“A Lingerling Note”
Comments on the Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki

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But on this bridge, we are in no hurry to cross over;
in fact, such bridges lure us to linger.
—Ted T. Aoki

There is a problem with an American doing this work. Aoki is a Canadian scholar, uniquely so. To be grasped in terms of Canadian intellectual life, his work must be situated within Canadian history and culture, specifically, within Canadian curriculum studies. I lack the expertise for such a project, nor am not appropriately situated to undertake it. (I am not reiterating the view, held by some in cultural studies, that subject position is a prerequisite for expertise. But, of course, it matters.) I think Aoki’s work is extraordinarily important for American as well as Canadian curriculum studies, as I trust the attention I gave to it in Understanding Curriculum testifies. In that textbook, I focused on Aoki’s intellectual leadership in the effort to understand curriculum phenomenologically. While acknowledging there the movement in his work from phenomenology toward poststructuralism, I confess I did not grasp the full extent of it.

Why? I attribute this lapse in judgement to the fact that, while I had access to a number of Ted’s essays, I did not have access to them all. A number were in fact unpublished; and many were published in journals not readily accessible in the U.S. Several of the most brilliant, in fact, I had not yet read when I composed the passages on Aoki’s work for Understanding Curriculum. Now, thanks to Ted and to Rita L. Irwin, I have (and you will have) access to the entire body of work, entitled Curriculum in a New Key.
Aoki’s leadership in the effort to understand curriculum phenomenologically is legendary. After having read everything now, I conclude that it is only part of the story. Aoki’s scholarly work cannot adequately be described as “phenomenological,” despite the strong and enduring influence that philosophical tradition exhibits in these collected essays. Ted is enormously erudite; he is not only well–read in phenomenology, but in poststructuralism, critical theory and cultural criticism as well. Even these four complex intellectual traditions fail to depict the range and depth of his study and his intellectual achievement.

In my introduction to the collected essays of the man who taught us to “hear” curriculum in a “new key,” I emphasize the range and depth of the work. I focus too on the deft pedagogical moves Aoki makes in these essays, most of which were speeches. I know of no other scholar who took as seriously as Aoki did the scholarly conference as an educational event. Often working from conference themes, Aoki takes these opportunities to teach, and with great savvy and subtlety. Of someone we might say that s/he is a fine scholar and a superb teacher. Of Aoki we must say that his brilliance as a pedagogue is inextricably interwoven with his brilliance as scholar and theoretician. It is the unique and powerful combination of the three that makes Aoki’s work absolutely distinctive.

In taking seriously the conference and, thereby, construing our coming together as an educational event, Aoki acknowledges the centrality of the social in intellectual—and academic—life. In a time in which careerist self-interest and self-promotion animate and, for many, define professional practice, Aoki’s generosity in acknowledging the presence of others is exceptional. It discloses not only his utter intellectual honesty, but his profound sense of the ethical as well.

“There are new curriculum researchers,” he tells his fellow conference goers in 1973, “with whose ventures I can strike a vibrant and resonant chord. Although not too long ago this chord sounded strange deep inside me, that strangeness is fading. I think it is partly because in being at a conference such as this, I feel a sense of emergent becoming.” Already, in this early essay (the title essay of the collection), we hear the auditory characterization of education as “resonance.” The last phrase—and its notion of “emergent becoming”—underscores the dynamic, developmental, and dialectical character of Aoki’s intellectual formation.

I intend my introduction to the collected works to function in two ways. First, I hope it inaugurates a series of scholarly studies of Aoki’s oeuvre. To situate Aoki’s achievement within Canadian curriculum studies is a project I trust will be undertaken by several; to those of you listening tonight, please know there is at least one (but, no doubt, not only one) book series editor committed to supporting such an effort. There should be comparative studies as well, such as of the intersections (and differences)
between Aoki’s and Huebner’s work. As well, there need to be studies of Aoki’s influence on generations of younger scholars, and not only in Canada. I would like to see extended studies of Aoki’s intellectual life history. And certainly there is room for a biography of this uniquely Canadian intellectual and public pedagogue.

Especially in this time when the academic field of education is under savage attack by politicians (Aoki once described it as “open hunting season for education”), it is incumbent upon us to maintain our professional dignity by reasserting our commitment to the intellectual life of our field. Such a reassertion of our intellectual commitment includes, perhaps most of all, the study and teaching of curriculum theory and history. Study in neither domain can proceed far without the careful consideration of the work of Ted T. Aoki.

Second, I trust my introduction will function as both teaching aid and study guide. This ambition may seem redundant, given how brilliantly Aoki himself teaches in these essays. While that is the case, it is also true that Aoki’s work is complex, nuanced, and profound, and students without backgrounds in phenomenology, poststructuralism and critical theory may well benefit from my sketching of the thematic and pedagogical movements in Aoki’s work. I hope that my long and “lingering note” will stimulate students to engage Aoki’s essays more actively than they otherwise might.

As students of Aoki’s work know, the title of the collection derives from an early essay that was widely read, including in the U.S. But its visibility and familiarity were not the only reasons why Rita Irwin and I proposed it to Ted as the title of the entire collection. The concept of “key” is an auditory rather than visual one, and it is the primacy of the auditory in Aoki’s work that constitutes one of his most important and unique contributions to the field. It is Aoki’s critique of ocularcentrism in Western epistemology and his honoring of the auditory, and specifically the musical, that enable us to hear curriculum in a new key. Almost alone among curriculum theorists, Aoki appreciated that after the “linguistic turn” comes an auditory one.

In the foreword to Voices of Teaching, published by the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, Aoki appreciates teaching as a calling (he notes that “vocation” derives from the Latin vocare/to call), and he characterizes the “voices of teaching” in this collection as having “sought ways of attentunement that will allow them to hear, even faintly, the call of the calling.” Speaking of those who contributed to the collection, Aoki is also, it seems to me, speaking about himself when he writes: “[t]he authors of Voices of Teaching offer us narrative of some moments in their experiences of teaching, thereby opening themselves to the lived meanings of teaching.” Aoki’s theorizing is always profoundly pedagogical, deeply
grounded in concrete and specific educational events, occasions for experiencing the lived meanings of teaching.

Disengaging himself from teaching as a bureaucratized profession, Aoki opened himself to his own lived experience of teaching, at first in the Hutterite school east of Calgary (his first teaching job after “relocation” during World War II), then in the public schools of southern Alberta, nineteen years in all as teacher and assistant principal. After accepting a professorship at the University of Alberta, Aoki understood immediately (as we learn in chapter 13) that his “job” was not narrowly vocational, but profoundly theoretical, and that there was no unbridgeable divide between theory and practice.

In characterizing these “voices of teaching,” Aoki describes the work of finding themes in others’ work as “theming,” disclosing his fondness for gerunds rather than nouns, emphasizing the live in lived experience.

“Theming,” he writes, “is understood as a lingering intimately in embedded thoughtfulness in the story—as thoughtful listening in the nearness of the calling. Such theming is, as some would say, reflective thoughtfulness.” The labor of “theming,” Aoki concludes, involves:

what we might call a hermeneutic returning to the lived ground of human experience within the story—a place wherein inhabits a tensionality of both distance and nearing. It understands such a place as a resonant place where emerging from the silence may be heard the movement of melody and rhythm—polyphonic voices of teaching. Where might such a place be? Paradoxically, the place is where we already are – a place so near yet so far that we have forgotten its whereabouts. Reflecting theming may allow us to come to know how sufficiently as humans we inhabit where we already are as teachers.

This paragraph expresses several of the major themes of Aoki’s remarkable career, among them the primacy of “lived experience,” a distant but near “place” of “resonance,” sounding in unmistakable if silent rhythms the “polyphonic voices of teaching.” Where is this “lived experience,” this “place” where we can hear the call of teaching? It is where we are “already.”

These are deeply evocative themes, recalling phenomenology’s critique of contemporary life in the West as estranged from its ground, lost in the chimera of the mundane everyday world. Nowhere is that inauthentic social world more “suffocating” (to use another gerund of Aoki’s) than in those classrooms regulated by proliferating bureaucratic protocols, institutionalizations of Western (mis)conceptions of “individualism” and “competence.”
It is Aoki’s voice—no unitary sound, indeed, polyphonic—that sounds the call of our vocation, that calls us back to its lived ground where we are already, if muffled by the distractions and obsessions of the maelstrom that structures inauthenticity. There, where we are already, we can dwell in a conjunctive space, not one splintered by binaries, a lived space marked by generative tensions which we can incorporate, embody, and personify in our dialogical encounters with students and colleagues.

This “third space” within which we can dwell both incorporates and leads us to the world outside. It is the space between political and bureaucratic stipulation and the classroom re-enactment of those contractual obligations, the space between what Aoki so usefully characterizes as “curriculum-as-plan” and “curriculum-as-lived.” It is the space where we work (and play) to understand the educational meaning of our being together, in classrooms, at conferences, in seminars, engaged in improvisation, that disciplined and creative reconstitution of the past in anticipation of a future waiting to be heard in the present. “It is,” Aoki explains, “a space of doubling, where we slip into the language of ‘both this and that, but neither this nor that.’ …The space moves and is alive.”

It is to this profoundly spatial, temporal, and vibrant character of curriculum to which Aoki’s work testifies. Significantly, it is not temporality severed from history. Aoki’s narratives of his own schooling (the story of Mr. McNab in chapter 7), the family’s “evacuation” during World War II and his encounters with ignorance and prejudice, his mention of specific events (such as the Challenger disaster and the Columbine murders) all keep “time” grounded in “history,” but never collapsing the two. There is always in Aoki’s work an attunement to time that exceeds historicity, an attunement that renders Aoki not only a philosopher, but a historian, an autobiographer, always the sophisticated theoretician, in each instance answering the call of pedagogy, speaking in the voice(s) of teaching.

Ted is always teaching. Nearly all of these collected essays are speeches; they are, in a profound sense of the word, “lessons.” And even though the lessons he teaches are complex, never does he seem distracted by that complexity. Indeed, he is always attentive to the concreteness and singularity of the situation at hand. Invariably he acknowledges (respectfully) the occasion on which he is speaking, often referring to the conference title or theme, and organizing his “lesson” around those “signifiers.”

He proceeds with the sophistication and savvy of the veteran classroom teacher he is, sometimes disarming his listeners with a folksy story, sometimes taking on their own incomprehension as his own, embodying in himself their struggles to understand the lesson he is presenting, to bridge...
the distance between where they are and where he invites them to visit. Ted’s pedagogical movements from the concrete to the abstract and back again, and into the spaces among and between them, dazzles me, enables me to linger longer, listening to this master “musician” play.

In that “music” we hear echoes of pieces he has played before, but there is never simple repetition. As in jazz (in chapter 23 a visiting trumpeter makes this point explicit), the narratives Aoki reiterates sound differently each time he speaks them, each time in new context, serving a different purpose, while reconceptualizing an enduring theme. There is in Aoki’s oeuvre a robust recursive movement, as Aoki returns to lessons past in making points present, anticipating ideas yet to come. It is this temporal enactment of his pedagogy—organizing these speeches into “moments” and “echoes”—that enables listeners to understand the lessons he has to teach.

I had suggested to Ted that he organize these essays chronologically so students could see how his thought evolved over time. Too linear, I could hear him say in that familiar twinkling of his eye. After rereading the foreword to the Voices of Teaching I know why; he was “theming,” reflecting the gatherings that stimulated his thought, the clustering of concepts, the reconfiguring of melodies, creating new sounds of dissonance and difference out of juxtapositions a simple chronology would have silenced. I am grateful you declined my suggestions and stayed your course, a course, like the one you taught in Montreal, without foundations, in this instance, temporal foundations.

“Foundations” would be too reductionistic, too binary. You are, by your own admission, a “bridge,” both a noun and a verb. This theme shows up in the chapters on conversation, on the Pacific Rim, “a person,” as you put it, who is “both self and other.”

“It is my wish,” you offer in 1988, “to serve as a bridge over the Pacific Ocean.” You live on the Pacific Rim, you are Japanese and Canadian (as you make clear, a slippery set of signifiers), you are well aware of Western individualism (the limitations of which you have insistently pointed out), well aware of the Eastern side of the Rim. At some point you quote Roshin, a Taoist teacher, to make your point: “Humanity’s greatest delusion is that I am here and you are there.” There is no American–style narcissism here, in which the “other” disappears into my “self.” You invoke Levinas to ensure that your Western listeners and readers do not mistake the profoundly ethical, relational, indeed, ecological character of “self and other.”

It is this enduring sense of the ethical that enables you to occupy a space between history and time, between continents, between the public school classroom and the university seminar room, between a field in collapse in
the 1960s and a field experiencing rejuvenation today. Your career started in the Tylerian past, but you never seem to have been seduced by the apparently commonsensical purposes to which Tyler’s work was put, namely the conversion of the school into a factory.

Over and over again you point out that education is not a business, that a school principal is not an administrative manager (but, rather, a principal teacher). Somehow you knew that we needed not to see a new curriculum model, but to hear curriculum in a new key. And the new key you have composed is breathtakingly beautiful in its sonorous poeticity, powerfully and provocatively multiplying in its concepts.

Because the concept communicates the significance of the auditory in Aoki’s theory and teaching (and is a central concept in contemporary curriculum studies in the U.S.), I would like to close tonight by focusing on the notion of “conversation.” In the collection, it shows up first in Chapter 4, where Aoki revisits his experience during the 1970s evaluating the British Columbia Social Studies curriculum. In what he characterizes as the “Situational Interpretative Evaluation Orientation,” the primary interests are those meanings ascribed to the situation by those engaged in teaching and studying the curriculum. In order to represent those meanings, Aoki and his B.C. Social Studies Assessment team employed “conversational analysis.”

Disclosing the primacy of phenomenology in his thinking even at this early stage, Aoki notes that the conversation he has in mind is not “chit-chat,” nor is it the simple exchange of messages or only the communication of information. None of these, he suggests, requires “true human presence.” Nor is language only a tool by means of which thoughts are recoded into words. Curriculum as conversation, in this formulation, is no conveyor belt of “representational knowledge.” It is a matter of attunement, an auditory rather than visual conception.

In chapter 10, Aoki brings this phenomenological critique of “conversation” to bear on issues of intercultural education, specifically as these surfaced in the internationally–attended graduate program in curriculum studies at the University of Alberta. Revealing his characteristic pedagogical movement from the abstract to the concrete, from the theoretical to the anecdotal, here from the local to the global, Aoki conceives of graduate study as “a conversation of mankind” in a “transnational situation.”

Speaking with students who have come to Alberta from beyond North America, Aoki is reminded of the instrumentality of his assignment as an administrator and of the centrality of conversation in the process of education. In this intercultural educational experience, Aoki worries about the erasure of originary identities. “[T]o remind ourselves of who we are in
conversation,” he suggests to these students, “I ask that we turn the conversation to ourselves.” He poses to them what might be the central curriculum question in an era of globalization: “How will you know that what we consider ‘good’ here is ‘good’ in your homeland?”

In this same essay, Aoki employs “conversation” to think about what might comprise an “authentic dialogue” among scholars worldwide. “If East–West conversation in curriculum is to be authentically East–West dialogue, if North–South conversation is to be authentically North–South dialogue,” he suggests, then “such conversation must be guided by an interest in understanding more fully what is not said by going beyond what is said.” Here he is using a phenomenology of language—and specifically its depth imagery—to remind us that the social surface of speech is precisely that. Authentic conversation requires “going beyond” the surface to take into account “unspoken” and “taken-for-granted” assumptions, including “ideology,” what Aoki characterizes as “the cultural crucible and context that make possible what is said by each in the conversational situation.” With the inclusion of the concept of “ideology,” Aoki is disclosing a complication of his initial phenomenological formulation, here by critical theory, specifically the work of Habermas.

Aoki reminds us that “authentic conversation is open conversation,” never “empty,” always one in which the participants engage in a “reciprocity of perspectives.” Invoking one of his favorite metaphors, he tells us: “I understand conversation as a bridging of two worlds by a bridge, which is not a bridge.” Conversation is a passage from here to there and elsewhere, but it is not “here” or “there” or “elsewhere,” but in the conjunctive spaces in–between.

Aoki employs “bridge” in both literal and metaphoric senses; the idea seems to foreshadow the bridging movements in his own work. That movement is evident in chapter 9, a 1992 speech to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). It is, in my judgement, a most remarkable paper in which Aoki moves deftly between high abstraction and amusing anecdote. Among the abstractions he introduces to this audience of school personnel is interdisciplinarity, specifically, the teaching of science as one of the humanities.

Lest he run off his audience of administrators by such talk, Aoki creates a scenario on Bourbon Street. (Given that this conference was being held in New Orleans, he is enabling his audience to “run off” while remaining seated.) In this scenario, a scientist and a novelist are engaged in conversation, yes, about science taught as one of the humanities. Here he seems to be using “conversation” commonsensically, but this seems to me strategic, and it doesn’t last long. Quickly this concrete sense of conversation becomes abstract “under the influence,” not of drink (as one might suspect, being on Bourbon Street), but of the philosophy of Gilles
Deleuze.

For in this encounter between scientist and novelist, Aoki imagines, as he puts it, “improvised lines of movement growing from the middle of their conversation.” Such improvisation in conversation requires, he tells us, “a new language,” still a phenomenological theme, but now emitting a decidedly post-structuralist sound.

The language Aoki hears in this interdisciplinary conversation on Bourbon Street has, he tells us, “a grammar in which a noun is not always a noun, in which conjoining words like *between* and *and* are no mere joining words, a new language that might allow a transformative resonance of the words *paradigms, practices, and possibilities*” (a reference to the subtitle of Bill Schubert’s widely-read 1986 study).

“If that be so,” he concludes, returning us from the abstract to the concrete with humor, “we should all move to the French Quarter, so that we can not only listen, but also join them right in the middle of their conversation.”

Conversation understood as authentic attunement to “true human presence” was, let us remember, a radical idea in the 1970s; for many trapped in the school-as-a-business, it remains so today. By characterizing the exchange of “information” as “chit-chat,” Aoki was, in the 1973 essay, calling to us to rethink not only what we mean by “evaluation,” but, as we reflect on his later (in chapter 5) questionings of technology, to rethink the so-called Age of Information in which we presumably live. In 1992, not blocks from Bourbon Street, he is employing poststructuralism to disperse disciplinary identities and to create interdisciplinary spaces between the humanities and the sciences, spaces that include both sets of disciplines.

Twenty years after his initial and important formulation of the concept of “conversation” as evocative of and attuned to “true human presence,” Aoki (presumably retired, mind you) is speaking of conversation in less somber tones. By the early 1990s, Aoki is speaking of conversation as a version of jazz, a notion that first shows up in the 1991 Bobby Shew anecdote (see chapter 23) and a discussion of improvisation, although the language he employs in the New Orleans speech to ASCD is Deleuzian. Rather than returning to something lost or at least in jeopardy (“true human presence”), Aoki now focuses on something futural, something to be created, a “new language,” and through improvisation.

There is no question for Aoki of working from *either* phenomenology *or* from poststructuralism. The interest in language and, more specifically, the analysis of the conjunctions of apparently mutually exclusive binaries through deconstruction is present in Heidegger (if in the service of retrieving “true human presence”), as John Caputo (1987) and others have made clear (see Pinar et al. 1995, chapter 8). Aoki never abandons
phenomenology, but he follows it to its edge where conversation as hermeneutics becomes conversation as “improvisation.”

This is, I submit, a powerful notion that allows us to emphasize not only the creativity of teaching, but enables us to “hear” the relation between theory and practice. As Aoki notes in the title essay (if in visual terms): “Rather than seeing theory as leading into practice, we need now more than ever to see it as a reflective moment in praxis.” In the sounds of our conversation we honor the past by self-reflectively reformulating it in the present, animated by our own and others’ “true human presence.” That is the jazz of praxis.

If we focus on the auditory character of Aoki’s metaphors, we see continuity as well as change in the essays. From the beginning, Aoki is critical of scientistic observation (and its privileging of the visual), emphasizing instead the sound of conversation (and its privileging of the auditory). He makes this critique explicit in a 1991 speech to the British Columbia Music Educators’ Association, where he points out that conversation is primarily an auditory experience. In this important paper, Aoki quotes Derrida, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger to emphasize the significance of the ear and of listening in educational experience. He writes:

I pause [a musical term as well] to reflect. Lingering in the reflection, I confess that, over the years of schooling and teaching, I have become beholden to the metaphor of the I/eye—the I that sees….For myself, I too had become enamored of the metaphor of videre (to see, thinking and speaking of what eyes can see).

This formulation represents a major theoretical advance in our understanding of curriculum as conversation. In creating a “new language” in which sonare becomes as least as important as videre, Aoki has changed everything. Gone are decades of behaviorism and its residues in observational analysis. Questioned is the very subject–object binary in Western epistemology, imprinted as that is throughout the school curriculum and mainstream educational research. Questioned is the relegation of classroom teaching to “implementation,” a bureaucratic bridge between objectives and assessment.

Present are the sounds of complicated conversation in which teachers are bridges between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived, between the state and the multitude, between history and culture. “[C]onversation,” Aoki explains, “is a bridging of two worlds by a bridge, which is not a bridge.”

“Bridge” here is both noun and verb; it is both literal and metaphoric. It is
As Webster’s points out, “bridge” is defined as “time, place, or means of connection or transition.” Aoki himself performs, indeed personifies, such temporal and spatial connections and transitions: between the traditional and reconceptualized fields, between phenomenology and poststructuralism, between theory and pedagogy, between the West coast and the prairies, between Canada and the United States, between East and West.

To bridge East and West, Aoki moves away from a focus on the separate identities of the binary and into the spaces between them. As he puts it, he is “trying to undo the instrumental sense of ‘bridge’.” Such a nuanced sense of “bridge” is implied by the conjunction “and” in the binary. By focusing on the conjunctive space between “East and West,” and by understanding “and” as “both ‘and’ and ‘not-and,’” Aoki proposes a bridging space of “both conjunction and disjunction.” This is, Aoki explains, a space of tension, both “and/not-and,” a space “of conjoining and disrupting, indeed, a generative space of possibilities, a space wherein in tensioned ambiguity newness emerges.”

That last phrase describes, I think, the space you have created in your work, Ted, wherein we can now listen as if with new ears to conversation across terrains of difference, a complicated conversation in which both separation and belonging together exist in generative tension. The latter phrase is explicated in a 1990 paper, beautifully entitled “The Sound of Pedagogy in the Silence of the Morning Calm” (chapter 25), in which you privilege the gerund “belonging” over the noun “together.”

“[B]elonging” takes precedence over “together,” you explain, thereby revealing the “being” of “belonging.” In your subtle and sophisticated conceptualization, “being” vibrates like a violin string, and in its sound, honors the complexity and integrity of individual identity and social relationality.

“Bridge” is a musical term as well, defined by Webster’s as “an arch serving to raise the strings of a musical instrument.” How you have raised us, the individual strings of the field, attuning us to our calling as educators. You have ennobled us by your labor, you have enabled us to “be” in our belonging together, engaged in creative and disciplined “improvisation” as we traverse the terrain of our lived differences as educators.

“There are other bridges,” you note, such as those found in Japanese gardens, including Nitobe’s Garden here on the UBC campus. In your bridging movements from the abstract to the concrete, from the metaphoric to the literal, from history to culture, you have advanced, as you have complicated, our understanding of our pedagogical and scholarly calling. Your work is a bridge, and like the bridge you describe in chapter 18, “we
are in no hurry to cross over; in fact, such bridges lure us to linger.” This
metaphoric bridge is “a site or clearing in which earth, sky, mortals and
divine, long to be together, belong together.” Your work has created that
clearing, Ted Aoki.

I am grateful to you for allowing Rita Irwin and me to collect and edit your
life’s work. Your collected essays make crystal clear that you a master
scholar, theoretician, pedagogue. Your life’s work has influenced and will
continue to influence those who encounter it. If there were a Nobel Prize in
education, you would be a recipient.

Allow us, in our more modest way, to acknowledge your achievement
tonight. Allow me to point out that it is an achievement in which June Aoki
shares. Not only has June been your life partner, she has, on at least one
occasion (as we read about in chapter 27), been your colleague
intellectually, when her calligraphy informs your notion of “indwelling
calligraphically.”

As well, allow me to acknowledge your children, who have also
contributed to your intellectual formation. A man of rare artistic talent,
your son Edward asked you to “place yourself in the space between”
Gerhart Richter’s paintings at that exhibit in Montreal you describe in
chapter 28. “So located,” you report, “I tried a doubling….Indeed, my son
taught me a lesson on ‘where’—the site of living pedagogy.” And I suspect
that your son Douglas, on his way to a distinguished career in sociology,
has had something to do with those references to Lacan in the late essays.

Permit me too, Ted and June, to mention Michelle, whom Ted honors in a
very moving way in chapter 20.

But it is you—Ted Aoki—whom we honor tonight, a most remarkable
teacher, scholar, human being. "Brilliant" is a descriptor I have used
several times in these remarks. While accurate, “brilliant” doesn't
adequately convey the complexity of your gift and the extent of your
accomplishment, both of which have already been acknowledged across
North America.

I know of no other scholar in curriculum studies—or in the broader field of
education for that matter—whose lifetime of achievement has been
awarded with honorary doctorates from four universities. The Universities
of Alberta, British Columbia, Lethbridge and Western Ontario have each
conferred upon you honorary doctoral degrees. The Canadian Association
for Curriculum Studies honored you with its “Distinguished Service
Award” in 1985; also in that year, the Canadian Education Association
presented you with its “Whitworth Award for Research in Education,” and
two years later the American Educational Research Association awarded
you its “Distinguished Service Award.”
On Saturday evening, April 29, 2000, in Baton Rouge with June present and with colleagues from thirty nations and all the continents, it was my privilege and pleasure to present you yet another award. It read: “The Curriculum Theory Project of Louisiana State University honors Ted Aoki for a lifetime of achievement in the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies.” It is a minor trophy in your collection, but I was delighted to acknowledge you in front of colleagues assembled from around the world. Tonight I am delighted to acknowledge you in front of your colleagues assembled from across Canada.

I close by remembering a request you made of us, your colleagues, in 1979. You asked of us then: “Walk with me now.” We have walked with you, Ted Aoki, ennobled by your teaching, your ethics, your dignity. We will walk with you always. Please linger with us longer.

References


About the Author

**William F. Pinar** teaches curriculum theory at Louisiana State University, where he serves as the St. Bernard Parish Alumni Endowed Professor. He is the founding editor of the scholarly journal *JCT*, and, with Janet Miller, the founder of the Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice. He also was the founder and is now the President of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies. Publications include: *What Is Curriculum Theory?* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004), *The Gender of Racial Politics and Violence in America* (Peter Lang, 2001), and *Understanding Curriculum* (Peter Lang, 1995) for which he was senior author. He is editor of several collections, including the *International Handbook of Curriculum Research* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003 and *Queer Theory in Education* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998). Most recently, he has co-edited with Rita Irwin, *Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki*, (Lawrence Erlbaum, forthcoming). In spring 2000, he received the LSU Distinguished Faculty Award and an AERA Lifetime Achievement Award.

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