*Keynote*

# Curriculum and the National Imaginary; or, Re-Schooling Australia?

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There's a hotel in central Sydney that I often stay at — the 'Lawson Mercure', in Ultimo, close to the Powerhouse Museum and to Darling Harbour. It's convenient, and comfortable, and also — importantly — affordable. I like it, and recommend it.

The 'Lawson' referred to here is, of course, the iconic Henry Lawson. There are photographs and other memorabilia, scattered artfully all about, in what is a very deliberate and definite design-effect. In the lifts, along with the usual menus and the like, are displays of poems, beautifully presented — 'Andy's Gone With Cattle' and 'Mary Called Him Mister' are two that I recall. I read them each time, or my eye runs through and across them; sampling them in all their familiarity. If I'm alone, I may speak aloud a line or two, or savour the sound and texture of an image. Is *this* one possible future for an English Studies graduate, I wonder, someone trained in the Arts and Humanities, and therefore immersed in 'all that useless beauty'? To participate thus in what is undoubtedly a marketing campaign? Because I'm very conscious, each time, that this literary field of reference is yoked to the advertising ambience of this particular hotel, itself part of a global chain of such hotels. It's very much a situated image-effect, a 'lifestyle' marker, tailored to this time, this place. Lawson is hereby appropriated, commodified. It's a little touch of Australia, a glimpse into the national imaginary[1].

Native-born Australian as I am, and moreover by trade and training originally an English teacher, the whole thing immediately speaks to me, draws me in; reminds me of my formative years, when I both absorbed and actively resisted 'Australianness' — Australia literature, painting, manners and mannerisms, culture. It evokes my own identity project, as a 'subject' and a 'citizen', growing up in the 50s and 60s, and struggling with the mores and special lore of hegemonic masculinity, with issues of gender and class — for me, then, not so much race, or ethnicity — deeply inscribed in my body, my voice, my being and my becoming, my awkward passage through the second half of the twentieth century, here in Australia.

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[1] For a more formal and elaborated account of the concept of 'national imaginary', see Popkewitz (2000). For example: "The school has historically played a pivotal role in the construction of national representations and the principles through which individuals construct subjectivities" (Popkewitz, 2000: 266).

(An aside: What is being in this hotel like for tourists, I wonder?  Or, indeed, for those others who perhaps never get there — those *other* Australians?)

Looking back, nonetheless, I recognise and acknowledge this biographical trajectory through time and space as a not all that uncommon experience.  Many of us here today, I suspect, even in our obvious heterogeneity, have lived through similar stories, to become who we are — Australian curriculum workers, now facing the challenge of another century altogether and confronted, both professiona lly *and* existentially, with the question 'What to teach our children?'

We are gathered here today, together, in this Centenary year of Federation, part of a series of special events and occasions variously celebrating or questioning (or ignoring…) the coming into being of the nation — of Australia as a separate, distinctive nation.  We are, moreover, uniquely, a single nation spread across a whole continent — as Edmund Barton, our first Prime Minister put it (or 'Tosspot Toby, as he was called, apparently), 'a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation'.  Immediately, to note this is to introduce important issues of geography and governmentality, which I have begun to explore elsewhere in thinking about curriculum and schooling in Australia, the relationship between curriculum inquiry and curriculum work, our own tradition of 'curriculum thought', and the notion of a distinctively Antipodean form of public education (Green, 2001).

1901 is indeed a significant date in our history - and now it is 2001.  Another significant date, certainly in our cultural history, our cinematic imagination, reminding us of the legacy of the American filmmaker Stanley Kubrick, and also the pathos of history. Where is Hal now?  What future do we now inhabit?  What science fiction scenario, what (mere) fantasy?  Of course it is impossible to say this without reflecting on the extraordinary events of September 11, and the escalating tensions and frightening developments since then.  As you may know, another Kubrick-related  film has recently been released, 'AI', also science fiction, directed by Steven Speilberg and produced by him in deliberate homage to Kubrick, featuring among other things now doubly disturbing images of a Manhattan in ruins.  I find myself thinking of another film — 'On the Beach'.  (And, of course, Ava Gardner's famous although perhaps apocryphal line about Melbourne being a good place to make a film about the End of the World…)

Echoing Frank Moorhouse, we may be tempted to say 'It's the American's, Baby', and think that it's all quite distinct and distanced from us.  But it's not — and it hasn't been, at least since American influences first reached across the Pacific in the 40s and 50s, in film and television, in comics and popular culture, and entered indelibly into our psyches and our imag(in)ings.  That was an earlier form, a precursor, of what we now call globalisation.  It's not incidental, either, that it's linked indissociably with technocultural change, and the shaping influence of popular technologies ('tele-technologies'), the increasing significance of image and screen, and the 'visual', and new apprehensions of time and space, distance and proximity.

At this point I want to draw in some recent reflections of the historian Alan Atkinson, who among other things has researched and written about the significance of communications technology in Australian culture and history. As he writes in a recent address to a gathering of History teachers:

> I find it hard to teach about federation and the way it worked
> without saying a great deal about changing methods of
> communication. I see federation as a result of more efficient
> and pervasive methods of getting in touch and as an attempt to
> make those methods even more efficient and pervasive.

He argues that "[t]he way in which communications are changing today is part of a long history of evolution and revolution", not just in ways in which people deal with and relate to each other, on a personal (even 'amorous') level, but in terms of national sentiment and exchange as well. Change in communications and their associated technologies, he writes,

> is the basis of national feeling, and it is the basis of democracy
> because both depend on communication. An understanding of
> nineteenth-century communications technology — or rather, of
> the way in which communications technology was taken up and
> used — explains why and how men, women and children in this
> country came to think of themselves as members of a nation and
> a democracy. It explains the sense of national community both
> before and after federation in 1901 (Atkinson, 2001: 2).

Other historians have explored this line of thinking. Ken Livingston (1998) for instance referred to the notions of 'technological federalism' and 'technological nationalism' in his account of "the significance of communication history in the federation story" (Livingston, 1997: 14). Focusing more specifically on the history of the telegraph, he examined among other things "the extent to which intercolonial consultation over communications issues and whether such reporting fostered a federal and a national ethos" (Livingston, 1997: 16). Atkinson similarly looks at newspapers and their role within a generalised communications infrastructure — roads and railways, steamships and telegraphy, and later the telephone — in nation-building. He goes on to explore, very suggestively, the role of mass literacy in this regard.

In similar vein, scholars such as Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis highlight the role of communications history in Australian national development, from transportation to telecommunications. Right from the outset of the twentieth century, they write, "'[n]ation-building' and 'communication' were seen to be mutually reinforcing". Later, as they indicate, this modulated into concerns over "community-building" and "cultural standards" (Osborne and Lewis, 1995: 5). More recently, attention necessarily turns, as they indicate, to Australia's geopolitical (re-)positioning in a global context, and the acknowledgement of our proximity to Asia. Indeed, Osborne has suggested in a recent Radio National broadcast that whereas overcoming distance was at one time the key issue

in Australian communications history and theory, it has since become managing proximity — moreover, this is something that has been increasingly evident from at least the 1930s onwards. That date is significant for our purposes here, as I outline elsewhere (Green, 2001) and shall later go on to suggest again: the relationship between curriculum and communication, and the emergence and growing consolidation of curriculum theory and practice in Australia.

I want to reflect a moment on history itself, however, and on the historical imagination, and also on curriculum history. It is impossible in this Federation Centenary Year to escape various kinds of historical referencing — invitations of all sorts to look to the past for lessons and messages, roads taken and not taken, warnings and wonderings. Whatever else it is, Federation is a matter of memory and forgetting. "Australia is a nation consumed by amnesia", writes Paul Kelly (2001), in the context of a ('landmark') series of feature articles published earlier this year in *The Australian*, on republicanism, the Centenary celebrations, and the state of the nation[2]. Other commentators point to our predilection to nostalgia, including those of us in the business of education (Kirk, 1996). Some, perhaps understandably, distrust the whole exercise of telling and re-telling Federation stories — both in the present and as it unfolded, then — or are simply, sharply cynical, and critical. The debates continue. The good thing is that history is being talked up, on all sides, practised, in one form or another, even as the discipline and the subject enter into a perhaps fatal condition of formal decline, in schools and universities. What then is history, and how and why does it matter? More specifically: What are its implications and challenges for educators and for curriculum workers?

In this latter regard, Terri Seddon argued over a decade ago now that curriculum workers lacked an informed, self-critical sense of history, and were disadvantaged accordingly. "Australian curriculum workers do not know their own past; neither the curricular past, nor the history of their own profession". She continued:

> The preoccupation with the present which arises because history
> is neglected, means that the relationship between past, present
> and future is taken-for-granted. The links between past, present
> and future remain unexplored and the processes by which
> change occurs over time are insufficiently analysed (Seddon,
> 1989: 1).

There have been pleasing signs since then, specifically in the sphere of Australian curriculum research, that the field has indeed responded appropriately (eg Green and Beavis [eds], 1996; Green, Cormack and Reid, 2000), although it needs also to be said that a significant if scattered and somewhat sporadic body of work preceded her call to action. Particularly notable, I suggest, is the rich scholarship of David Kirk, addressed to issues of schooling, the body and physical culture, in the subject-area contexts of Health and Physical Education. Bernadette Baker is another Australian scholar, based now in the United States, who has made an important contribution *and* intervention in this regard, drawing on the neo-Foucaultian tradition. In a paper published in 1996, she

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[2] Other contributors include John Hirst, Mary Kalantzis, Lois Bryson and Lydia Miller.

pointed to structured absences in the available work in curriculum history in both Australia and New Zealand, in its earlier formulations at least, noting that

> … the construction and definition of the field in the 1980s not only marginalised or co-opted the histories of women and girls, the males and females of oppressed racial and ethnic groups and some aspects of class structures, but also ignored the evidence of children — the very pupils for whom curricula were initially constructed (Baker, 1996: 114).

It needs to be observed that work of this 'revisionist' kind has been emerging on the Australian scene for a while now — if not in curriculum history *per se*, then certainly in the history of education more generally. There are significant opportunities for dialogue here (Campbell and Sherington, 2001).

In a very recent paper, Seddon (2001) analyses "the history of curriculum formation with a view to documenting the changing significance and status of 'national' (ie nation-building) curriculum". She is worth quoting at some length:

> The history of modernist education indicates that state provided education, structured by a public curriculum and realised by a teaching workforce, was a key instrument for managing populations with national jurisdictions. Curriculum served as a means of regulation, an instrument of control and construction, wrapped up in nation-building rhetoric, which welded and organised 'the people' into a collective productive force to advance the nation, consolidate national identity and realise national destiny (Seddon, 2001: 1).

Yet, as she indicates, this historic ('modernist') mission is no longer as clear as it once was, especially given new dynamics and logics of globalisation and de-regulation. Now the very idea of "a *national* curriculum' is increasingly unconvincing" — "in the same way that the simple idea of a national space or national identity seems questionable". She goes on to describe curriculum itself as shaped increasingly "both by supra-national and sub-national social forces creating curriculum by diversity and dissent rather than by an over-aching and encompassing nation-building project" (Seddon, 2001: 1).

I want to make two points here. The first is simply to observe that historically-informed and -oriented curriculum research is clearly alive and kicking in Australia. The second warrants more elaborated discussion. It concerns the demise, or at least the decline, of what Seddon calls *the nation-building project* — a major condition of possibility and intelligibility for curriculum and schooling in Australia, as elsewhere. As I have argued in other contexts, this has been a feature of curriculum discourse from the outset: the relationship between public education and the building of the Australian nation. A central thesis of my own work has been that English teaching is thoroughly implicated in that whole activity, in ways that have yet to be adequately recognised or acknowledged.

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We are poised therefore at a particularly significant moment, and we are faced with an extremely important challenge. This might be described as the task of *nation-(re)building*, in a new era of crisis and change in the traditional nation-state.

Central to that, in my view, is the notion of *re*-schooling — to be sharply contrasted with *de*-schooling. With my colleague Chris Bigum, I have explored these notions in a paper addressed to the concept-metaphor of 're-tooling schooling' (Green and Bigum 1998), as part of a larger investigation of the educational implications of new technologies and the challenge of media culture. Among the arguments we have sought to marshal is that we are witnessing a profound transformation in the relationship between education and the media, as critical socialising agencies, a new importance assigned to media (in the broadest sense of that term), and — a directly related matter — a *decoupling* of curriculum and schooling. By this latter, I mean that while there had been a longstanding articulation between the idea of curriculum and the practice of schooling, as we know it, there are signs that this is changing. Curriculum increasingly needs to be conceptualised within other contexts and practices — notably the media, and also work, but taking in other pedagogic spaces as well, such as theme-parks, zoos, and museums. This means re-thinking curriculum itself, *outside* of the frames of the modernist schooling paradigm. It also mean re-thinking the very idea of the school, as traditionally conceived: a stand-alone, place-bound institution, in an increasingly networked world.

Re-tooling schooling, then. And re-schooling Australia. These are key themes, and together they constitute a crucial challenge, for curriculum workers, policy-makers, researchers. Re-positioning Australia in a globalised world, as a productive force and a significant presence in what is now widely seen as a knowledge economy, requires that we become a learning society, in the fullest sense. This must be characterised, moreover, by a new engagement with fundamental issues of culture, creativity and imagination. To become who and what we want to be, as a reconfigured, postmodern nation, is as much as anything else a *curriculum* problem — par excellence! It involves a view of curriculum practice, across its various levels, as the production of new national imaginaries: images and imaginings of Australian being and becoming, as a firmly cosmopolitan yet also always situated social identity. And that requires an informed, self-critical understanding of Australian history and culture. For those of us engaged in the work of curriculum, it requires above all else the exercise of historical imagination; and accordingly the project of curriculum history becomes invested with particular meaning and value, and urgency.

We also need new models and frameworks to help us in this regard. Hence I offer this formulation as a contribution of this kind, as what might be described as at once a 'table of invention' and a 'grid of specification', a heuristic map, enabling and informing the generation of curriculum statements and thus guiding curriculum research (see Appendix). As you can see, it brings together 'discourses', 'programs' and 'effects', along one axis, and a particular historical understanding along the other axis, encompassing 'past', 'present' *and* 'future'. I have been working with this diagram with my colleagues and students for some time now, and it has proved to be useful as a reference-point for our work. Two things should be noted about it. Firstly, its deliberate emphasis on plurality and difference — on the notion, for instance, that we should be cautious in

assigning a simple identity even to the 'present', the 'now' — is critical.  Secondly, I want to stress the necessary non-correspondence of the relations between what I am calling here 'discourses', 'programs' and 'effects', thus forestalling, hopefully, any attempt to read one off the other, or to assume that things can ever work out exactly as planned or desired!  History is too complicated, too messy for that.

For me, increasingly, I understand what I am doing as a form of *genealogy*, as a means of working with problematisations in the present, in order to think differently about curriculum and schooling now and tomorrow.  I am wanting to *supplement* our existing knowledges, and to unsettle our certainties — especially now, as we enter into what seems likely to be an era of very different ways of living and learning.  I want a wide, open angle on things.  I want the last, lost detail, *and* I want the Big Picture, as a field of constraint and possibility.  *And I want to retain always the capacity to be surprised.*

At the same time, it's important to be appropriately humble, to properly acknowledge what has happened previously, and to attend carefully to the dreams and the programs of the past.  What happened to them?  What can we learn from them?  For instance, in researching the historical dimensions of reading pedagogy, we have recently come across George Jones, a schoolteacher who taught in rural New South Wales in the early part of last century, and who devised a new method of teaching reading (Reid and Green, 2001).  Employing a combination what he called 'handplay' and an original system of diacritical markings, he sought to make the English alphabet more flexible and user-friendly, since "[h]e had come to the conclusion that the fault lay with the mother tongue, which was full of phonic difficulties".  Hence, as reported in the Union journal: "In order to make it thoroughly phonetic he sat down night and night and devised a new alphabet" (*Education*, Jan 15, 1920, p66).  His system was taken up enthusiastically, and after twenty-five years at Bundarra Public School (on the Gwydir) he was transferred to city schools to spread the Word.  It seemed to work — for a time at least.  Fifteen minutes stretched into more than a decade.  After that, the 'Jones Method' as it was called disappeared from the historical record, among other things caught up no doubt in the onset and then the onslaught of 'educational science' in the 1930s.

From a specifically curriculum point of view, there is much that could be said about this episode.  Picked up by an enterprising publisher and endorsed and supported by both the Union and the Department, Jones produced a set of curriculum materials, including charts and a Handbook.  It was a classic home-grown, grass-roots operation, clearly pre-dating the reading instruction and assessment industry as such, and the commercial and professional turn to external curriculum and literacy 'experts' that came subsequently to characterise the field.  It was also two decades into the radical curriculum innovation of Peter Board's introduction of a new Primary Syllabus, much influenced by the New Education.  Centrally-mandated syllabuses have since come to feature heavily in New South Wales, perhaps more so than elsewhere in the Australian scene — something that Cherry Collins and Margaret Vickers (1999) suggested at this conference in Perth two years ago is symptomatic of New South Wales, evidencing a distinctive curriculum-administrative mind-set or *mentalité*.  The tension between written and enacted forms of curriculum noted by Ivor Goodson and others (or between 'curriculum' and 'pedagogy', as

the recent Ramsey Report into teacher education in New South Wales puts it) is very evident in the ensuing history, right up to the present day.

The point to consider, too, is that the early twentieth century was a time of major consolidation for public schooling in Australia. Teachers like Mr Jones were active in shaping the nation, both in their programs (in every sense of that word) and in their presence, standing before the pupils in countless schools across the country. Board himself was convinced that public education, sponsored and funded by the state, had an especially significant roe to play in nation formation. As he wrote in 1905:

> Among the agencies that co-operate in nation building, the
> primary school holds a high place, for while in the school each
> individual child is the immediate object of the teacher's care and
> study, it is the relation of the child to the community and the
> State that gives to the teacher's work its wide horizon and far-
> reaching influence (Board, 1905: 7).

He was equally committed to the establishment of secondary schooling in this regard, as were his colleagues in other states, such as Frank Tate in Victoria and Alfred Williams in South Australia. Three decades later, Board reiterated his view of the importance of the schooling system to nationhood and what he called 'national consciousness':

> The history of the growth of a national consciousness in the
> Australian people has yet to be written. But here it may be
> stated that whereas education had been hitherto regarded as
> mainly the concern of the individual, it began to be realised after
> federation that, in addition to its relation to the individual, its
> relation to the State as a contributor to national well-being gave
> to it a significance which the State had to take into account
> (Board, 1932: 2).

As Williams avowed in 1910, "[w]hat we must do first is make good Australians of our children" (cited Kwan, 1991: 38). These are matters that have been taken up very usefully and comprehensively in the curriculum field by scholars such as Peter Musgrave (1994).

In a nice bit of historical framing, they have also been raised at the other end of the century, by the current Director-General of Education in New South Wales, Ken Boston. Like Board, and also people like Garth Boomer, Boston is both a public servant and an administrative-intellectual, particularly active in thinking about public education, curriculum and teaching. It is with figures (and their 'Offices') such as these, in fact, that much of our most influential curriculum thought is associated, more especially in its practical realisation in education policy and the schooling system. (Education Queensland's current 'New Basics' initiative is of a similar kind, spearheaded by Allan Luke more particularly in his special bureaucratic capacity, and arguably the most innovative and visionary undertaking in re-thinking public education and curriculum

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policy in the country's recent educational history.)  Boston too is passionately concerned about the fate and fortunes of public schools — understandably so, given the escalating drift to private schooling in New South Wales and the controversial school closures in inner Sydney.  His is a profoundly historical vision, sophisticated, and yet pragmatic and flexible: "Public education in NSW", he writes, "has never been static, and in the centre of Sydney, our nation's most mutable city, even less so.  The story of the State's schools is one of evolution and change, along with changes in society and its priorities" (Boston, 2001, p14).  The task he is engaged in is nothing less than that of re-thinking public education in Australia.  Given the Gormenghast effect of Australia's education bureaucracies, perhaps especially in New South Wales, I wish him well!

In an earlier paper, he makes explicit connections between the heady period of the late 1890s and the early twentieth century and our own recent history.  He refers to "[t]his period of optimism and imagination [that] expressed itself in the innovative social legislation which distinguished Australia at the turn of the century and seeded the 'practical arrangements' of Federation, the creation of the nation" — a time, moreover, of "extraordinarily intense discourse about public education  … and the circulation of new educational ideas and visions" (Boston, 1999: 6).  He is clearly attuned to the play of national imaginaries.  In another paper, he asserts that "[i]t is the distinctive role and capability of public schools to enable children and young people to assume the full dimension of their public character as Australia citizens" (Boston, 2000: 2).  Much as Board did a century ago, he explicitly evokes the power of literature and culture in this regard:

> Coincident with great transformations in Australia's national
> life, such as Federation, and the world wars of the last century,
> painters, writers, musicians and commentators have represented,
> and told stories about successive representations of[,] Australian
> character.  Their fictional creations have become either positive
> or negative ideals of personality and its public representation,
> which have peopled our imagined communities (Boston, 2000:
> 3).

He is drawing here on Benedict Anderson's (1991) understanding of nationhood as an "imagined community" — as do historians such as Atkinson, to whom I referred earlier.  This is an important formulation.  It certainly warrants extensive discussion.  At issue is the manner in which language and literacy are central and instrumental in shaping both subjectivity and national formations of culture and identity; personhood *and* nationhood.  Atkinson notes, among other things, the significance of newspapers in creating regular effects of community, not simply through their ever-changing content but also through the rhythms and rituals of daily acts of reading, the patterns of popular consumption, and the conversations that ensue.  Anderson himself points both to newspapers and the novel as important 'technologies' in this regard: registers of 'print-capitalism', in his terms, and of what I have elsewhere called *the print apparatus*, so foundational in our current-traditional notions of curriculum and literacy.  It is but a little step from here to consider modernist mass-compulsory schooling as another such 'technology', as Boston does, and

Atkinson, and others: a pedagogic machine for (re)producing national sentiments and for making good Australians…

But how?  How is this managed?  What actually happens?  Does it really work like that?  I wonder.  Bringing all these overall questions and concerns together is, in fact, the goal of a large-scale project I'm currently engaged in, with my colleagues Jo-Anne Reid and Phil Cormack.  Funded by the ARC, it's a curriculum-historical study of English teaching, teacher education and public schooling in Australia, focused on the period from Federation to World War Two.  For me, as I've indicated, it's part of a longer-term research program addressed to the history and politics of English teaching, within a general concern for curriculum inquiry and curriculum history.  We have called our project 'Schooling Australia', to indicate our interest in what is involved and what's at issue in constructing the teacher and schooling the nation, in this crucial formative period (Green and Reid, 2000).  We are particularly interested in mapping the English curriculum over the first half of the century, both in its programmatic features and form and in its often unforseen effects, as well as its overall discursive field of practice and formation.

So when Boston points to the power and value of literature in (re)generating public character and a sense of citizenship and national community, there is particular resonance for us.  "How do public schools create the values which build character?" he asks, responding that "[i]t is through what they teach and what they are".  He refers specifically to Lawson's short story "The Drover's Wife" — "typical fare", as he puts it, "for public schools in years 10 or 11" (Boston, 2000: 4).  As he presents it, classroom work with this story is an exemplary lesson in ethics and understanding, offering insight into the history, culture and feeling of Australia, as a distinctive national imaginary.  I agree with him: it does have that potential, and that resonance, but only when it is appropriately and richly contextualised, and read *and* taught in ways that open up its complex polysemy.  The passage through curriculum, in the fullest sense, is crucial.

And there's the rub.  We assume too often that this is more or less straightforward.  We forget, or overlook, or perhaps simply fail to realise, that this is always a *transformative* practice.  Something different happens — always.  Classrooms are always sites not simply of instruction but of *production*, of learning and meaning-making, individually *and* collectively, of cultural practice and formation.  Moreover, curriculum is a 'dividing practice', in Foucault's sense: it produces and reproduces inequalities, differences, distinction.  Hence, when we refer to curriculum in terms of a representation problem, as originally proposed by Ulf Lundgren and elaborated by Stephen Kemmis and others, we need to be aware of the complexities of the notion of representation, beyond its original modernist framing.  We need to understand it as, at once, political and semiotic — a matter of power and meaning, together, or force *and* signification.  Understanding curriculum in terms of the play of national imaginaries is always a matter of struggle and contention, then.  What is at issue are more often than not conflicting definitions and conceptualisations of Australia, its culture, identity and destiny, and its place in a changing world.

A fascinating account of bush schools in Australia (Nelson, 1989) provides rich historical insight into curriculum practice, and I want to conclude with some references drawn from it. As Nelson writes: "When children from the 1920s to the 1950s are asked what they were taught in the one-teacher schools they talk about the stories and poetry of Paterson and Lawson" — something no doubt many of us (even of later generations?) can identify with, ourselves, however mixed our feelings about that might be. "The distinctive knowledge that the children of the bush schools had in common is about the Loaded Dog, The Man from Ironbark, and the Snowy River, The Drover's Wife, Clancy, Harry Dale, Saltbush Bill, and That There Dog of Mine" (Nelson, 1989: 114)[3]. It is impossible to read this now, at the beginning of a new century, in very different circumstances and conditions, without bearing in mind the long persistence of the Bush Myth, and the power of certain national imaginaries — always gendered, raced, classed, etc, as they are. What is being communicated here through curriculum and the schooling process? What has replaced it? If curriculum is indeed the story we tell our children, about our past, our present and our future, what messages and meanings are we now charged with transmitting, with communicating, with offering up to their reading and their learning, their hybrid forms of cultural production? Their *re-telling*?

What challenges are we faced with now, as curriculum workers, with no binding agreements in place, anywhere, as to the existence of a common, canonic, 'core' culture, and the capacity lost, as Seddon (2001: 15) writes, to "understand curriculum as a common entitlement and as endorsed knowledge which is publicly validated and authorised as it is passed from generation to generation"? What's different now?[4]

Let me return, in closing, to "The Drover's Wife", and to Henry Lawson. What else is needed now, to complement and supplement this text, and to make it the subject of a truly meaningful, persuasive, socially responsible, critical *curriculum* experience, one that opens up new opportunities for the pedagogic structuring of knowledge and identity? Is there room for Barbara Baynton's "Squeaker's Mate"? For Murray Bail's postmodernist re-writing? Drysdale's painting? Can we imagine a meeting between "The Drover's Wife" and "The Simpsons"? A version filtered through "South Park"? Or re-routed, however surreally, through Hong Kong martial arts cinema? These are curriculum questions. We are charged now with re-negotiating the curriculum, with reviewing and re-affirming certain curriculum priorities and with generating new social imaginaries, new visions and versions of the Nation, the Citizen *and* the School, in the context of a New World Order. The challenge now is one of, in short, re-schooling Australia.

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[3] Further, in relation to educational events such as Anzac Day and Empire Day: "The children of the bush schools were Australians and members of the British Empire. Later, commentators were to see a contradiction between the two: they thought Australians were uncertain about their identity. But for most Australians there was no doubt. They were Australians, that was basic to who they thought they were, and they were also members of the British Empire" (Nelson, 1989: 115-116.

[4] For a start, the composition of the population is very different from what it was in the first half of the century. This is a point made by Miriam Dixson in her book 'The Imaginary Australian', on the importance of the notion of a 'core culture' and a need for re-assessment of the Anglo-Celtic tradition in Australian history and society. As she writes, citing James Jupp: "At its highest point, in 1947, 'the British component of the population was over 90 per cent, of which the vast majority was born in Australia'" (Dixson, 1999: 35).

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**APPENDIX:**

|  | PAST(S) | PRESENT(S) | FUTURE(S) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DISCOURSES** |  |  |  |
| **PROGRAMS** |  |  |  |
| **EFFECTS** |  |  |  |

On behalf of the International Conference on Education, we cordially invite participants to speak as a keynote speaker on advances in the field of Education research at the conference. The research conference is attended by distinguished scholars, experts and researchers from all over the world. The organizing committee would be grateful if keynote speakers share their expertise on their specialized topic with conference participants. As a keynote speaker, your knowledge would be an excellent addition to our program. Thank you for considering our request and please do not hesitate to contact u Indeed, education for participatory democratic citizenship as an educational purpose overcomes the fragmentation transversalities of the different purposes, and could become an element of curriculum integration. Within this new interest in educating for a democratic and participatory citizenship, there has been a focus on the treatment of social and environmental problems arising from the belief that education should be directed towards the formation of a critical and socially engaged citizenship, helping to understand social reality and its problems and to build social thinking to manage the In the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship, students investigate diverse cultural contexts and develop skills in being able to see common issues through diverse cultural lenses. They explore the notion of citizenship, the contribution of diverse cultural influences, and the critical role of shared beliefs and values in an evolving Australian identity. Â The Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education provides opportunities for students to recognise and respect different ways of thinking about personal, family and social health approaches. Â Students also develop intercultural understanding from their study of the English language and the ways it has been influenced by different cultural groups, languages, speakers and writers.