

Afterword¹

William F. Pinar

Bill sought to see with an owl's eyes.²

Carl Leggo

After words comes silence. The voice of William E. Doll, Jr. has now fallen silent. There will be no more captivating courses, no more ground-breaking books, no more provocative presentations at academic conferences. Now there are our words about his words, words enacted in pedagogical practices worldwide. These words and practices are embodied in Doll's students and colleagues: particular people in particular places, expressive of, responsive to, particular times. Doll – and his wife and intellectual compatriot Donna Trueit – always emphasized relationality; now the term feels like a lifeline to a great teacher, original scholar, congenial colleague, and invaluable friend. Bill Doll was all these and much more. While he is among us no longer, he remains in relation to us through the words published here.

These words – the ones you're reading now - may comprise an afterword, but here there is no silence, as words continue to be composed and spoken, words inspired by the still reverberating presence of William E. Doll, Jr. This ongoing echo – his words, his voice incorporated into ours, the raising of voices Doll supported throughout his long and astonishing career – is audible throughout this collection that Molly Quinn has so ably assembled, a collection that is, in her inspiring words,

a kind of polyphonic harmony or symphony of voices that are themselves each echoes of a sort of Doll's divine laughter— as it also seeks to express something of/at the heart of his thought, teaching, work, influence, legacy, life, and person:

certainly, an art born of spirit, and its expression of playfulness and delight in being in the world and creatively participating in its becoming.

This collection, then, is a complex echo³ – utterly earnest in its playfulness, an academic juxtaposition of Mardi Gras and Lent (as Hendry implies) – that sends shock waves through those of us touched by his thought, presence, and practice. We mourn his loss, but we can still hear that still reverberating laughter, that constant questioning, threaded through his sustaining study that has brought us insight, understanding, even joy. Let us celebrate this man.

What gift you were – are - Bill Doll, a judgment exclaimed in each of these distinctive chapters. Those who did not know in person this man can nonetheless hear him in our words, often his words that have now become ours. Maybe you can almost sense that expansive subjective presence it has been my personal privilege to know for forty-one years.⁴ All of us gathered in this text remember too. You who come afterward – after these words - can re-experience him through your study of his work, relocating his words into yours. Allow this collection to serve as a cordial invitation to enter the “fascinating imaginative realm” of William E. Doll, Jr.⁵ It is a realm he inhabited in time and place and expressed especially through his teaching.

Time

Doll’s art too embraces complexity, paradox, tensionality, and temporality—complexifying curriculum studies, it challenges much of accepted, endorsed educational and curricular ideology and certitude.

Molly Quinn

Especially in the United States – William E. Doll, Jr. was an American from head to toe – the nightmare that is the present continues.⁶ Like the owl Carl Leggo invokes in his essay, Doll could see through the darkness that shrouds us, could hear what was moving underneath the surface of the soil, could glide effortlessly through the jagged terrain of the present moment. Even within the nightmare of standardized tests, teacher scapegoating, and moving curriculum online, Doll kept education alive, made it seem easy, even fun. Morally committed to children and to those who teach them, Doll courageously continued his effort to enliven curriculum despite others' determination to reduce it to a computer program.⁷

The darkness within which educators work is worldly; it references the centuries-old tendency to stifle the spirit⁸ of students and teachers and the knowledge they study. In that darkness ghosts haunt us, imperilling our commitment to keep knowledge alive. For Doll, the ghost of control was the key culprit. For Eero Ropo and Veli-Matti Värri, the ghost that haunts education *is* control, but it is control that fails, burdening us with by-products of technological progress (they name pollution as one) that haunt the future we bequeath to children. They liken that ghost to a “hyperobject,” a term denoting the scale of what haunts us. For Doll “control” itself was on such a scale; like pollution and the climate change pollution produces, the ghost of (now technological) control disables us from breathing freely, seeing clearly, gliding through the air like an owl.

When haunted by ghosts, words can sometimes seem inadequate. Nel Noddings examines “the four criteria at the center of Doll’s vision,” wondering “what remains of them,” pointing to “current developments that might renew our hope.” Because ideas persist despite present circumstances, I suggest that even without “current developments”

everything remains of Doll's ideas. They stand at the ready for anyone who walks into his fascinating imaginative realm. Noddings adds moral commitment to Doll's four R's (richness, recursion, relations, and rigor), but moral commitment vivifies Doll's vision from beginning to end. He could not agree more with Noddings' assertion that "our aim is to produce better people, and what we mean by that is perpetually open for transformative exploration." Doll's pedagogy is morally committed to that progressive aim.

Control was the ghost Doll identified as haunting the curriculum, but maybe that same ghost can come to our rescue, or so Ropo and Värri seem to suggest. "We need a global curriculum," they argue, "something that responds to the very basic needs of the whole humankind, to develop global citizens, transform people towards universally positioning thinkers, and to help them grow into responsible agents, willing to serve the universal good, equity, equality, and democracy," adding, humorously, "maybe we also have to introduce a new PISA test promoting the common understanding of the world and ghosts we have with us." They conclude: "This is the legacy from Bill Doll. Thank you Bill! Is it time to start the work, together?" That apparent paradox – control for the sake of freeing us from control – haunts progressive thinkers from Dewey to Doll, haunts all of us who position education as a means to an end.⁹

After Progressivism in the United States came powerful propaganda¹⁰ followed now by out-of-control profiteering. Education remains a means but the end is no longer democracy and the self-realization of citizenry but the enrichment of the few. Doll lived through this wrenching outraging sequence. Rather than becoming submerged in it, Doll, like the owl of Minerva, took flight. What this means, the great Canadian educator

George Grant suggested, “is that human beings only pursue philosophy, a rigorous and consistent attempt to think the meaning of existence, when an old system of meaning is coming to the end of its day.”¹¹ Doll studied pragmatism just as it disappeared from U.S. public schools and university-based schools of education; he critiqued modernity just as it dissolved into post-modernity; he theorized the curricular implications of complexity theory just as the standardization of assessment rendered education simplistic. Like the owl of Minerva Doll glides through this deepening darkness, his eyes alert to enemies and to progressive possibilities, his wings gently enfolding friends, protecting authentic knowledge (in contrast to empty information), keeping knowledge alive. Quinn knows:

Of “sunny elegance” is an apt description for Bill as well, and his playful laughter and thought have been a healing balm time again, bringing me happiness and hope amid melancholy, as I am sure it has been for many others also (to which some here attest)—and the curriculum field itself amid dark times. Occasions with him, too, are ever festive, and often toasted with spirits as well—of which colleagues in this collection also speak.

One such close colleague is Petra Hendry, who remembers the “tension” between Doll’s emphasis upon “indeterminacy” and her own demands for “a more just, humane society,” a tension that had “animated” many conversations ... [that] taught me much about embracing the temporality and spirit of education.”

The darkness in which we move is not only worldly; it is also spiritual. Doll’s “struggles with spirituality” – as Petra Hendry testifies – “remind us that, not only are we intertwined and connected to a larger ecology and cosmos, but also that in the end, our individual lives have little meaning except as part of a much larger whole.” She

continues: “Embracing this dynamic tension, or spirit, between chaos and order, what Bill calls perturbation/dissonance/vitality is central not only to understanding our temporality, but illuminates an understanding of education as a breathing, living, spirit that surpasses all understanding.” So the concept of relationality – so central to Doll’s *oeuvre* – is surely spiritual as it is intellectual, ecological and social, interlacing domains of experience interpersonally engaged in classroom conversation.

For Doll, however, spirituality suffered – suffers still – a vexed relation to the institutions pledged to protect it, a relation not unlike that of education to schools. That is evident in Doll’s “struggles with spirituality,” housed as these were within Catholicism. Like Petra Hendry, Steve Triche points out that Doll’s Catholicism was “heretical” – playful even: “For instance, when he goes to mass, he goes on Monday rather than Sunday.” Hendry too acknowledges this fact, but she points out that for Doll Lent was a different matter, a season he observed, she notes, “with a great deal of reverence.”¹² Ugena Whitlock wonders whether Doll’s theology is queer, by which she means odd or eccentric, not Queer. Whitlock recounts several episodes, the first of which she names (as does Jayne Fleener) the *Mysterium Tremendum*, a phrase Doll employs “to represent the ever-contriving complexity and creativity in the cosmos,” adding that “he furthers the concept of tremendous mystery to also hold feelings of repulsion that works together with awe and fascination. Herein is the nature of struggle with our participation in divine life.” Between the “intense fear and trembling concurrent with ecstatic attraction,” Whitlock writes, “Doll finds the cosmologic, ecological awakening to an awe-some power of the universe.” Queer here means awe, the “awe-some” complexity of the universe.

Relationality is, then, not only social and intellectual and historical, it also denotes our embeddedness in what we might not understand.

Whitlock remembers her days as a graduate student, living among fellow graduate students: “we traveled as a pack, seven or eight sharing a hotel room—room, not suite—at conferences, dashing to each other’s presentations, clustering in star-struck awe at networking receptions.” Suddenly it was ending, and Whitlock recounts: “Toward the end of my studies the last Bergamo I attended as a doc student was weighing heavily on me in my nostalgic way of missing a place in time rather than being joyfully mindful of it.” It was at a conference where another episode unfolded, paired she was with Doll at a keynote session.

Although his theorizing is brilliant and provocative—and inspirited, probably the one word I remembered from senior seminar—his topic is usually superfluous to me. It’s worth the price of a ticket just to see him present, because he walks the audience through his thought processes, itself a journey into chaos and complexity that ends in illumination.

Whitlock’s subject was queer theory, and the question/answer session was “rich and spirited,” perhaps because she depicted “engagement with the divine as orgasmic.”

Stymied by a question on method, Whitlock was waiting for an answer when Doll “walked over to me.... He paused, breathed, smiled, and said, *Try prayer.*” That advice answered *her* question: “Yes, I am talking about transcending intellectual limitations—but not by turning to God in a fundamental, Judeo-Christian way; I am suggesting a *currere* in which there is a bending backward and forward, apart and together, across

space and time, in our search—whatever the ground of being, the ultimate concern may be. All that from two words.”¹³

Recall that Jayne Fleener also points to the *mysterium tremendum*, the phrase Doll invoked to reference the mystery of religious experience. This sense of “spirituality,” Fleener notes, Doll placed alongside science and story. This triumvirate incorporated, she continues, complexity theory, including conceptions of “process, perturbation, emergence, transformation, and recursive dynamics in an ongoing and unfolding hermeneutic.” These concepts accent the “unfolding” of Doll’s *oeuvre* over the course of his career, itself, Fleener suggests, “a complex adaptive system with recursion, emergence, and increasing layers of complexity defining the evolving story and pathways of understanding.” The “largeness” of the work and the man was embodied as well as conceptualized: Fleener recalls Doll’s booming voice and his “enormous laugh” filling the classrooms of LSU’s Peabody Hall. Quinn too recalls Doll’s “laugh ... so unique, robust, jovial, infectious and surely unforgettable.”

This symmetry of subjective and physical presence was also audible, as one heard that symmetry, Fleener points out, in his “booming voice” and “enormous laugh.” The scale of Doll’s achievement seems almost somatised too, in what for Whitlock was a seemingly seven-foot tall Doll, “mostly limbs, [a] silken shock of white hair neatly combed, thick eyeglasses, signature bowtie. And the laugh.” Doll laughed, Whitlock notes, “with his whole being ... a joyful, howling roar.” She emphasizes *joy*. So does Noel Gough: “Bill’s great gift to all who know him is his seemingly limitless capacity to find wonder and joy in almost everything he experiences, no matter how trivial or insignificant they might seem to those of us who are more suspicious or cynical. Long

may we cherish the echo of Bill's laughter." The words that echo through us now are not only serious, then, they make us smile, chuckle, even laugh.

That resounding echo – joyful, playful, pedagogical - filled through the ears of those occupying the institutions where Doll taught, as he challenged established hierarchies of knowledge and sequences of learning. "The fragile edifice of disciplinary superiority crumbled," Douglas McKnight remembers, "when in walked this tall, thin, gangly, bespectacled man with wispy white hair and a bow-tie, a Dickensian character come to life in the halls of LSU." What he offered, McKnight continues, was "something ... "strange yet seductive, a concept of curriculum that challenged years of schooling ... a gift, a curriculum of hermeneutic play, of playfulness, of keeping knowledge in play." Kathleen Kesson also invokes the metaphoricity of Doll's subjective and specifically physical presence:

So thank you Bill ... for offering your – very tall – shoulders for us to stand on, to gaze into the stellar distance and feed our imaginations with educational possibilities as yet undreamed, and visualize the space/time bridges that might connect the Now and the New, and to approach the infinitude and the vast unknown with the awe, and wonder, and humility which it deserves."

Reminiscent of a religious icon, Bill brought took our attention from here to eternity. Not only a movie title, the phrase postulates the space between materiality and spirituality, implying that the two can be traversed, can even become entwined.

Zhang Hua implies as much when he notes the unity of the heavenly and the human that informs "the ancient state and wisdom of curriculum." Both "charming and enchanting," Zhang Hua characterizes that ancient curriculum as "enchanted." After the

Renaissance, Zhang Hua reminds, science and technology replaced enchantment with industrialization and social efficiency, both of which restructured school curriculum and curriculum theory, now, in late modernity, “disenchanted.” It is within these circumstances, Zhang reminds, that Doll makes his “great contributions to the field.” First, he notes, Doll criticizes the disenchantment of curriculum, and second, he proposes a re-enchantment of curriculum, his post-modern curriculum theory. These contributions, Zhang Hua knows, hold “great significance to our time and world.”

Place

It’s not surprising, either, that laughter is physically tied to play—a notable characteristic of Doll’s theoretical and pedagogical gifts (signature elements in his approach to theory and pedagogy) to us.

Molly Quinn

Just a month before Doll’s death on December 27, 2017, Louisiana State University established a fellowship in his name, the third honor that institution has conferred, having already named a conference room after him, and having established the William E. Doll, Jr. Archive at the LSU Library. Appreciation for his academic accomplishment is hardly limited to Louisiana, as Zhang Hua would testify. Tero Autio focuses on the “Finnish receptivity to the style of curriculum research Bill Doll’s insightful and imaginative scholarship embodies.” In contrast to “the self-sufficient and arrogant grasp of the Anglophone mainstream instrumental rationality and system closure,” Finnish basic education policies acknowledge complexity, chaos and contingency as “natural,” in sync, Autio points out, with “the spirit, theoretical and moral sensitivities exemplified in Bill Doll’s scholarship.” Autio characterizes Doll’s

scholarship “as an intellectual struggle for an education worthy of its name,” opposing the instrumental rationality that Adorno and Horkheimer criticized as “half-education.” For Autio, Doll’s *oeuvre* demonstrates that “there *are* alternatives for that global, anti-intellectual and antidemocratic waste of human talent, imagination and creativity in the name of education.” Talent, imagination, and creativity were all at work in Doll’s pedagogy, amply explicated in Hongyu Wang’s astute study.¹⁴

Noel Gough remembers the year – 1987 – his travels with Bill Doll began, “a journey that began in the academic landscape of American curriculum studies but took us in directions that neither of us anticipated.” In the absence of email, it was not likely “that an Australian and an American curriculum scholar—neither of whom had any previous knowledge of one another’s work—would initiate and sustain a productive personal and professional working relationship that would grow and strengthen across three decades.” Meeting at conferences and finally at LSU, Gough saw “how special Bill was to his graduate students, and of the reasons that so many of them remain lifelong friends.” In honour of his “stature and leadership” in the field, Doll was, Gough acknowledges (as do others in this collection), crowned the King of Chaos.

Jie Yu tells the back-story of that appellation, one in which “a monkey born from a rock in a big storm at the far end of the East China Sea” became a “monkey king is famous for his untiring battles against rigid social structure. He is also called the King of Chaos because of both his birth from chaos and his adventures against all dead orders such as the caste system.” Jie Yu remembers that during Doll’s lecture tour of China that one of his hosts, a middle school principal, pronounced him the “King of Chaos” after

hearing him speak. When the principal explained, Doll was “fascinated” and quickly accepted his new title, a title that traveled across the Pacific Ocean back to Baton Rouge.

Recently returned from China, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook writes directly to Doll, reporting that the curriculum of the Wuhan Yucai Second Primary School “draws on your initial conceptions of a 3S curriculum,” replacing science with STEM and story with “social practice,” emphasizing moral and aesthetic education as “spirit.” Still addressing Bill directly, Ng-A-Fook reports that “What I witnessed in Wuhan, at that school, and in our conversations, is that your intellectual work continues to provide a reflective window for us to rethink our approaches to (quoting Doll) ‘life and our activities in life, including teaching and curriculum design, in a way that allows the spirit or soul of these activities and of ourselves to come forth’.” Ng-A-Fook concludes: “To be a small part of the community that studied and lives your teachings, I thank you.”

Teaching

Doll’s enlivening presence, pedagogy and thought are so unforgettably influential and surely inspiring.

Molly Quinn

“Creating his own space in the midst of difference,” Hongyu Wang appreciates, “had cultivated in him the capacity to stand on his own while at the same time initiating conversations across differences.” Wang focuses on “play” and “difference,” noting that the former is “usually associated with early childhood and elementary education,” and the latter with “social and cultural differences.” While acknowledging there is “no inherent

relationship between the two,” in Doll’s curriculum and pedagogical theory and practice, “play and difference take on quite different meanings,” concluding that “his playful engagement with difference as a teacher and as a scholar has opened up a new landscape in education.” For Doll, Wang emphasizes, play enjoys “an essential role in students’ and teachers’ intellectual growth,” and, she continues, “the key to opening students and teachers to growth is “playful engagement with intellectual difference.” In other words, “openness to something different is the precondition for transformative learning and teaching.”

For Doll, Wang continues, “playing with different ideas and playing with patterns of subject matter, which bring newness and surprise, are important for ‘keeping knowledge alive’.” She explains: “As students play with ideas and craft an experience, richer and deeper understandings as well as creativity can come forth.” Moreover, “playing with ideas is also related to the spirit of questioning,” encouraging students to examine issues from multiple points of view. And in multiple venues, one might add: “The blending of sharing food, walks, and talks in his intellectual relationships with students and colleagues infuses social dimensions into intellectual life, which is usually marked by independence and seriousness,” in service to creating “a communal space for everybody’s intellectual exploration and personal growth.” Refusing to reduce a person to a single dimension, Doll declined identity politics, emphasizing “the necessity of playing with tensionality in the relational in order to negotiate more room for educative possibilities.” Wang reminds: “In his curriculum visions, whether the 4R’s, 5C’s, or 3S’s, playful engagement with relations is an important component, as reflected in Relation in the 4R’s (Richness, Recursion, Relation, and Rigor), Community in the 5C’s (*Currere*,

Complexity, Cosmology, Conversation, and Community), and the relational quality of Story in the 3S's (Science, Story, and Spirit)." For Doll, Wang adds, play and difference are "not only social and human, but also ecological and cosmological, which leads to the next dimension of play: spiritual play with difference." Wang appreciates that "Doll's play is simultaneously intellectual, social, and spiritual." Knowing his life history, Wang knows that Bill Doll was a "playful child." As Doll's student, she knows he was a "playful educator." And as students of his work we can all appreciate, as Wang does, that William Doll was "a playful scholar." His legacy, Wang concludes (quoting Doll quoting Kundera), "lies in '*the fascinating imaginative realm where no one owns the truth and everyone has the right to be understood,*'" a legacy, she asks us to remember and carry on: "May we all be inspired to play with difference to reach deeper and fly higher, embracing the complexity of life and of education."

Embracing the complexity of life and education was especially evident in Doll's capacity to embrace intellectual difference. After my diatribe against identity politics at LSU's Curriculum Camp one year, it was Bill Doll who broke the stunned silence, asking me a definitional question that defused the moment. I am hardly alone to have experienced Doll's determination to keep the conversation going, a Rortyan phrase Doll practised at every turn. Respecting – playing with - difference is also evident in Petra Hendry's acknowledgement that: "While our politics were radically different—I was a feminist, critical, post-structuralist seeking social change, and Bill was a post-modernist, complexity theorist who sought to embrace chaos; it seemed that Bill never saw our differences as opposition, but as pedagogical spaces to explore multiple sites of meaning, to generate more questions as a way to keep knowledge alive." Keeping knowledge alive:

this moral-pedagogical commitment was enacted through Bill Doll being subjective present in the educational lives of students and the concepts they studied.

“Bill Doll’s thoughtfulness,” Jung-Hoon Jung testifies, “combined with his wholehearted presence, makes personal growth possible. His thoughtfulness sustains his interpretive and reflective intelligence, intuitiveness, sensitivity, and openness to students’ subjectivity.” What Whitlock remembers is precisely “his *presence*, as always. Contemplative, gentle, deliberate.” She recalls the “silence in the room as he towered over the podium with spectacles, bow tie, and shock of hair in tact.” Whitlock was inspired by Doll’s capacity for “contemplation,” in-spiring study “with a sacred spirit of wisdom,” and “the mindfulness ... with which he is present in the briefest of encounters in such a way that they stay with you more than a decade later—if these are all I know of Bill Doll, I know him in abundance.”

That fine phrase of David Jardine’s¹⁵ seems especially apt when invoking the subjective presence – that “enlivening presence,” in Quinn’s phrase - of William E. Doll, Jr. That presence was profoundly expressive of his own distinctive, original theory: at once progressive, post-modern, and complex. It was expressive too of his practice: assiduously communicative, earnestly playful and irreverently reverent. Doll exemplified the very concept of educator he depicted in his scholarship, true to the uniqueness his life history while encouraging those in his midst to be faithful to theirs.

“Understanding education spiritually requires our subjective presence within the complex relationships within which we are embedded,” Petra Hendry sagely observes, “and such presence enables us [now quoting Doll] ‘to be alive to the awe, wonder, and process of being’.” Such subjective presence structured as it animated his classroom

conversation, as Jardine himself remembers: his “unwavering joy in conversation, commiseration, his whiling over a question, a spark, bespeaks a lightness that produces joy while it seeks it.” Jardine emphasizes Doll’s capacity to listen – to be “all ears” – and the glow that his listening amplified, adding that “the joy he takes in being ‘all ears’ *creates* joy.”

Nicholas N-G-Fook remembers the places where such listening, glowing, and joy occurred. He recalls specifically the Friday seminars, time spent – still speaking to Doll directly - “together in complicated conversations about ghosts in the curriculum ... whether that was in Peabody Hall, or later over lunch at Arzi’s, was us, with you, becoming community.” He continues: “For you, of all the 5 C(s)—*Currere*, Complexity, Cosmology, and Conversation—community was the most important.... I was fortunate enough to experience as a graduate student, a friend, and a colleague, a familial community during my studies at Louisiana State University.”

That community occurred among those physically present at LSU but also among those absent, as Doll emphasized historical figures and out-of-fashion ideas, figures and ideas he kept alive as enlivening memories. Ng-A-Fook affirms that dimension of disciplinary conversation, remembering Doll’s own work as a graduate student, providing “glimpses of your past political activism,” among them Doll’s protesting of the closure of the Johns Hopkins University Department of Education (where Doll had studied for the Ph.D. degree). There, and later at the State University of New York, the University of Redlands, at Louisiana State University, and at the Universities of Victoria and British Columbia, Nicholas notes, “you continued to trouble the false dichotomy between theory and practice in relation to the coming of a post-industrial society,” adding that that phrase

(now out-of-fashion) denoted “social organization ... as influenced by changing economic and technological forces.” Characterized variously as an “automated society, a knowledge society, a leisure society, a technological society, a change society, and a service society,” in a post-industrial society “the prime commodity will be knowledge, but not just knowledge, for the axial principle of post-industrialism is the ‘centrality of theoretical knowledge.’” Nicholas wonders what has stayed the same and what has changed since the suggestion that theoretical knowledge would be central.

Denise Egéa wrestles with Doll’s work – like Ng-A-Fook, in historical terms - noting that Doll wrestled with others, among them Morin, Mandelbrot, and Poincaré, on whose work Egéa pins key concepts, including complexity and chaos. Over one hundred years ago Poincaré knew that precise prediction of important human affairs was impossible (breaking news to the U.S. Department of Education). Still, “the many irregular shapes that make up our natural world at any scale (clouds, smoke, surf, etc.) are not random, but follow some organizing principles,” a fact Egéa associates with Doll’s fascination with fractalness and self-organization, the very “nature” of complexity. The latter Egéa links with *cheminement* ... “a journey on the continuous path of learning, of change.” In such a conception, the curriculum would “engage our students [not only] in a quest for knowledge which should take them way beyond the boundaries of their immediate socio-politico-cultural context in space and time ... but which would encourage them to become constructors and generators of meaningful knowledge, meaning makers.”

Fused with the screens in front of us – I am staring at one now – reactivating the past (as Egéa and Ng-A-Fook have done) might afford us some separation, even if just

one degree of separation, from the present. Immersion in the moment followed by detachment from it – not always in sequential fashion of course, perhaps in dialectical tension – is evident in Doll’s pedagogical practice, summarized in a phrase Bernard Ricca recalls: “Be engaged. Pull back.” That phrase means – “sometimes to engage we must pull back and regroup – but Ricca suspected “a deeper meaning,” one with “multiple levels.” One meaning has to do with the problem with “explanations of emergence that rely on emergence across levels.” A second has to do with hierarchies, as creating patterns does not, evidently, proceed only one direction, but are “inherently geometric in nature.” Ricca prefers “topology,” similar to “the study of networks,” concluding that “topology is a better branch of mathematics on which to base investigations into complex systems in general, and for the particular exploration here.” Translated into “best practice,” this means that “openness” not “control” is prerequisite for “emergence to occur,” indeed “a very radical openness.” Ricca returns to Doll’s suggestion - “Be Engaged. Pull Back” – again, summarizing: “Full engagement, then, implies a rather radical openness: We do not know what will come out, and we cannot control it; in fact, control is the opposite of engagement. And pulling back is an essential part of this engagement: We must remove ourselves from that with which we engage – while still maintaining engagement! – so that we may allow the system to become itself.”

Acknowledging that “no two sentences can sum up Bill Doll (or anyone else, for that matter), but I believe that it is this ability to be engaged while pulled back that are a hallmark of Bill Doll.” Ricca reminds readers of Bill’s “expansive personality” that – in contrast to control – connects with others so all can “grow.” Put differently, Doll’s

curriculum theory is less wedded to the ideas than it is to student growth, the promotion of “emergence.”

Emergence, it seems, is developmental, intellectual, and spiritual. Is it also historical? Is post-modernity another phase of (late) modernity? Doll implied as much, insisting on hyphenating the term post-modern. Peter Appelbaum admits his misreading of Doll’s “4 R’s” as “modernist,” missing that how this conception traversed the “slow and confusing transformation underway in culture, social institutions, and knowledge/curriculum.” No new set of objectives, he concludes, “these concepts also exist in a transformative, process-based world of flux and becoming, a post-modern plasma of complexity and uncertainty.” Doll understood, Appelbaum appreciates, that “we are still in a transition period between paradigms, still entering that new world.” That sense of drama is communicated too in McKnight’s remembrance of the man who embodied the transitional period Appelbaum identifies.

Unfurling the flag of curriculum, McKnight writes, remembering his time with him at LSU, Doll “uttered four words that changed everything – ‘This is your curriculum’.” McKnight’s “brow furrowed in concern” was “soon transformed into utter joy.” For McKnight too play was the most significant element of Doll’s multidimensional curriculum theory, playing with ideas and with each other, changing curriculum into an “active rather than passive notion that encouraged the child’s inherent capacity to interact with the world through basic playful curiosity.” Such playfulness occurs through language, emphasizing interpretation. A curriculum of complexity would be hermeneutical, no longer a game of “determining an author’s meaning, but as an act in which I participate in a spirit that animates human life.”

Through this complex hermeneutical curriculum theory McKnight “came to believe Dr. Doll had been joyfully dancing with Hermes from the beginning. Hermes is the ultimate player, the creator of language and messenger of the Gods.” Etymologically, McKnight notices, knowledge means “the state of being or of having to become,” an archaic conception very much in play for William E. Doll, Jr. Now McKnight appreciates that “knowledge is a form of play, a gift, a state of being and becoming.” That state McKnight likens to a dance: “And every time William Doll appeared in our classroom, Hermes appeared alongside him, each dancing with the other and inviting us to join in the play by creating our own new ways of knowing.” Among these new ways, as McKnight emphasizes, were old ways, including spiritual ones.

Not entirely different from religious associations of reverence with revelation, Fleener associates the concept of emergence with spirituality. “Opening up the curriculum to create spaces for emergent learning,” she suggests, and such opening “reveals the importance of the *Mysterium Tremendum*, the mysterious energies that drive an intellect. These mysterious energies emerge when one focuses less on the science and embraces personal story and spirit.” Doll, Sarah Pratt reminds, knew “the significance of stories.” Alongside science and spirit, she notes, story conveys “complexity” as it fosters “emergent thinking.” Indeed, “stories invite complexity into the classroom and the curriculum.” Pratt quotes Doll: “a good story, a great story, induces, encourages, challenges,” and it includes just enough “*indeterminacy*” to allow for an “open form of narrative.” Thus, Pratt concludes, “indeterminacy is integral to story.”

And vice-versa it would seem, as story can be crucial to indeterminacy: “Just like in story,” Pratt writes, “an emergence is just on the horizon, not to be controlled or

predicted. In nonlinear dynamics, a chaotic system is one in which patterns can be understood in retrospect.” Moreover, story is “also about recursively reflecting.” Pratt emphasizes that “recursion is not the same as repetition; it is the act of doing again but looking for a difference based on initial conditions.” She continues: “Additionally, story is a reciprocal relation of interactions. Story is a dance of mutual reciprocity in which the context, the conversants, and the topics help shape and influence the story. This is significant, for the networks of relations and playfulness all impact the dance when teachers and students engage in the act of learning.” That engagement is a series of “complex conversations,” a concept that depicts “learning and teaching that moves away from the mode of ‘teaching-as-telling’ toward an embodiment of thinking this world together.” Here is an instance of Doll’s moral commitment to an enlivening conversational pedagogy resounding in the words of those whom he taught.

That fact is also evident in Triche’s reflection on Bill Doll’s “pedagogic creed.” Students are invited to join a close and democratic community wherein open discussion is the rule, including the disclosure of students’ struggles with new ideas. Triche tells us he has included a version of Doll’s “pedagogic creed” in his syllabi “during his entire university teaching career,” working “hard to live up to it, sometime succeeding, but often failing.” The creed includes patience, inspiring Triche to be “empathetic to the needs of my students,” as Doll, he notes, was with him. Play was part of Doll’s pedagogical creed – the “most serious aspect” Triche tells us - that Doll’s “sense of play has certainly influenced my scholarship as well,” as the man was always playing with ideas. “For Bill Doll,” Triche continues, “play is the ground out of which knowing

emerges.” The creed, he concludes, “requires the teacher to have a different type of presence in the classroom,” one that promotes “learning that refreshes the soul.”

Lixin Luo experienced such learning as well, depicting it as “seeing the whole in parts,” interweaving her personal stories with Doll’s teachings, showing the space that was opened for her personal, professional and academic development. “The change Bill occasioned in my thinking was nothing but subtle, yet it would take me much longer time to enact this level of change. As the intense summer study [at the University of Victoria] with Bill subsided, I entered a recursive journey of re-encountering complexity and its accompanying chaos and hopeful transformation.” She references the change in her teaching as grappled with complexity theory, on which she focused during her doctoral study. Her “renewed understanding of complexity” enabled Luo to shift from “reflection” to “recursion.” noting that “the question in recursion, then, is not just how to reflect, but also how to loop back.” She adds: “Undoubtedly, recursion lies at the heart of Bill’s post-modern curriculum: It is through the process of recursion that one can see relations among isolated topics and understand richer and deeper, hence recursion brings forth the other 3R’s in Bill’s transformative curriculum.”¹⁶ Through study of Doll’s scholarship, Luo “learned to listen better to my personal experiences and stories,” cultivating a “willingness to be led by one’s personal experience and to answer its call,” enabling her to “make sense of one’s experience and make personal experience educational.”

For Lixin Luo, Doll has been a teacher who “embodied” what he taught: “a mentor, inspiring, and full of life.” He taught big ideas, leading her to a “land of creativity and imagination.” Working with her “patiently” and “with care,” teaching her “patience and faith.” Did Doll’s exemplary teaching derive, in part, from his exemplary

study? Lixin Luo seems to suggest so, characterizing him “a fellow student,” enacting “complexity thinking” that “can lead oneself and others to a space of infinite possibilities. Bill has kept the knowledge alive!”

“An extraordinary teacher of our time,” Jung-Hoon Jung characterizes William Doll as a pedagogue of “unfailing excitement, generosity, hospitality, and thoughtfulness.” He is, Jung summarizes, a *susung*, “a Korean concept that can be translated in English as *teacher*, *mentor*, or *advisor*.” The concept, he continues, is historically associated with “Confucianism, whose ideas have sustained the ideals of education in Korea.” Those ideals emphasize virtue, ethics, and morality, elements of being human. “Thus,” Jung continues, “a *susung* is a person who provides teaching (or learning opportunities) for reaching or achieving” these ideals. They can be achieved in many ways; the concept of *susung* is not limited to official educators but can be extended to anyone who affirms one “agency.” Jung explains that “the concept of *susung* should not be understood as undermining the centrality of the teacher in education: instead, it expresses the significance of pedagogical relationships between teachers and students.”

Jung recalls Doll’s “way of being in the conversation,” a form of “pedagogical thoughtfulness” that is “neither a science nor a behavioral code ... [which] cannot be taught formally ... [but is, rather] an intuitive sense of doing and being in concrete personal embodiment.” Jung too recalls that while officially the instructor, Doll acted also as “a student in the course,” wherein “participants were all asked to write reflections on the weekly readings, and Bill unfailingly wrote his reflections and shared them with us.” “The power of Bill Doll’s being overcame the institutional and geographical limitations. The relationships developed through his efforts made the class a familial

learning community.” Jung testifies to his membership in this community by sharing with readers that, despite living “thousands of miles” away from Doll, “my sense of connectedness with him never decreases; it gets stronger as my desire to be with him grows ... I am together with him. The fact that he is there and he prays for my well-being reminds me of the caring relationship between a *susung* and a student.”

That caring relationship is implied in David Jardine’s insight that “someone had to simply say, ‘Stop!’ in a voice loud enough to break the spell, loud enough to remind everyone that we are surrounded by ancestors who can help us, quite literally, *out*,” Doll prominent among them. “Once we summoned them, they broken our fixed gaze and cultivated our readiness. We studied our circumstance instead of falling for it. They provided us with a field rich enough to work *out* what was happening, here. They helped us be all ears.” Remembering “the past thirty years of friendship and camaraderie with Bill Doll,” Jardine emphasizes “Study. Light air that bears a sword. Terrifying but not petrifying. Readiness. And, too, somehow fragile and perishable.” These poignant phrases convey the character of William E. Doll, Jr. as they challenge us to preserve the gifts he gave to us by keeping that knowledge alive.

Legacy

Come, then, let us attend what strange, marvellous, fascinating and sweet delights/insights await us, and in curriculum studies, as we venture forward thus with Bill Doll in these echoes of/on his divine laughter.

Molly Quinn

Kathleen Kesson likens Doll to “Planet Nine, circling the known world of educational theory in his own orbit, his revolutionary ideas slowly manifesting as

adventurous seekers begin to infer the presence of something of enormous import just outside our range of perception.” Kesson points out that “postmodern theories of curriculum, embodying as they do notions of uncertainty, relationship, complexity, indeterminacy, self-organization, chaos, and transformation circle far beyond the known orbits of modernist curriculum, teaching, and learning practices.” Continuing with the metaphor, Kesson notes that “Professor Doll, with telescopic vision, has helped to bring the unknown closer into the orbit of the known, enriching our lives and our thinking in multiple ways.” Opening new universes for us to explore, perhaps? “In that vast distance, he saw the emerging sciences of chaos and complexity as having the power to push our understandings of teaching, learning, and curriculum into entirely new spaces,” including “fresh understandings of the connections between spirituality and science.” Doll provided “a bridge between the innovative educational thinkers of the recent past and the experimentalists of the time.”

Moving well beyond the “fixed ... orbits of the behaviorists and the constructivists,” Kesson continues, Doll entered that outer space “opened up by the new sciences – ideas such as synchronicity, self-organization, non-local causality, intuition, connectedness.” While espousing no “particular form of spirituality,” Doll was “wonderfully open to the multiplicity of ways that people expressed their own soulful commitments. In this, he was a model for how we might embrace difference in a postmodern world, in which truth can no longer be spelled with a capital T.” Kesson concludes:

Perhaps my most fiercely held educational belief is that everyone possesses within their being a psychic compass that steers them into the development of

their potential, and that this manifests differently in all of us as curiosities, interests, and passions. We can call it soul, we can call it spirit, or we can call it an organism's capacity to self-organize, but I believe, with the Romantics, that these inclinations need to be honored and that education really should be a "drawing, or leading out" (*ēducere*) and development of these emergent intentions.

Doll shared that Truth, however buried it can be in truths and even falsehoods.

Carl Leggo remembers the 7th Biennial Provoking Curriculum Studies Conference (that he and Erika Hasebe-Hudt organized), in particular the celebration and Erika engineered on the evening of February 20, 2015, a circle of curriculum scholars located in Canada, among them William E. Doll, Jr. "A highlight of the evening," he remembers, "was Antoinette Oberg's tribute to William E. Doll," an Argentinian tango Antoinette danced with her partner Daniel. It was, in Leggo's words, "sensual, fluid, lyrical, delightful!" The dance, Leggo continues, "represented a kind of love story," a love that Doll has enjoyed "in Canada among students and colleagues," an abiding love for a teacher who "lives with a poet's delight in language and dialogue and questioning." Carl Leggo – a poet, our poet – would know. He also articulates a quality of colleagues' response to Bill. We can treasure the responses students have expressed, but Carl Leggo's captures colleagues' response, one of

bemused reverence. Bill Doll was loved! When I finally met him, I understood immediately that he is a man of singular charm. Bow ties always breathe with an air of stylish exuberance! Bill lives poetically in the spaces between his primary two names. On the one hand, he is William E. Doll Jr.—a name with enough

gravitas to gain entrance to a prestigious golf club! On the other hand, he is Bill Doll—like a Dr. Seuss play on words, the name reverberates like a bell, a spondee with two stressed syllables, singing out a psalm of delight.

There may well be no “after” to append to those words. But in-between them maybe we can allow Leggo to slip a few more, among them Leggo’s recognition of Bill as “living the conviction of the slow professor long before the concept was invented,” there by teaching “us how to live in the academy ... with compassion, care, and conscience.”¹⁷ A “teacher of the heart,” Leggo affirms Doll’s “commitment to integrity and interrogation and interconnection. Bill is constantly curious, motivated by awe and wonder.”

“Comfortable in his own presence, and therefore comfortable in the presence of others,” Doll seems “always the host ... never arrogant, loud, extroverted, self-centred ... always gracious and generous. He lives with his feet in the earth, the *humus*. He lives with humility. And he lives with his heart, the source of all courage for living well.”

These qualities Doll and Donna Trueit thread through their teaching, as Leggo recounts: “I often heard from students how Bill and Donna created caring and loving communities where everybody took creative risks with language and ideas and possibilities.” His teaching and writing, Leggo continues, “full of voice—the unique voice that he has honed and sustained in a lifetime of devotion to scholarship and education. One of his lasting gifts is his invitation for us to learn to hear our own voices, especially as we learn to hear the voices of others.” Through yours, Carl Leggo – and those of the others in this collection – we have once again heard the voice of Bill Doll. May it resound through all those who hear it.

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Endnotes

¹ Pinar, William F. 2019. Afterword to *Complexifying Curriculum Studies: Reflections on the Generative and Generous Gifts of William E. Doll, Jr.*, edited by Molly Quinn (218-237). Routledge.

² Unless otherwise indicated, all quoted passages can be found in this text.

³ Referencing Greek mythology, Quinn points out that “Echo’s is a playful spirit, born of and inhabiting and cavorting about in the high and exalted places, in conversational art and companionship with the divine.... Doll is apt to appreciate Echo’s mischievous adventures, as well, overturning the established order of things and reveling in that which it would define as diverting or excessive.”

⁴ We met in an airport after an academic conference in 1976, discovering that we lived an hour apart in upstate New York. I acknowledge our friendship in my 2006 collection. My introduction to his 2012 collection – edited by Donna Trueit – focuses upon his intellectual accomplishment; my introduction to the 2016 book by Hongyu Wang is focused on Doll’s teaching. I dedicated the 2nd edition of *What Is Curriculum Theory?* to both Bill and Donna. This present statement chronicles the consequences of Doll’s teaching and scholarship for others, consequences that exceed what you read here, consequences that continue to reverberate among those who study him.

⁵ One place to begin is Trueit 2012.

⁶ School reform has now been hijacked by profiteers who see public education not as a sacred public trust but as a financial market to be plundered. “Many of the country’s largest tech companies,” Kang (2017, September 27, B6) reports, “including Amazon, Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Salesforce, have pledged “\$300 million for computer science education, part of a partnership with the Trump administration meant to prepare students for careers in technology.” Not only do these mega-companies intend to convert public schools into private-sector job-training centers, “these efforts coincide with a larger corporate initiative to sell computers and software to U.S. schools, a “market” projected to reach \$21 billion by 2020 (Singer 2017, June 7, A14).

⁷ While “captains of American industry have long used their private wealth to remake public education,” Singer (2017, June 7, A14) reminds, “with lasting and not always beneficial results,” today the huge technology companies – Apple, Google, Microsoft – attempt to sell their products (curriculum has become one) directly to students, teachers and parents, often using social media. These companies also cultivate (through free dinners and trips) administrators and teachers – sometimes violating public ethics laws – to accept that their products ensure students learning (despite study after study that contests such claims). These unethical and sometimes illegal strategies enable these mega-corporations to influence public schools far more quickly than in the past, creating unquestioning faith in technology that spreads like an oil slick to legislators and education officials. “Another difference,” Singer reports, is that “some tech moguls are taking a hands-on role in nearly every step of the education supply chain by financing campaigns to alter policy, building learning apps to advance their aims and subsidizing teacher training” (A14). This massive intervention represents an “almost monopolistic approach education reform,” said Larry Cuban, an emeritus professor of education at Stanford University. “That is starkly different from earlier generations of philanthropists” (quoted in Singer 2017, June 7, A14). While Doll was open to the use of technology in education, he was no unquestioning believer in its omnipotence in student learning. And

he always affirmed the public character of public education, e.g. its formative role in the cultivation of citizens capable of critical and creative thinking.

⁸ “Spirit,” Hendry points out, is for Doll the “breath of life” and it “gives force, passion, and commitment to an event.”

⁹ Not that I oppose paradox. Control of climate change *is* urgent; intolerance of intolerance is as well. In Germany, anti-Semitism among new residents of the country may be addressed – or so a recent proposal suggests - by requiring new immigrants to visit to Nazi concentration camp memorials. Of course there remain too many instances of anti-Semitism among native-born Germans, despite student trips to Nazi concentration campus being “regular elements of German school curriculums” (Gladstone 2018, January 11, A4). Still, democracy requires a strong – even anti-democratic – response to those who would end it.

¹⁰ For an early analysis see Berliner and Biddle 1995.

¹¹ Grant 1966 [1959], 5.

¹² Doll, Hendry continues, “observed all the Lenten rituals: giving alms, sacrifice (no meat on Fridays), repentance and confession. The three traditional practices to be taken up with renewed vigor during Lent are prayer (justice towards God), fasting (justice towards self), and almsgiving (justice towards neighbors). I don’t believe he did this in the ‘spirit’ of following the ‘law’ of the church.” He also observed Mardi Gras, as Hendry – and everyone in this collection – can recall.

¹³ Recall that James B. Macdonald also invoked curriculum theory as a prayerful act: see 1995.

¹⁴ See Wang 2016.

¹⁵ See 2006. Also I am reminded of Paula Salvio’s depiction of Anne Sexton as a teacher of “weird abundance.”

¹⁶ Petra Munro Hendry concurs: “It is this sense of recursion that I now also understand not only as central to Bill’s teaching, but his very vision of education. We return again and again, this iteration is not repetition but a recognition that the dynamic process of education cannot be reduced to a linear story, an objective or method.”

¹⁷ For the slow professor see Berg and Seeber 2016. There is also slow art: see Reed 2017.