A Common Countenance? Part VII

George Tomkins reports that "all provinces except New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island had free public kindergarten by 1980,"[1] where "particular attention was given to 'articulation,' or readiness for formal instruction."[2] Moreover, curricular attention was given to the formation of the child's personality "through free and spontaneous expressive activities utilizing language, music and rhythmic instruction."[3] Unless the elementary school curriculum emphasized expressive activities too, it would seem that provincial efforts to ensure "articulation" between kindergarten and first grade - prescribing specific "areas of learning corresponding to those of elementary curricula"[4] – could contradict the kindergarten curriculum. And so it seemed they did, as Tomkins tells us that the Canadian tendency toward "formalism" was "extended into the lower grades, in contrast to the hopes of reformers who had expected to see Froebelianism extended upward."[5]

Still, despite this apparent disavowal of kindergarten – at least its extension into the elementary-school curriculum – policy-makers evidently thought it of value, as pre-school programs proliferated, especially for those children then termed "disadvantaged," emphasizing "stimulations programs designed to provide visual, tactile and auditory stimulation for disadvantaged infants."[6] Despite that endorsement, and "apart from a few suburban communities, Tomkins reports that "progressive ideas had penetrated" the Ontario curriculum rather little, a claim resting on "an approving account that an American writer, John Keats, gave of his children's experience in a two-room rural school [in Rockport] in eastern Ontario in 1953-55."[7] Keats' account confirms the continuity of curriculum, so much so that "for most Ontario post-war elementary school pupils, the school experience was similar to that of their parents."[8] Aside from their larger size and facilities such as libraries and gymnasia, urban schools were, apparently, very similar to that of Rockport,[9] characterized by "silent, totally teacher-directed classes in which marks came in carefully worked-out percentages," a "far cry," Tomkins acknowledges, "from those that had been envisioned by reformers hardly more than a decade before."[10]

That said, "secular, socializing, humanizing influences were becoming evident by 1950s," evident in the appearance of "Human Relations Classes" in the Toronto suburban Forest Hill school curriculum.[11] Tomkins speculates that the "activity tradition of the elementary school made it, at least in theory, more amenable to the new 'discovery' teaching. less public dissatisfaction with elementary schooling, together with a curriculum that was more developmentally and less academically oriented also probably enhanced receptivity to change."[12] One post-1960 "change" Tomkins cites he judges to be "the most publicized innovation in the elementary school after 1960," what was termed "the open area (or open

plan) classroom," an "innovation" that promised more payoff for social than for intellectual development,[13] a price today's compulsory collaboration may also exact. All Tomkins will admit is that "very little was known about the extent and effectiveness of team teaching."[14]

Having entered his own era, Tomkins sounds less assured in his claims, perhaps due to the ambiguity – or is it polarization - of "continuity" and "change" in the Canadian curriculum, that juxtaposition of "conservative" and "progressive ideas" rhetorically at odds with each other but becoming, at least in the elementary school curriculum, somewhat intertwined. Tomkins returns to the 1961 British Columbia Chant Report that had critiqued Progressivism in part due to its "over-emphasis on the doctrine of interest," replacing considerations of student engagement for the sake of "intellectual development as 'the primary or general aim' of British Columbia's schools."[15] He notes that "intellectual development [was] interpreted as the acquisition of factual knowledge," a version of "intellectual development" that was "very different from discovery-oriented curriculum reform that emphasized independent thinking."[16] There had been, apparently, some resistance to the very idea of "pre-schooling" in Québec, as Tomkins announces that due to "revised notions of child rearing in Québec, preschooling was now accepted as a supplement to the family's role rather than an encroachment upon it."[17]

Tomkins finds "some paradox" in the juxtaposition of "permissive" elementary schools and the "back to basics" movement, but the latter seems to have prevailed, at least insofar as "the concept of continuous progress" became accepted, leading, in part, "to the virtual disappearance of grade and age retardation as universal promotion, or what some critics called 'social promotion,' became the norm," adding: "Here was the clearest and most easily documented change of any during the period." [18] Another instance of this "paradox" was, after 1950, an "explosive expansion" in enrolment – post-War World II babies, the so-called Baby Boomers – which "conflicted with new academic pressures engendered by the Cold War."[19] Tomkins also notes the emergence, during this time, of "a youth sub-culture of unique dress and hair styles,"[20] providing, perhaps, some undertow to efforts to mobilize academic study in service of national defence. Even before that generation raised questions concerning the relevance of what they were studying, criticisms of the high school curriculum had been submitted to a Manitoba Legislative Committee in 1945 questioning not only curricular relevance but the schools' provision of "equality of opportunity."[21] That same "paradox" came into view, as "despite criticism, the influence of academic tradition was understandable, the committee felt.[22] It was present in Québec, insofar as "Protestant Québec was not dissimilar from other provinces," but "on the Catholic side the classical colleges were an outstanding example of a persisting nineteenth century classical curriculum."[23]

Perhaps Tomkins' preference for "paradox" parallels his subtitle, as the term surfaces again when he summarizes "various national studies that had been launched to consider social and individual needs engendered by the Depression and World War II," indicating that, despite

calls for curriculum change, "the immediate post-war period proved to be one of comparative curriculum stability."[24] He cites the "expansion of formal guidance services was one of the few significant innovations," but, overall, he judges that the Canadian curriculum at all levels "remained notably non-experimental."[25] He reminds us that Hilda Neatby's 1953 *So Little for the Mind* had "stimulated a vigorous public debate on the merits of Progressivism which paralleled a similar debate in the United States," but unlike in the United States, "serious policy alternatives were lacking."[26] He notes there were "no counterparts in Canada" to such influential reports as *Education for All American Youth* (1944), *General Education in a Free Society* (The Harvard Report, 1945) and James B. Conant's *The American High School Today* (1959), each of which influenced curriculum policy in the United States, adding: "These studies did attract some attention in Canada, but were less influential than Bruner's *The Process of Education*."[27]

Next Tomkins return to curricular conformity, this time noting that increased mobility of parents; schools' "facilitation of student transfer among the provinces" made another "argument for national curricular uniformity."[28] There were, of course, critics at both ends of that argument, some deploring "a lack of uniformity" while "others criticized the lack of diversity."[29] Even more potent than parents' convenience were concerns still reverberating from the 1957 Sputnik satellite launch, and, as in the United States, "all the trends" … were leading to calls for remedial action by the late 1970s."[30] Such "action" spelled stress for students and teachers, and the former leaned on school counselors, who, Tomkins tells us, "increasingly" served as "curriculum mentors to students in the selection of courses, thereby exerting a significant potential influence on the shape of the program in each individual school."[31] He also reports that a "recurring problem arose from the tendency of some guidance teachers to follow a philosophical orientation different from that of classroom teachers," as the latter "tended to stress academic achievement while counselors emphasized human development."[32] Issues of "human development" must have also been on policy-makers' minds, as also during this period "disadvantage and limited opportunity were of increasing concern," with "particular attention focused on children deemed exceptional or special."[33] The concept of "exceptionality" prompted "policy initiatives … in all the provinces."[34] Such attentiveness also prompted controversy, as "mainstreaming" had, Tomkins suggests, "potentially revolutionary implications for the curriculum, teaching methods, the organization of the regular classroom and the training and work of teachers."[35] Indeed, by "the early 1970s" there was "a greater acceptance of mainstreaming, a greater flexibility in organizational arrangements and more attention to exceptionality in teacher education programs."[36] By 1980, "Bill 82 mandated universal access of all Ontario's school-age pupils to a publicly supported education regardless of special needs," legislation "modeled partly on U.S. Public Law 94-142, was the most sweeping legislation in Canada."[37]

Another curricular concern during this period was the promotion of "critical thinking," although evidently limitedly so: Tomkins finds "irony in the failure to promote discriminating

viewing of televised entertainment."[38] That "failure" was evidently not everywhere, as by "1980, some school systems, such as that of Scarborough, Ontario, were inaugurating programs in 'media literacy' for children and 'television awareness training' for parents."[39] Two decades earlier – in 1961 to be precise – the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC/Radio Canada) had initiated "a twice weekly schedule of Canadian School Telecasts in co-operation with the National Advisory Council on School Broadcasting."[40] Technologization intensifies with the introduction of the personal computer, leading to coursework in "computer literacy."[41]

From computer literacy Tomkins moves to the concept of literary, citing the Dartmouth Conference,[42] at which "British delegates questioned the American emphasis on Bruner's discipline-centered approach, asserting that 'It is literature not literary criticism which is the subject'."[43] Tomkins points out that, "to the consternation of traditionalists, classics and masterpieces were now downplayed, although Shakespeare and Shaw remained relevant."[44] In Canada, during the 1960s at least, the genre had remained "a basic mode of organizing the [literature] curriculum although, as Northrop Frye observed, it did not meet Bruner's criteria of structure very satisfactorily.[45] By the 1970s, genre remained but its themes mattered more: In *Survival*, a thematic guide for secondary schools, Margaret Atwood likened Canadian literature to a "map, a 'geography of the mind' that gave Canadians a shared knowledge of who they were and where they had been."[46] In many provinces, Canadian literature began to occupy a significant place in some curricula.[47]

Spanish and German, Tomkins reports, remained the "most popular non-official languages," with "little attention" accorded to Asian languages, "even in British Columbia where Canada's growing trade links with the Pacific world were most obvious."[48] Nor had much curricular attention been accorded to Russian, despite that 1957 launching of Sputnik, that in contrast to curriculum in the United States where "the number of American schools teaching Russian increased from sixteen to more than 1000.[49] In Ontario, in 1967, only nine Ontario schools offered Russian, and then usually by what Tomkins judges as "antiquated" teaching methods, those that "neglected listening and speaking skills."[50]

Militarization – certainly the case in the United States after Sputnik – meant that mathematics mattered more than language, and that subject's "reform set the pace for a new openness in curriculum matters."[51] Perhaps Canadians weren't spared this attribution of American military failure to the school curriculum, as Tomkins tells us that "during these years, links that had been established between Canadian and American mathematics educators were strengthened," illustrated by the inclusion of the Mathematics Council of the Alberta Teachers Association in the USA's National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics,[52] it established in 1920. "Most provinces" used American mathematics textbooks, if "suitably Canadianized and, after 1970, metricated," textbooks "usually based on the work of the School Mathematics Study Group (SMSG), the most popular of the American curriculum projects in Canada."[53]

Tomkins considers "the most positive development" to be the "introduction of the metric system, especially in elementary schools where it was claimed as a particularly successful example of curriculum innovation."[54] Significant as that "innovation" was, I would name the affirmation of Canadian literature the most important curricular "innovation" of the period, as it – more than an almost universally shared metric system – provides a portal to national self-understanding.

There is mention of Business Education, but soon enough Tomkins turns to the other major beneficiary of the post-Sputnik curriculum: science, noting that before Sputnik there had been "little enthusiasm for innovation in science teaching."[55] But by 1959 Cold War anxieties – displaced onto public-school teachers[56] - prompted Alberta's Cameron Royal Commission to declare that "Nothing less than national security, not to mention our standard of living, depend upon extensive and intensive science education."[57] British Columbia's Chant Commission – to which Tomkins had referred earlier - recommended curriculum reform "in the light of world conditions," reform that (as Tomkins noted earlier) emphasized "intellectual development that would give a better understanding of science through content more closely related to pure science."[58] Ontario curriculum reformers concurred: the science curriculum should emphasize "the scientific attitude" and mirror science as it "really was,"[59] rather than, say, science in the public interest. I suppose panicked post-Sputnik reformers would retort that a science curriculum mirroring science in universities and research laboratories was in the public interest.

So-called Nuffield Science from Great Britain[60] influenced elementary science curriculum, discouraging teachers' reliance on "textbooks in favor of kits of materials, experimental methods and open-ended teaching."[61] Tomkins tells us that "many elementary teachers with limited training in science were uncomfortable without the security of a textbook," an assertion offered without evidence (as too many generalizations about teachers are). A decade later, teachers were being encouraged to return to textbooks for sake of consolidating concepts presumably learned through "experimental methods."[62] There were teachers, Tomkins allows (again without empirical evidence), who "emphasized the social and applicative aspects of physics,"[63] teaching "designed to appeal to a wider range of students and not, coincidentally, to increase enrollments."[64] Such "conflicting views supported Ivor Goodson's view that curriculum reform typically involves competition for status, territory and resources among contending interest groups."[65]

A decade later – in the 1980s – critics of "pure science" curriculum raised social and moral issues, including "demands by some religious groups that 'creationism' be taught on an equal basis with evolution,"[66] to which Tomkins – attempting to be even-handed perhaps – notes that "some evolutionists did not always assist their valid case by paradoxically upholding an outmoded concept of evolutionary theory with religious-like fervor."[67] Returning to more solid ground, Tomkins then tells us that "here was a general lack of a Canadian perspective in

textbooks, particularly of Canadian science and technology and its history and impact on society,"[68] as David Blades has documented.[69] During that decade, science in the public interest finally surfaced, as "issues of social significance" were raised, "such as the ethics of genetic engineering or whale hunting, or the political dimensions of problems such as nuclear waste disposal."[70]

To social studies Tomkins turns next. Decades before "Eurocentrism" became a battle cry of curriculum reformers in Canada and the United States, Margaret Atwood made fun of the "ethnocentric and imperial European-oriented social studies curriculum that she experienced as a pupil in the 1950s," Atwood's remembrance reminding Tomkins of the experience of Fredelle Maynard[71] a generation earlier.[72] But "moves to interdisciplinary studies" – such as social studies – "were slower than those in the United States."[73] To illustrate, Tomkins mentions that Bruner's interdisciplinary social studies curriculum – Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) – "attracted only limited attention" in Canada, "even though MACOS was based largely on the famous National Film Board production on the Netselik Inuit."[74] In Geography, Canadians looked to the British, emphasizing "the use of area, local and sample studies, together with large scale maps and air photographs in geography and documents or primary sources in history.[75] The arrival in 1951 of N. V. Scarfe as Dean of Education at the University of Manitoba – he would later become the first Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia[76] – brought from England to Canada "the leading world figure in geographic education."[77] Tomkins points out that Scarfe affirmed "a form of discovery learning which long pre-dated Bruner in British school geography."[78] History, on the other hand, had "lost much of its former status and by the 1970s historians themselves no longer contributed significantly to the writing of school textbooks."[79] Within the discipline of History, Tomkins judges that "excessive specialization and quantitative and other techniques had undermined the traditional grand, if unduly romantic, sweep of historical, literary narrative,"[80] an accurate if somewhat overstated observation, as history conceived as one of the humanities – and not as quantitative social science – remains today. "Not surprisingly," Tomkins adds, "the rise of the new social studies evoked criticism from professional historians,"[81] a tension that also remains into the present day. Economics – including home economics (formerly domestic science)[82] – alongside geography and history were the dominant social studies disciplines at senior high schools.[83] He notes a Canadian economics course was offered in every province except Manitoba; world history courses were still Europe-centered, although, by 1980, "more attention" was being paid to non-Western cultures, while "surprisingly little attention was given to the study of the United States in most curricula,"[84] perhaps a consequence of the Canadianization movement.[85]

Tomkins turns to the art curriculum which, after 1960, was apparently "plagued by such familiar problems as poorly trained teachers, lack of proper facilities, limited or inflexible scheduling in schools, the status of the subject as a frill or outer subject, and its general non-

acceptance for university admission purposes."[86] Having just told us that there was little attention paid to the study of the United States, it was surprising to read that during the early 1970s "British Columbia made use of the Ohio Curriculum Guides," a "neo-progressive curriculum shift" that supported art conceived as "expression and as a means to developing creativity."[87] But then those guides were apparently not about Ohio but "expression" and "creativity" which, among students British Columbia, was Canadian creativity and expression. Tomkins considered "encouraging" the appearance of the Artist in the Schools program that, while "originating in the United States," in Canada (presumably) hired Canadian artists to "teach and to work on their own projects in the school, enabling pupils to learn about art and artists through direct observation."[88]

Tomkins distinguishes between "art" and "music," reporting that music "probably had more support than art as an accepted part of the general education of students," a speculation he supports by suggesting that the "publicity value of performing bands, orchestras and choirs, and the wide popularity of competitions and festivals caused musical performance to rival athletic performance in the schools,"[89] the last assertion that would hold true in the United States, especially in states like Texas. Then he suggests that the "social importance of music in teenagers' lives also affected its role in the schools," another speculation he extends by offering his observation that "school programs received an enormous boost when music teachers recognized the legitimacy of jazz and rock," enabling music to become "one of the few areas of the curriculum in which there was a positive response to student interests and knowledge."[90] Even so, he adds, "music educators did not ignore their obligation to introduce students to the written music of the past."[91]

Returning to Home Economics, Tomkins tells us that "some [home economics] curricula included attention to the aesthetics of interior design," as well as "to the social and physical sciences, thus giving the subject a broader educational function."[92] Another "emerging trend during the 1970s was the enrolment of both boys and girls in home economics and industrial arts programs, with results that would have surprised and possibly dismayed earlier school promoters," adding that now "boys could proudly display cakes they had baked in home economics classes and girls could display bookcases made in woodworking classes."[93]

Next up are health and physical education which, during the 1950s "gained importance, arising from an increased awareness of physical fitness influenced by American Cold War concerns for preparedness."[94] Unlike the situation in the United States, in Canada, Tomkins tells us that: "After 1960, greater affluence and leisure and the growth of an ideology of individual self-fulfillment led to a broader view of fitness, as the focus of physical education shifted from a militaristic orientation, mass calisthenics and aggressive team sports to a focus on sports to be pursued throughout life.[95]

Having commented on these individual school subjects, Tomkins turns to "curriculum differentiation, the credit system and a more diverse school population," developments which "had created a demand for more varied teaching materials."[96] Those "teaching materials" may have been varied by school subject but not by locus of production, as "upwards of 40 percent of all students in the country were domiciled in the province, mean[ing] that Canadian texts were, in practice, Ontario texts.[97] That said, Tomkins allows that: "In some subject areas such as science, materials originally developed by federally funded American projects were adopted by Canadian school systems, with the ironical result that the U.S. government indirectly had more influence on curriculum change than did the Canadian government," prompting "most provinces during the 1970s" to begin to "encourage or require Canadian authorship and publication of curriculum materials."[98] Canadian production of curriculum materials was marked by "increasing bureaucratization and politicization of the selection process," in part due to what he summarizes as "external demands."[99] As an example of these Tomkins cites "human rights legislation in several provinces," legislation that "had considerable influence on textbook policy and selection, and thereby became an instrument of curriculum control."[100] On occasion bureaucratization meant obfuscation, at least when "policy-makers and teachers were frequently at a loss in dealing with pressure groups who sought to influence the selection of materials."[101] Such "politics of controversy" prompted, Tomkins suggests, "officials and publishers to back off from it," as in "the absence of judicial protection such as that afforded under the U.S. Bill of Rights, Canadians had only *ad hoc* defenses against censorship."[102] A "new conservative mood" during "the late 1970s led to greater curriculum control through control of materials," a development that occurred in the U.S. as well.[103] In the U.S. that mood expressed itself in declaring the country "at risk"[104] due to schools that had, presumably, no standards, a "crisis" to be addressed by standardizing assessment, a development that also occurred in Canada, as "provincial achievement tests in English, French, and Chemistry were prepared."[105] The teacher blame-game would intensify in the U.S. after the turn of the century, but Tomkins appears to anticipate it, pointing out that, even by the 1950s, so-called school failure was less a function of poor teaching and/or inadequate curriculum materials than the "increase in numbers of students of low or mediocre ability who were staying in school."[106] Standards – that battle cry of U.S. (so-called) conservatives in the 1980s – were, in Canada, "firmly in the hands of universities," if administered by provincial examinations, the "varying … difficulty of questions" enabled officials "to identify the best candidates for university admission."[107] Decades before it occurred in the U.S., in Canada, Tomkins tells us, "standardization was increasingly questioned as a distortion of the educational process and of the curriculum," and "much testing was said to be irrelevant and redundant, retained largely for the mystique associated with it."[108]

As early as the 1960s, then, in Canada "two contradictory trends became evident," the first "demand for more uniform examination and selection system," and the second, a

"demand for the abolition of province-wide testing and the substitution of local assessment."[109] It appears the second triumphed, as Tomkins tells us: "Gradually, external examinations were abolished in most … provinces."[110] Afterward, "principals became responsible for recommending students to the ministry for their high school diplomas" while "teachers, using student class performance and various instruments of their choice, now felt sufficiently professional to assume full responsibility for evaluation."[111] "Canada," Tomkins summarizes, "had moved from what had been one of the most examination-ridden educational systems in the world to one in which large-scale uniform examinations were no longer the norm."[112]

That triumph didn't last long, as Tomkins tells us that "by the late 1970s, the new conservative mood in Canadian education was leading to demands for the restoration of some type of uniform assessment."[113] He suggests that "universities were facing serious difficulties in assessing the knowledge possessed by incoming students, a situation that had serious implications for their own courses and curriculum planning,"[114] that last phrase a surprise for me since I've never known a university to attempt to articulate their courses with those incoming students had taken. "Difficulties" – Tomkins doesn't specify what these are but presumably articulation is the problem – "were exacerbated by the growing curricular permissiveness of the universities themselves, as in their cafeteria-style offerings they emulated the high schools," again a puzzling statement since I've never known universities anywhere to "emulate the high schools."[115] Then the most puzzling statement of all: "Academic freedom had come to mean that the university teacher had absolute power to determine the texts and instructional practices used and the methods of evaluating students."[116] I am under the impression that that is what academic freedom has always meant.

"British Columbia developed the most extensive provincial assessment program in Canada," Tomkins continues, and "Alberta took a similar comprehensive view of assessment," but "Ontario took a different approach, with the setting up in 1976 of the Ontario Instrument Assessment Pool, which was based on a curriculum-oriented approach to evaluation,"[117] implying that British Columbia had Alberta composed examinations on whatever topics they pleased, without considering the curriculum exam-takers had studied. If standardized exams are composed in order to control the curriculum exam-takers study, then the scheme becomes plausible, if obviously authoritarian. And apparently that was the scheme, evident when, in 1980, Douglas T. Kenny, President of the University of British Columbia, stated that by increasing its admission standards, "the university means to ensure that the high schools had a solid program."[118] Soon after, Tomkins continues, the University of Toronto "followed the UBC lead," and university-bound students were "constrained to emphasize the hard sciences, English and mathematics the detriment of preparation in the cultural subjects, a trend that undermined the traditional liberal educational function of the high school and contributed to a narrowing of the curriculum."[119]

This period was also "noteworthy for the fact that the training and education of teachers finally came under the jurisdiction of the universities," a takeover that had "begun in Alberta in 1946 when the normal schools ceased to operate and a Bachelor of Education program was established."[120] Not until thirty years later had all provinces required a university degree as a minimum basis for certification; in 1974, Ontario, "the last major bastion of the normal school, finally made a university degree mandatory for all teachers."[121]

Across Canada "prospective teachers now acquired their content background in the academic component taken in faculties of arts and science, training in methods and other courses no longer gave as much emphasis to what had in the normal schools sometimes been called professionalized subject matter,"[122] the latter in part the province of curriculum studies in its conception and practice of the "synoptic text,"[123] itself not modeled after the school curriculum but designed to complicate it. Apparently normal school curriculum study was focused on what teachers would probably teach; at least that is what one surmises when reading that "the academic independence that the university teaching model exemplified for instructors and the lack of official governmental supervision that had previously prevailed formerly diminished congruence between school and teacher training curriculum."[124] Apparently Tomkins regrets that development, as he then writes: "More positively, the requirement of a university degree meant that teachers now had a broader, deeper and ostensibly more liberal education. It could be said that teachers were now better educated, although not necessarily better trained."[125] Not all provinces were on the same page, however, "and in some rural areas as many as half of all teachers still lacked degrees in 1980."[126]

The normal-school tradition of preparing prospective teachers to teach the school curriculum did not disappear altogether, a conclusion one reaches when reading that the "exploding curriculum of the schools, it seemed, required an exploding curriculum in teacher education."[127] Apparently knowledge of the school curriculum would, however, take place in schools not universities classrooms; we learn that one "major attempt to counter dissatisfaction [in university-based teacher education] took the form of extended school-based experiences designed to capitalize on student perception of practice teaching as the one useful component of their training."[128] The study of the school curriculum – as a concept and practice – had been attenuated is implied when Tomkins writes: "In a period when the central role of the teacher in curriculum development was increasingly recognized, it was surprising that pre-service programs still gave so little systematic attention to the study of curriculum theory and practice and to issues such as those involved in the selection and evaluation of learning materials,"[129] that last phrasing indicating his disagreement with that decades' dismantling of what had been termed (erroneously[130]) the Tyler Rationale.[131]

Next, Tomkins returns to academic freedom, reporting that "there was reason to believe that teachers had more freedom under the dictates of a tolerant central authority at a distance than under a local superintendent zealous for the success of a program

'democratically' contrived,"[132] a point well-taken. To the extent that was the case, Tomkins notes that "nearly all provinces had curriculum directors."[133] His main point is that "despite oscillations between subject-, child- and society-centered curriculum change after 1960, and shifting trends between centralization and decentralization of authority, the Canadian tradition of administrative control remained alive and well," adding that: "Rapid growth and greater affluence led to a marked expansion of supervisory personnel and to a greater organizational complexity, marked by greater bureaucratization and professionalization of administration."[134]

Concerning teachers' role in curriculum development during the 1970s, Tomkins tells us it "waxed and waned."[135] There were teachers who "demanded the abolition of department directives and sought the right to decide what should be taught," but, rather than praising them, Tomkins notes "they disregarded the insecurity and extra work this would mean for themselves and the repetitive learning and lack of adequate content knowledge for students that would result,"[136] as if uniformity of curriculum content ever ensured "adequate content knowledge" or that students would acquire it. Also undermining any confidence in a negative correlation between academic freedom and "adequate content knowledge for students" is Tomkins' observation that "even when they used the same textbook, teachers placed significantly different emphasizes on different aspects of content."[137] He allows that while "such freedom was desirable, there was still a need for centrally coordinated provincial leadership."[138] The "progressive-conservative" view remains intact, also evident in the subtitle of the Tomkins text.

"As administrators slowly came to realize that knowing and controlling what transpired behind the classroom door was the most problematical of issues," he continues, "implementation became a new buzzword in the curriculum lexicon," another term dismantled in the scholarly literature but one with which Tomkins appeared to feel some sympathy, as he adds: "Some research indicated that teachers continued to ignore precisely stated objectives and systematic curriculum planning *per se*."[139] Insightfully he adds: "Some data suggested that, while teachers were often castigated for their failure to be innovative, they might well perform their best curriculum service by their resistance to indiscriminate change."[140] By that last phrase he means the late 1970s' promulgation of "core curricula in various provinces," something he ascribes to "ad hoc political responses to a perceived public demand or crisis."[141] And while these were advanced on the provincial level, these "political responses" were – ipso facto – national, thanks to "through the Council of Ministers, which became a major inter-provincial forum for senior bureaucrats."[142] Strictly speaking, however, "the federal role in education was even more ambiguous and confusing than that of the Council of Ministers."[143]

"Ambiguous" and "confusing" on the surface perhaps, but Tomkins seems clear: "A considerable federal presence in educational policy was tolerated as long as nobody called it such, and as long as there were no overt strings attached to money coming from Ottawa."[144]

He testifies to Ottawa's influence, noting that "federal support of bilingual programs in British Columbia caused the number of elementary grade pupils studying French to quadruple during the 1970s," an instance, he adds, "of how federal educational policy, never identified as such, could affect and alter provincial priorities."[145] While federal influence increased, university control of the school curriculum did not, as "in general academics had less a direct impact on [curriculum] development than in the past."[146] In contrast, "teachers' federations, usually through their provincial subject specialist organizations, had a direct input to curriculum policy-making, by virtue of their representation on provincial committees,"[147] while "national organizations of subject matter specialists such as the Canadian Association of Science Educators and the Canadian Council of Teachers of English … appeared to have only indirect influence."[148] "Still less direct in influence," Tomkins continues,

> were such national groups as the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, organized in 1972. Together with its affiliate, the Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies, the organization brought together university researchers and members from the public educational sectors who, through publications such as *The Canadian Journal of Education*, conferences and workshops attempted to influence policy.[149]

As in the United States, Tomkins suggests that "there had been a general neglect in Canada of research on the schooling experience from the student point of view."[150]

Also during the 1970s teacher attitudes were changing; they shifted "away from a professional, social service model towards a trade union one that embodied greater autonomy," adding: "As with students, a lack of opportunity to participate in policy-making contributed to teacher dissatisfaction."[151] Even after acknowledging that "little research had yet been done in Canada on the teacher's role in curriculum development," he apparently attributes teacher "dissatisfaction" to "a bureaucratic structure that reflected an industrial organization of education and inhibited any broad participation by teachers in decision-making,"[152] as "teacher militancy increasingly focused on working conditions, an issue that had high curricular salience."[153] Note that "working conditions" do not necessarily include curriculum concerns, nor does " curriculum salience" necessarily imply "curriculum significance."[154] What Tomkins terms "parent power became a phenomenon during the period, and was advocated in a book called *About Schools* that attracted national attention," adding that "the Parent-Teacher or Home-and-School movement had long existed, but its genteel approach was now replaced by demands for real involvement in decision-making."[155] Tomkins concludes: "Everybody, it seemed, had an interest in the development of the curriculum."[156]

As he approaches his own time, Tomkins, like a stone hurled from shore, skips along the surface of the pond. First he notes that the "teaching of imperial patriotism was superseded by the teaching of an often ill-defined Canadian identity suffused with a greater appreciation of the Canadian mosaic."[157] Then he notes that "narrow academic curriculum with limited

choice was replaced by a broader, more diverse, more vocationalized yet more personalized curriculum with a bewildering choice of options."[158] "Administratively," he reports, "decision-making was devolved to the local level, as detailed provincial courses of study were replaced by guidelines, and as the single prescribed textbook and province-wide examinations were mostly discarded, the concept of a common curriculum was further attenuated."[159] By 1980, he continues, despite Canadians having "fewer illusions about and lower expectations of their schools," they continued "to see education as a panacea for social, cultural, economic, political and moral ills."[160] Among the "ills" to be banished was "racism," and the curriculum was to celebrate "cultural diversity,"[161] both despite a "growing emphasis on 'credentialism' whereby grades, tests, scores and degrees had become essential passports to employment and further education."[162] Then, as he often does, Tomkins juxtaposes one claim with one that appears to contradict it – also evident in the subtitle of the book – as he reports (after noting – above – that the "concept of common curriculum was further attenuated") "there remained a high degree of common textbook use, at least in the core subjects," adding:

> Through nationalizing initiatives, provincial policy-makers acting collectively were able to demonstrate their Canadianism by extending their very Canadian penchant for curriculum uniformity beyond their individual jurisdictional boundaries. Similar university admission policies, academic programs and standards were aspects of a national system of higher education that retained a number of common and distinctive features; these encouraged a significant common curricular response to the part of school systems necessarily sensitive to university expectations.[163]

Curricular "uniformity" was further affirmed by the "growth of an integrated national economy created a demand for national education designed to produce scientists, technicians, managers and other professionals for both the private and greatly expanded public sectors."[164] Yet such "curriculum uniformity" – what Tomkins has termed a Canadian attribute, if aggravated by the "national economy" – is also "powerfully influenced by international forces. Critics and commentators continued to compare Canadian schooling with that of the U.S., Great Britain, the Soviet Union and Japan," the "most common cross-national comparison was with the U.S."[165] He concludes – ruefully? – that "it seemed that Canadian education had become more Americanized than ever."[166]

Now – almost at the end of his panoramic study – Tomkins turns to "global problems," among them "the population explosion, food shortages, environmental deterioration, energy shortages, disparities between rich and poor nations, political instability, international violence and the ever-present threat of nuclear holocaust," each one of which has "salience for curriculum planners."[167] He notes that if these are "addressed at all in schools," they are "rarely addressed effectively."[168] Moreover, a "failure to meet the demands of a high tech society, epitomized by the Japanese challenge, had by 1980 created an alarm that was reminiscent of the post-Sputnik Soviet challenge a generation earlier,"[169] referencing, perhaps, the

displacement of government and industry's responsibility for failure onto the school curriculum and those who teach it.[170] His earlier acknowledgement of the "set-up" that is social engineering seems forgotten.

That set-up is political, and on the next-to-last page Tomkins seems to succumb to the view that has triumphed today, terming curriculum development, e.g. the "process" that deciding what knowledge is of most worth and how it should be represented in the curriculum, as "essentially political," rending "rational arguments for change … of little avail,"[171] an assertion belied by the history he has just narrated. Then he pivots, realizing that "curriculum questions had some kind of deep psychic significance,"[172] a profound insight he reduces to one, albeit important, feature, namely that those "who felt that they had been relatively successful in life, the middle class were the most vocal critics of the schools, ascrib[ing] their success in part to their education."[173] These "successful" ones, he continues, demand "an education for their children as similar as possible to what they had experienced a generation earlier,"[174] positioning them as advocates of curriculum continuity, one key phrase in the book's subtitle. Those who demanded "curriculum change" perhaps suffered "schooling had in some sense been deficient," a speculation anticipating Grumet's more complex and provocative argument for "contradiction" as a key dynamic in curriculum controversy.[175] If those expectations that curriculum could enhance "meaning and a more positive self-concept were to be met, educators in the future would have to mediate the conflicting demands of stability and change more constructively than they had done in the past,"[176] that the last sentence in the book.

COMMENTARY

When I first read Tomkins' tome, I was thrilled – and grateful - as it provided the one overview of the Canadian curriculum that I had found in my forty years of intermittent study of curriculum studies in Canada. My excitement subsided as I realized it was no intellectual history of the field – what I had wanted - although there are snippets here and there of what scholars thought what knowledge was of most worth and why. In providing a sweeping overview, Tomkins' strokes are broad, sometimes so broad as to arouse my suspicion, especially when generalizing (as he does, including in that last unfortunate last sentence) about educators, classrooms, schools. Of course Tomkins has hardly been alone in assuming he knows (or at least has a pretty good idea of) what teachers and administrators think and do. While he does attend to overall trends in and influences on the Canadian curriculum, he also focuses considerable attention to rather specific developments in the individual school subjects. What distinguishes curriculum studies, of course, is the complete curriculum –

including the extra-curricular - including its situatedness in (and its efforts to revise) culture, politics, history, economics. In university-based faculties or colleges of education, single subject specialists are often administratively categorized as "curriculum studies" specialists, but that is, in a direct disciplinary sense, inaccurate - unless of course, scholarly attention to the individual school subject is linked to study of the overall curriculum, including the extra-curriculum. Curriculum studies specialists are interested in the complete school experience – homework[177] as well – including its influences on the individual, the locality, region, nation, world. Tomkins focuses more on the former and less the latter, but his panoramic study is all we have – until now and the Curriculum Studies in Canada Project, a project focused on the intellectual history of the field and in which Tomkins' monumental study must be judged as canonical.

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Endnotes

[1] 1986, 357.
[2] 1986, 358.
[3] Ibid. Does "rhythmic instruction" mean music and/or dance?
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] 1986, 359.
[7] 1986, 360.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Still a village, apparently: https://rockportthousandislands.com/
[10] 1986, 361.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid. Columbia University's Teachers College Professor Alice Miel was an early promoter of "human relations," linking the concept not to corporate collaboration but to the acknowledgement of, indeed appreciation for, cultural diversity, that in service to the democratization of society: https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/miel-alice-1906-1998
[13] 1986, 362.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] 1986, 362-363.
[18] 1986, 364.
[19] 1986, 365.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] 1986, 367.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.
[28] 1986, 371.
[29] 1986, 372.
[30] 1986, 373.
[31] 1986, 374. One would think that curriculum uniformity would be ill-served by offering elective courses, but then perhaps electives across provinces were uniform.
[32] 1986, 375.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] 1986, 376.
[36] Ibid.
[37] 1986, 377.
[38] 1986, 378.
[39] Ibid.
[40] 1986, 379.
[41] 1986, 380.
[42] https://wac.colostate.edu/resources/research/dartmouth/
[43] 1986, 385.
[44] 1986, 386.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] 1986, 388.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] 1986, 389.
[52] Ibid.
[53] 1986, 390.
[54] Ibid.
[55] 1986, 392.
[56] Just as Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission assigned to teachers an outsized role for redressing the anti-Aboriginal past and present of the country.
[57] Quoted in 1986, 392.
[58] 1986, 392.
[59] Ibid.
[60] https://www.deepdyve.com/lp/wiley/nuffield-chemistry-in-britain-1961-1982-part-i-development-and-XugUKodRH5
[61] 1986, 392.
[62] Ibid.
[63] 1986, 393.
[64] 1986, 394.
[65] Ibid. For more on Goodson, see Pinar 2020.
[66] Ibid.
[67] 1986, 394-395.

[68] 1986, 395.
[69] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gZfQMF8-rc&t=15s
[70] 1986, 396.
[71] https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/maynard-fredelle-bruser
[72] 1986, 396.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] 1986, 397.
[76] https://educ.ubc.ca/neville-scarfe/
[77] 1986, 397.
[78] Ibid.
[79] 1986, 398.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] 1986, 400.
[83] 1986, 399.
[84] Ibid.
[85] See Cormier 2004.
[86] 1986, 401.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] 1986, 403.
[93] Ibid.
[94] 1986, 403-404. Concerning developments in the U.S., see Pinar 2019, 68-75.
[95] 1986, 404. That turn occurs a decade later in the U.S.
[96] 1986, 410.
[97] Ibid.
[98] 1986, 411.
[99] 1986, 412.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid. In the U.S., that Bill of Rights afforded little or no protection to politically powerless groups: see, for example, Pinar 2019, 60ff.
[103] 1986, 413. Regarding that "mood" in the U.S., see Pinar 2019, 57.
[104] Pinar 2019, 57.
[105] 1986, 414.
[106] 1986, 415.
[107] Ibid.
[108] 1986, 416.
[109] Ibid.

[110] 1986, 417.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] 1986, 418.
[118] Quoted in 1986, 420.
[119] 1986, 420. During the Eight-Year Study, thirty schools were freed from university curriculum coercion: see Pinar 2010.
[120] Ibid.
[121] 1986, 421.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Pinar 2006.
[124] 1986, 421.
[125] Ibid. Since our vocation is large part academic, the two are necessarily reciprocally related.
[126] 1986, 422.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] See Pinar 2015, chapter 7.
[131] See Tyler 1949.
[132] 1986, 423.
[133] Ibid.
[134] 1986, 424.
[135] 1986, 425.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid. We disagree on that last point.
[139] 1986, 426. One would hope so.
[140] Ibid. Who decides when curriculum change is "indiscriminate"?
[141] 1986, 428.
[142] 1986, 429.
[143] 1986, 430.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.
[146] 1986, 431.
[147] 1986, 431-432.
[148] 1986, 432.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid. Without presenting data to support such a sweeping assertion, I suspect this could be an overstatement.

[152] Ibid.
[153] 1986, 433.
[154] Tomkins has made no earlier acknowledgement of curriculum as component in teacher "attitudes," certainly not in "teacher militancy." Nor in the U.S., historically at least, has the curriculum been foremost in negotiations between representatives of the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers.
[155] 1986, 433.
[156] Ibid.
[157] 1986, 437.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid. Casting teachers as social engineers has now been internalized by many prospective and practicing teachers, at least many of those enrolled in my curriculum theory courses at UBC.
[161] Ibid.
[162] 1986, 438.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] 1986, 439.
[167] 1986, 440.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] For that story, see Pinar 2019, 57.
[171] 1986, 440.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] 1986, 441.
[175] See Grumet 1988.
[176] 1986, 441.
[177] Homework may morph in response to ChatGPT, released in November 2022 by the artificial intelligence lab OpenAI. ChatGPT generates intelligible text in response to short prompts, and apparently innumerable students are now using it to do their homework. Such cheating has left countless teachers scrambling to determine who is, and who is not, using the chatbot. Several public-school systems, including those in New York City and Seattle, have banned ChatGPT on school Wi-Fi networks and devices to prevent cheating, although students can easily find workarounds to access it. Many teachers – K-12 and at university - are reconfiguring their courses entirely, emphasizing oral exams and handwritten assessments rather than typed ones. Huang (2023, January 17, A16) reports that OpenAI promises to release another tool, GPT-4, presumably even better at generating text than ChatGBP. Google has built a rival chatbot – LaMDA - and Microsoft is considering a $10 billion investment in OpenAI. Silicon Valley start-ups, such as Stability AI and Character AI, are also working on generative A.I. tools. Huang (2023, January 17, A16) reports that

some 6,000+ teachers, including professors from Harvard and Yale Universities, have signed up to use GPTZero, a program that promises to detect A.I.-generated text.