

**The Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (CACS)
Bi-Annual Pre-Conference**

**Announcement and Call for Papers
Friday, May 28, 2010
(one day prior to CSSE)
8:30 am to 3 pm
Concordia University, Montréal**

**Pre-Conference Theme:
Thinking About and Enacting Curriculum in “*Frames of War*”¹**

In her recent book *Frames of War*, Judith Butler raises critical questions about how we comprehend (“frame”) life and our relations to others in the contexts of the proliferation of war around the globe. She argues that the current global conflicts have thrown into especially sharp relief issues of how we apprehend the other, and what constitutes a “grievable life,” when others suffer in situations of war and related calamities. In the introduction, she begins,

I am seeking to draw attention to the epistemological problem raised by this issue of framing: the frames through which we apprehend, or, indeed, fail to apprehend the lives of others as lost or injured (lose-able or injurable) are politically saturated. They are themselves operations of power....On the other hand, the problem is ontological, since the question at issue is: *What is a life?* The “being” of life is itself constituted through selective means; as a result, we cannot refer to this “being” outside of the operations of power....(2009, p.1; italics in original)

Questions of epistemology and ontology are central to our work as curriculum scholars and practitioners. We are suggesting Butler’s notion of framing as a challenge to curriculum: that is, given the kinds of contextual challenges in which we work, how do those both enframe our understanding and practices, and to what extent are those frames mutable points of challenge and indeed re-framing? As well, the question of “what is a life” is a central—or should be—concern for curriculum practice and theorizing. Thinking about and enacting curriculum in “frames of war” is echoed in Hannah Arendt’s memorable words about a world that is always “out of joint”: “To preserve the world against the mortality of its creators and inhabitants it must be constantly set right anew. The problem is simply to educate in such a way that setting-right remains actually possible, even though it can, of course, never be assured.”²

The pre-conference theme is consistent with the overall theme for the 2010 CSSE Conference: “Connected Understanding,” and how we understand relationships of learning and being with Butler’s (2009) challenge of recognizing the precariousness of life and how that obliges us to recognize the frames of war. These “*frames of recognition*” (p. 5) include those through which we understand curricula, diversity and enact our relationships with our students, and the kind of

¹ “Frames of War” is from the title of Judith Butler’s book, *Frames of war. When is life grievable?* London and New York: Verso, 2009.

² Arendt, H. (1969). *In Between Past and Present. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: Penquin Books, p. 192-3.

challenges posed by Arendt: that is, how we both conceive of and "take care" of knowledge and the responsibilities to the young. In describing the children's book "The Librarian of Basra" as a metaphor for the caretaking of knowledge in difficult times, Jardine & Naqvi (2008) challenge educators with the following: "*What educators have with this simple children's book is an image of taking care of knowledge in difficult and dark times, our time, this time, under the current shadow of war consciousness*" (p. 640³)

In this shadow of "war consciousness"⁴ the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies' pre-conference format offers interested scholars an opportunity to engage in dialogue about curriculum questions within and against the "frames of war," what that implies for recognition of the other, and how we may understand the complexities and precariousness that encompasses our work as educators and caretakers of knowledge in difficult times. The pre-conference will provide a forum that encourages discussion across philosophies, across disciplines, across borders and across timelines. We welcome papers representative of a wide range of perspectives and methodologies that examine the topics springing from these questions offered by this call for proposals.

Invitation to submit a Proposal for Participation in the CACS Pre-Conference

Curriculum and other educational scholars and practitioners are invited to submit a proposal for the CACS pre-conference.

Proposals should **not exceed 500 words**, and should clearly indicate the relationship to the pre-conference theme.

Please submit your proposal for participation by e-mail to: **Roswita Dressler rahdress@ucalgary.ca** by **Friday, December 11, 2009**

On your proposal, in addition to your abstract, please indicate:

Name of Presenter(s):

Contact person and email:

Affiliation(s):

Mailing address:

Email:

Telephone:

³ Jardine D. & Naqvi R. (2008) Learning Not to Speak in Tongues: Thoughts on the Librarian of Basra In Canadian Journal of Education. Vol. 31, 3, pp. 639-666. <http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE31-3/CJE31-3-JardineNaqvi.pdf>

⁴ For a discussion of this and its implications for education, see Smith, D. G. (2006). Trying to teach in a season of great untruth: globalization, empire and the crises of pedagogy. Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers. Smith, D. G. (2006a). Troubles with the sacred canopy: Global citizenship in a season of great untruth. In G. Richardson & D. Blades (Eds.), *Troubling the canon of citizenship education* (pp. 124-135). New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

Proposals will be adjudicated according to their relationship to the pre-conference theme and their interest and relevance for provoking dialogue around diverse knowledge traditions within transnational understandings of curriculum and pedagogy.

We will advise you of acceptance of your proposal by **Friday, January 22, 2010.**

If you have further questions about the pre-conference, please contact either:

Co-chair Rahat Naqvi (rnaqvi@ucalgary.ca)
2nd Vice president Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies

Co-chair Hans Smits (hsmits@ucalgary.ca)
Faculty of Education, University of Calgary

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Cost: \$30 for faculty and practitioners and \$20 for students (includes cost of lunch and snacks)