effects upon the number of children in school, noting that “between the 1891 and 1921 censuses, total enrollments doubled.”<sup>48</sup> A corresponding 250 per cent increase in the number of teachers actually reduced teacher-pupil ratio,<sup>49</sup> although by how much Tomkins doesn’t say. Given that by 1918 all provinces but Québec had compulsory attendance laws leaves one

wondering exactly how many students teachers taught each year. Apparently attendance laws were observed, as Tomkins tells us there was, during this period, “a sharp decline in illiteracy,”<sup>50</sup> adding that non-British<sup>51</sup> immigrants suffered a “significantly higher degree of illiteracy,” too often attributed by British-born immigrants to “race.”<sup>52</sup> Indeed, race became considered “the strongest factor in illiteracy in Canada,”<sup>53</sup> that fantasy circulating despite the 1897-1898 findings by the Québec scholar Léon Gérin<sup>54</sup> – “one of the founding fathers of Canadian sociology” - who associated illiteracy to cultural and familial factors rather than to “race.”<sup>55</sup>

The apparent ascendancy of progressivism – and the decline of mental discipline as rationale for curriculum content and organization – is evident in a recommendation made in 1913 by the Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education: “The work of the school day should gradually be arranged less and less on subjects as such, and more and more on occupations, projects and interests [forming] ... a centre for the correlated study of ... reading, composition, number work, writing and drawing.”<sup>56</sup> Two years earlier the redoubtable Vincent Massey<sup>57</sup> had proclaimed that “manual training has become a fetish in our primary education.... It is doubtful if the manufacture of hat-racks and towel-rollers has much more bearing on the average man’s life than a course in history.”<sup>58</sup> As important as Massey would become to Canadian cultural and educational life, his caution then was evidently ignored as the curriculum became increasingly differentiated. “The specific curriculum innovations of the New Education,” Tomkins explains, “took the form of various new subjects, of which manual training, domestic science, agriculture (including “nature study”) and health and physical education were the most important.”<sup>59</sup> Even “long established but peripheral subjects such as art and music achieved new status or assumed new forms,” Tomkins continues, and even “temperance education, one of the less successful innovations, was associated variously with health, domestic science and general science.”<sup>60</sup>

Tomkins tells us that “primary education” received sustained attention, enabling it to enjoy “the most longstanding improvement,” and giving “new impetus to the kindergarten movement.”<sup>61</sup> These “overlapping” elements of the new curriculum were harnessed to educate “the whole child,” articulated by J. W. Robertson in a 1913 report, then recast in 1915 in an “official Ontario teachers’ manual” as “Education for Social Efficiency.”<sup>62</sup> “Too often,” Tomkins continues, “manual training, domestic science and other innovations were merely tacked on to an overcrowded curriculum, despite the intent of reformers who viewed them less as subject than as sources of projects and activities through which the three Rs could be enriched and correlated in order to make learning more interesting and efficient, more ‘educative’.”<sup>63</sup> There was, evidently, no overcrowding of the curriculum when “schools lacked manual training rooms and gymnasia.”<sup>64</sup> Even though urban schools lacked land, Tomkins tells us that “more success was achieved in agricultural education.”<sup>65</sup> While these developments were underway and influenced by curriculum revision in the U.S., in Anglophone Canada



British antecedents and terms took precedence.<sup>66</sup> For example, William Heard Kilpatrick's "project method" became, in Canada, "enterprise education."<sup>67</sup>

As well as sketching the "big picture," you'll note that Tomkins also attends to specific subjects, telling us that "manual training" took time to reach even "a rough consensus" concerning its contents: "By 1910, the term referred essentially to work with wood and metal and was more clearly differentiated from domestic science."<sup>68</sup> (Twenty years later manual training would become "industrial arts," and "domestic science" morphed into "household science," later replaced by the term "home economics."<sup>69</sup>) Tomkins implies that "domestic science" appeared partly to provide girls something to do "while boys were in shop," but to "Adelaide Hoodless, a Hamilton homemaker who was the prime mover of domestic science, the objectives of the subject were clear," specified "in her pioneering textbook, *Public School Domestic Science* published in 1897."<sup>70</sup> The scope of the subject becomes clear when Tomkins quotes Hoodless defining the purpose of the subject being "to assist the pupil in acquiring knowledge of the fundamental principles of correct living."<sup>71</sup> Such knowledge was judged to be of most worth because the family was seen to be "in decline."<sup>72</sup>

Tomkins summarizes Hoodless' argument: it derived, he tells us, "from the perspective of what some modern scholars have called 'maternal feminism,'" namely that "with the loss of the economic functions of the home, mothers had lost many opportunities to teach character building and related practical elements."<sup>73</sup> Hoodless thought "future mothers" and "servants" – for many the two categories fused - ought "apply scientific methods to household practices," if to support the "teaching of Christian morality and citizenship, the training of youthful character among the poor in the interests of "national thrift;" temperance, and the Canadianization of immigrant girls."<sup>74</sup> Tomkins reminds us that "it was blithely assumed that the poor generally were morally wanting, and [that] New Canadians especially were of doubtful loyalty. Domestic science was seen as a major means of remedying these defects."<sup>75</sup> The subject, Tomkins adds, "helped to diversify the curriculum and to make the classroom more socially relevant and less restrictive." He also adds that unlike "boys' manual training," domestic science became a university subject, something he thought "may have made it more relevant and lively, rescuing it from mere craft training."<sup>76</sup> Critics were concerned "that home economics would raise unrealistic expectations among working class girls by introducing them to foods and domestic equipment such as electric refrigerators beyond their station and pocketbooks as future wives and mothers."<sup>77</sup>

Next Tomkins returns to agriculture, a topic that "had long been taught perfunctorily as a bookish subject," a tradition "reformers" attempted to revise, wanting "to make it more active, vital and relevant."<sup>78</sup> One strategy was to spend time away from books, outside, not unlike "outdoor education" affirms today; Ontario, for instance, added gardening to its curriculum in 1904.<sup>79</sup> The topic was also taught in

British Columbia, Alberta, and Nova Scotia, all of these provinces adopting “texts, courses and manuals for the subject.”<sup>80</sup> Methods of instruction included “observation, active investigation and correlation of agriculture, geography and physiology, all aimed at ‘spiritualizing’ agriculture and building character.”<sup>81</sup> In Québec, where other subjects associated with the “New Education made limited impact,” agriculture - “inspired by fears of rural decline and influenced in part by the Macdonald-Robertson movement”<sup>82</sup> - was emphasized. Tomkins tells us that even a “few experimental urban gardens” were “established to teach city children to appreciate rural life,” and “teachers were exhorted to fill their pupils’ minds with the ‘poetic breeze of an earthy scent’ by using agricultural examples in arithmetic, grammar and other lessons.”<sup>83</sup> The number of “school gardens” in Québec increased from 188 in 1910 to 1468 in 1920.<sup>84</sup> Critics called these topics “frills,” insisting that “the curriculum should be restricted to the dispensing of knowledge, i.e., the three Rs and the teaching of theories.” As a result, nature study (as agriculture was often called) was frequently reduced to formalism, taught second hand from books without the use of real-life specimens.<sup>85</sup> “[C]reative educators” – Tomkins names Loran De Wolfe in Nova Scotia – were undeterred; De Wolfe taught “nature study as a basis for the initial development of elementary school science and general science.”<sup>86</sup>

Like other subjects in the expanded curriculum, physical education and health (hygiene), including temperance, encompassed a wide range of objectives and incorporated disparate topics.<sup>87</sup> Tomkins reminds that “physical education had had at least a perfunctory place in the curriculum before 1892 in the form of physical culture,” but “after that date physical training, to use the significant term that educators increasingly preferred, became compulsory in most provinces in the form of military drill and gymnastics for boys and calisthenics for girls, as the subject gradually became one of the three or four required elements of the Canadian curriculum.”<sup>88</sup> So-called “manly games” were introduced in Winnipeg around 1910 in order to promote “British manliness,”<sup>89</sup> underlining that “physical training encompassed discipline, moral and social self-control, military preparedness and patriotism, this last including the Canadianization of immigrant children.”<sup>90</sup> In the minds of many, so-called “manly games” constituted a “means of combating physical, mental and moral decline resulting from urban life and the debilitating influences of materialism.”<sup>91</sup> Even the “pre-eminent classicist at the University of Toronto” - Maurice Hutton<sup>92</sup> - regarded “drill as promoting law and order, punctuality, obedience, subordination and loyalty,” necessary “as an ‘offset to democracy and liberty’ and their abuses.”<sup>93</sup> Such “drill” – “conducted by male instructors” – also constituted a corrective to “the influence of female teachers on boys.”<sup>94</sup> In time “instructional certificates in physical training and military drill were adopted in every province as part of every teacher’s license.”<sup>95</sup> The subject “remained essentially a male preserve throughout the period, with the terms of female participation dictated and most controlled by male educators and doctors.”<sup>96</sup> Teachers

followed the prescribed *Syllabus for Physical Exercises for Schools*, a Canadian version of a British syllabus that was itself derived from a Swedish system of gymnastics.<sup>97</sup>

The teaching of temperance became incorporated into the health curriculum, its inclusion promoted by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) through its provincial and local branches.<sup>98</sup> Despite the organization's lobbying efforts, so-called Scientific Temperance Instruction (STI) was accorded "a low priority in most provincial curricula following the adoption of prohibition during World War I."<sup>99</sup> Tomkins reports that, "like the agricultural reformers, the temperance educators had a messianic faith in education."<sup>100</sup> He attributes the failure of that faith not to the fact that many like to drink but instead due to "poor" preparation, "inadequate textbooks" filled with "pictures of organs diseased by alcohol," what he terms "a negative approach."<sup>101</sup> Moreover, Tomkins judges the curriculum as "overcrowded," and "educators faced too many other pressing problems," resulting in "temperance education" being relocated from public to "Sunday schools and other child and youth groups."<sup>102</sup>

Sex education was subsumed in hygiene and physical education, although the subject found "little formal place in the curriculum."<sup>103</sup> So-called "purity lectures," later termed "eugenics lectures," were incorporated into the Ontario school curriculum by the WCTU in 1905, to be administered by the Ontario Department of Education in 1911.<sup>104</sup> These were "sex education" in sync with the masturbation panic pummeling North America and England at this time,<sup>105</sup> as these interventions aimed to alert young men to "the danger involved in young boys bleeding away the 'life fluid' from the 'male part'."<sup>106</sup> One lesson required all boys to repeat: "The more you use the penis muscle, the weaker it becomes; but the less you use the penis muscle the stronger it becomes."<sup>107</sup> Tomkins wonders if such lessons might have had the contrary effect, might have "interested young boys in masturbation for the first time in their lives."<sup>108</sup> Girls were spared such frank talk, instead suffering "veiled warnings against 'the secret indulgence' [that] found a place in hygiene textbooks for girls."<sup>109</sup> Contrary teachings also occurred: textbooks emphasized "bust development" in service to "cultivating sexual attractiveness," an acceptable aspect of female hygiene.<sup>110</sup> Such a curriculum may have been intended less for future wives than for future (probably male) bosses, as the increasing "need of business and industry for armies of girls in offices [also] led to the expansion of commercial education beyond bookkeeping to include typing, shorthand and office practice."<sup>111</sup> Tomkins adds that "before World War II, stenographers were often paid significantly better than teachers."<sup>112</sup>

Masturbation and breast size were hardly the only provocations of gendered curriculum controversy. Tomkins tells us that "arguments ... ranged from fears that academic study would impair girls' health or "defeminize" them to the stout defense of 'collegiate education for women' on the grounds that due to 'an essential unity of human nature' female capacities and needs differed from those of males less than was supposed."<sup>113</sup> While "most girls finishing high school who went on to further



education entered non-university programs in normal, nursing or commercial schools, by 1911-12 women made up one fifth of the university student body, a proportion that had increased twelvefold in thirty years.”<sup>114</sup>

Gender and sex controversies would seem to be confined to secondary-school curriculum, as “the child-centered nature of the elementary school – as contrasted with the subject-centered high school – together with the lesser need to be as responsive to the demands of the labor market and to those of higher educational institutions provided a greater degree of freedom.”<sup>115</sup> As a consequence, “both before and after 1920, the major efforts of curriculum reformers were directed to the elementary level, which was also probably where they achieved most of whatever success they had.”<sup>116</sup> Reformers argued that elementary school curriculum ought to be free from demands of the high school curriculum, “just as the latter must be freed of university domination.”<sup>117</sup>

Tomkins points out that “curriculum development” proceeded “by accretion,” and “the overcrowding of subjects exacerbated difficulties.”<sup>118</sup> The “traditional curriculum” continued its “hold,” evidenced by the fact that the 1915 elementary school course of study devoted an “average of 205 minutes daily to the three Rs.”<sup>119</sup> “Rarely,” Tomkins adds, “was the curriculum fitted to local conditions.”<sup>120</sup> Indeed, “the continuing belief in the formal discipline theory of studies,’ which, although discredited everywhere else, was adhered to in Canada ‘with mid-Victorian tenacity’.”<sup>121</sup> That’s not altogether true, as the “social efficiency” wing of progressivism appeared to be place, as “increasing attention was given to the more efficient teaching of the traditional curriculum after 1900.”<sup>122</sup> Tomkins cites James L. Hughes’ *Public School Methods*, “a comprehensive systematic manual for teaching based on scientific child study that devoted 123 detailed pages to a prescription for teaching reading.<sup>123</sup> Sixty-four pages were devoted to teaching language, including grammar, and other long passages “were provided for every major subject, together with prescriptions for every aspect of the school environment, of hygiene, discipline, morals, teaching methods (these stressing ‘mental powers’), school management and questioning.”<sup>124</sup> Any “earlier Froebelian child-centered rhetoric” had gone missing, as the “book illustrated the formalism that so often belied the theory of the New Education.”<sup>125</sup> Perhaps this “adherence to formalism was one reason why Ontario educators rejected Maria Montessori’s famous experimental curriculum in 1913,” although critics “agreed that her use of plants, animals and materials was praiseworthy in producing pupils avid to learn, but thought that her approach was too unstructured,” a judgment that would be reversed in the 1930s when Montessori’s would ideas become acceptable in Ontario.<sup>126</sup>

Also early in the new century was a “growing realization” that the “articulation between elementary and secondary” school curriculum needed improvement, treating “the curriculum as continuous,” that sentiment seemingly contradicted by an accompanying “effort to differentiate the high school curriculum,” and in “stressing the role of the high school as more than university preparation.”<sup>127</sup> Tomkins cites the

Committee of Ten, chaired by Charles Eliot, whose report recommended that “there should be no distinction between curricula of students preparing for college and those preparing for occupations,” setting the “terms of debate about the direction of American secondary education for the following generation and [which] became fairly well known in Canada.”<sup>128</sup> Well-known but evidently not influential, as the Committee’s “report had limited relevance in the Canadian milieu with its higher dropout rates and more selective high school population, its greater uniformity of curricula and college entrance requirements, its smaller number of local jurisdictions and universities and its more acute rural problem.”<sup>129</sup> Moreover, “Canadian educators did not share American concerns about a lack of school-university articulation,”<sup>130</sup> maybe because it seemed already articulated. (Evidently it was the elementary school curriculum that needed to be brought into alignment with the secondary school curriculum, implied in the first sentence of this paragraph.) Harvard’s “famous elective system” – also introduced by the University’s President Charles Eliot – encouraged “subject and course options at both the college and school levels; it, too, had little appeal in Canada,” as “Canadians were prepared to defend a prescribed curriculum on philosophic grounds.”<sup>131</sup>

Prescribed but not uncontested was curriculum uniformity, as requests for a broadened curriculum, a more practical orientation, increased enrollments, and the higher retention rate for girls than for boys led to “the great high school debate” in Ontario, starting in 1901 at a Queen’s University conference.<sup>132</sup> The debate spread well beyond that campus in Kingston, providing “a public forum where the different purposes of the high school were discussed and where for the first time in Ontario’s history ‘the traditional academic and literary subjects were ... forced to justify their entrenched positions’.”<sup>133</sup> Because “much of the debate centered on the place of Latin in the high school curriculum,” Tomkins tells us, “it was also referred to as the Latin debate.”<sup>134</sup> Despite debate, “Latin retained its high place in the high school curriculum everywhere for several more decades.”<sup>135</sup> Even “as late as World War II nearly all pupils in Grade 12 were enrolled in the subject,” although outside Ontario “Latin was much less popular.”<sup>136</sup> Perhaps that was due, in part, to an inadequate number of competent Latin teachers, a speculation that occurs to me when I read Tomkins write “that the most intellectually demanding courses were often assigned to the least qualified teachers,” adding: “Anyone could be assigned to teach mathematics, for example, while manual training could only be entrusted to the teacher with special knowledge and skill.”<sup>137</sup>

Continuing “university control” of secondary-school curriculum was evidenced by the “continuing predominance of Latin and, as noted earlier, in the increasing control of examination systems by higher institutions.”<sup>138</sup> Curricular “conservatism” would seem to be prompted as well by “continuing criticisms of declining high school standards and in nostalgia for past achievements,”<sup>139</sup> occurring as early as 1903 when John Seath reported that “university people” began to ask: “What is the matter with

the high school? We are all the time getting matriculants ignorant of the elements of English.”<sup>140</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly public-school people did not always share this sentiment: Thomas Kirkconnell, a headmaster in eastern Ontario, judged the secondary-school curriculum as “too rigid in aim and method and too dominated by external requirements [for it] to meet the needs of the majority who did not go beyond secondary school.”<sup>141</sup> Kirkconnell opposed “the Prussian system” that Ryerson had imposed,” arguing instead that the “high school should classify pupils according to their abilities, training the majority for future employment with the scholastic minority ‘winnowed out’ and prepared for university.”<sup>142</sup> But for many even high-school graduation was out-of-reach. In 1913, Tomkins reports, “only 8 percent of Nova Scotia’s students were enrolled in high school grades, half of them in the lowest one, Grade 9,” and “as late as 1940 more than 80 percent of the province’s schools offering high school work were one-room institutions.”<sup>143</sup>

Recall that the social efficiency conception of curriculum decreed productivity and efficiency in all aspects of social life. Predictably, then, labour and business people promoted non-academic subjects, a focus that, Tomkins tells us, also appealed to “educators concerned with making the curriculum more relevant to an expanding high school population.”<sup>144</sup> While vocational enrollments were not as high in the United States, interest there was nonetheless strong, and, Tomkins reports, the “American manual training movement helped to redefine the concept of equality of educational opportunity.”<sup>145</sup> Students were routed into school curricula structured by “predicted job roles,” routing often aligning with “their social class backgrounds.”<sup>146</sup> “Such channeling and the ability grouping which accompanied it,” Tomkins explains, “were made possible by scientific testing and guidance, two interrelated developments that gained impetus from the vocational movement.”<sup>147</sup> Ability grouping and vocationalism meant curriculum differentiation.<sup>148</sup>

In Canada, these developments were “less widespread,”<sup>149</sup> but present nonetheless. Albert Leake and John Seath both assumed a positive correlation between social class and academic ability, as few students, they felt, had “the ability to complete a regular secondary education.”<sup>150</sup> Tomkins attributes their view to “their British background.”<sup>151</sup> “[P]ossibly the best example of a Canadian social efficiency educator, Albert Leake argued that education should be placed “on a purely business basis so that the greatest possible return both in a material and moral sense may be secured from the investment.”<sup>152</sup> In contrast to most of their American social-efficiency colleagues, both Seath and Leake argued that “vocational students should be educated in separate specialized secondary schools, with curricular retaining, however, a strong academic emphasis.”<sup>153</sup> Tomkins judges this “an elitist perspective that was heavily influenced by British attitudes,” the upshot of which was to rationalize Canadian educators to support “separate types of secondary education,” in certain areas even “in separate institutions,” a “policy was facilitated by a more centralized system than that

of the U.S.”<sup>154</sup> Despite such curriculum differentiation, by 1920s “de facto national curricula were already emerging” in both secondary schools and universities.<sup>155</sup>

The “vocalization” of university curricula, Tomkins suggests, “probably contributed to sense of national community during an era of expansion as engineers, agricultural scientists and other professionals moved among the provinces and contributed to a growing economy.”<sup>156</sup>

While businesspeople pressed for such vocational curricula, “not all were as hostile to traditional learning as Stephen Leacock and some other academic critics implied,” although not only businesspeople complained “that too much time was wasted in the indiscriminate study of algebra and mathematics and the dead languages.”<sup>157</sup> In Canada the so-called “self-made man or woman could be transformed by liberal studies into a less bumptious and more humane person with a mental discipline that would also contribute to commercial success.”<sup>158</sup> Tomkins continues: “Similar concerns were expressed in Québec,”<sup>159</sup> and secondary-school curriculum there was “at least as practical or vocational as that in English Canada,” with “one third of the students registered in the classical college were in the commercial course.”<sup>160</sup> Tomkins finds it ironic that “Quebec Protestant education was no less classical and non-scientific in its own way, and thus resembled the stereotype of Roman Catholic education.”<sup>161</sup> He characterizes “curriculum policy in Québec, muted by the overwhelming, monolithic influence of the church,” and “paralleled by moralistic, conservative Anglophone Protestant attitudes in other provinces.”<sup>162</sup> It would seem, Tomkins concludes that “on both sides of the two solitudes, business success depended less on education than on experience.”<sup>163</sup> Is that the case in teacher education?

## REFERENCES

- Bederman, Gail. 1995. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bobbitt, Franklin. 1918. *The Curriculum*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Christou, Theodore Michael. 2012. *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario's Public Schools, 1919-1942*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Jay, Martin. 2022. *Genesis and Validity: The Theory and Practice of Intellectual History*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kaag, John. 2020. *Sick Souls, Healthy Minds. How William James Can Save Your Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Pinar, William F. 2001. *The Gender of Racial Politics and Violence in America*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Pinar, William F. 2007. Punk'd. In *Queering Straight Teachers: Discourse and Identity in Education*, edited by Nelson Rodriguez and William F. Pinar (155-182). New York: Peter Lang.
- Pinar, William F. in press. *A Praxis of Presence in Curriculum Theory: Advancing Curere against Cultural Crises in Education*. Routledge.
- Pinar, William F., Reynolds, William, Slattery, Patrick, Taubman, Peter. *Understanding Curriculum*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Spock, Benjamin. 1946. *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. New York: Pocket Books.
- Tomkins, George S. 1986. *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum*. Scarborough, Ontario, Canada: Prentice Hall.
- Westbrook, Robert. 1991. *John Dewey and American Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Tomkins 1986, 98.

<sup>2</sup> 1986, 99.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 1986, 100.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> 1986, 101.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. In the U.S., mothers' influence on their sons became quite the issue. One chapter of J.B. Watson's influential *Psychological Care of the Infant and Child* (1928) was titled "The Dangers of Too Much Mother Love" (Pinar 2007, 162). Teachers' political subjection is likewise gendered, as I argue in that same essay.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> 1986, 101-102.

<sup>11</sup> 1986, 102.



- 
- 12 Ibid. Parent manuals became best-sellers in the United States as well: see, for instance, Spock 1946.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 1986, 103.
- 18 1986, 102.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 1986, 103.
- 22 See also Pinar et al. 1995, 78-83.
- 23 1986, 103.
- 24 1986, 104.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 1986, 103.
- 27 Christou 2012.
- 28 1986, 105. There is a vast literature on each of these. I suggest students start with Kaag 2020 (for James), Bederman 1995 (for Hall), and Westbrook 1991 (for Dewey).
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 1986, 105-106.
- 32 1986, 106. Again, I refer students to Christou 2012.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 James is almost always characterized as a philosopher not a “theorist,” the latter not coming into wide use in the U.S. until the final decades of the twentieth century: see Jay 2002, 193ff.
- 35 1986, 106.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 1986, 107.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 1986, 108.
- 42 Ibid. By the publication of *The Curriculum* (1918), Bobbitt is credited by many with inaugurating the contemporary curriculum studies field in the U.S. The “future” Tomkins invokes concerns “adult activities” for which, Bobbitt thought, the curriculum should prepare children to perform.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 1986, 110.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in 1986, 110.

<sup>47</sup> 1986, 110.

<sup>48</sup> 1986, 111.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> The concentration of British immigrants in British Columbia was considerable. “Whereas in 1901 the province had been demographically Canadian,” Tomkins 1986, 112-113 n. 2) reports, “by 1911 it had been transformed into a British one, with one third of the white population born in Great Britain and Ireland. This proportion held into the 1920s with the British group outnumbering those born in British Columbia, elsewhere in Canada and in other countries.”

<sup>52</sup> 1986, 112.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in 1986, 112.

<sup>54</sup> For more detail see: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/leon-gerin>

<sup>55</sup> 1986, 112.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in 1986, 114.

<sup>57</sup> With a B.A. from the University of Toronto and an M.A. from Balliol College, Oxford, Vincent Massey served as a lecturer in modern history at the University of Toronto from 1913 until 1915 and as a staff officer of Military District No. 2 (Canada) during the World-War I years 1915 to 1918. In the early 1920s, Vincent Massey was active as an actor and director at the Hart House Theatre at the University of Toronto, serving, from 1921 to 1925, as president of the Massey family farm-implement business, the Massey-Harris Company, Toronto. In September 1925, Mr. Massey joined the Liberal cabinet as minister without portfolio at the invitation of Prime Minister Mackenzie King; a year later he became Canada's first diplomatic representative in the United States of America, serving in this post from 1926 to 1930. From 1935 through 1946 he served as high commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom from 1935 until 1946. While in Britain, Massey served as chairman of the National Gallery, London, from 1943 to 1946; he was made a Companion of Honour (C.H.), a member of an order limited to the King and 50 others, by King George VI in 1946. On his return to Canada, Vincent Massey was appointed Chancellor of the University of Toronto, serving in that post from 1947 to 1953, then as chairman of the National Gallery of Canada, 1948-1952. From 1949 to 1951, Vincent Massey served as chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, holding held 114 public hearings across Canada and receiving 462 formal submissions. The Massey Commission report included important recommendations concerning broadcasting, the creation of the Canada Council, the establishment of a national library and financial aid to universities, all implemented by 1957. Massey served as

---

Canada's first native-born governor general from 1952 until 1959. Retrieved from <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/2/5/h5-200-e.html>

Accessed on June 10, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in 1986, 114.

<sup>59</sup> 1986, 115.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> 1986, 116.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> 1986, 118.

<sup>67</sup> 1986, 142. For a summary of Kilpatrick's concept see Pinar in press.

<sup>68</sup> 1986, 118.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Allow me a personal note: While I met her only once before her early death, Mildred Chapin Klohr – the wife of my beloved Ph.D. mentor Paul R. Klohr – devoted her academic life to home economics:

<https://archives.library.illinois.edu/slc/mildred-chapin/>

<sup>70</sup> 1986, 119.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in 1986, 119.

<sup>72</sup> 1986, 119.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> 1986, 119-120.

<sup>76</sup> 1986, 120.

<sup>77</sup> 1986, 121.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> 1986, 121-122.

<sup>81</sup> 1986, 122.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. Regarding the Macdonald-Robertson Movement, see:

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0055603>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> 1986, 123.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. See: <https://utarms-online.library.utoronto.ca/islandora/object/utarmsIB%3A2001-77-100MS>

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. For more on this misogynistic nonsense see Pinar 2007.

<sup>95</sup> 1986, 124.

<sup>96</sup> 1986, 125.

<sup>97</sup> 1986, 124.

<sup>98</sup> 1986, 125.

<sup>99</sup> 1986, 126.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. For a report on contemporary sex education see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MybYw2MeaQI>

<sup>104</sup> 1986, 127.

<sup>105</sup> Pinar 2001.

<sup>106</sup> 1986, 127.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in 1986, 127.

<sup>108</sup> 1986, 127.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in 1986, 127.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> 1986, 127.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> 1986, 128.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> 1986, 131.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> 1986, 132.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> 1986, 133.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> 1986, 133-134.

<sup>129</sup> 1986, 134.

- 
- 130 Ibid.  
131 Ibid.  
132 Ibid.  
133 1986, 134-135.  
134 1986, 135.  
135 Ibid.  
136 Ibid.  
137 Ibid.  
138 1986, 136.  
139 Ibid.  
140 Quoted in 1986, 136.  
141 Ibid.  
142 Ibid.  
143 1986, 136.  
144 1986, 137.  
145 Ibid.  
146 Ibid.  
147 Ibid.  
148 Ibid.  
149 Ibid.  
150 1986, 138.  
151 Ibid.  
152 Quoted in 1986, 138.  
153 1986, 138-139.  
154 1986, 139.  
155 Ibid.  
156 Ibid.  
157 Ibid.  
158 Ibid.  
159 Ibid.  
160 1986, 140.  
161 Ibid.  
162 Ibid.  
163 Ibid.