the profession and "outside" it (in society, in government) that makes radical curriculum reform in the schools unlikely.

Given our conception by others, we are currently unable, as individuals or as a group, to undertake radical reform. Christopher Lasch's point about the political socialization of the young pertains, I think, to many educators as well: "The socialization of the young reproduces the political domination at the level of personal experience. In our own time, this invasion of private life by the forces of organized domination has become so pervasive that personal life has almost ceased to exist" (Lasch 1978, 30). Given the historical moment, we must work from within.

2

Autobiography: A Revolutionary Act

I
TO RUN THE COURSE

[I]ndividuality is no longer associated with sovereignty but instead with subjection and docility.
—Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (2001, 26)

Currere is a reflexive cycle in which thought bends back upon itself and thus recovers its volition.
—Madeleine R. Grumet (1976, 130–131)

[A]utobiography can be a revolutionary act.
—L. L. Langness and Gelya Frank (1981, 93)

To support the systematic study of self-reflexivity within the processes of education, I devised the method of *currere*. The method of *currere*—the Latin infinitive form of curriculum means to run the course, or, in the gerund form, the running of the course—provides a strategy for students of curriculum to study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction.

There are four steps or moments in the method of *currere*: the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical. These point to both temporal and cognitive movements in the autobiographical study of educational experience; they suggest the temporal and cognitive modes of relation between knower and known that might characterize the ontological structure of educational experience (Pinar 1994; Pinar and Grumet 1976).

Stated simply, *currere* seeks to understand the contribution academic studies makes to one's understanding of his or her life (and vice versa), and how both are imbricated in society, politics, and culture (Bruner 1996). Influenced by literary and feminist theory, *currere* becomes a version of cultural criticism. "Cultural criticism," Christopher Lasch (1978, 16) notes, "took on a personal and autobiographical character, which at its worst degenerated into self-display but at its best showed that the attempt to understand culture has to include the way it shapes the critic's own consciousness." Due to the dangers of exhibitionism and exposure (De Castell 1999), I have declined to recommend the use of *currere* as an instructional device in the school curriculum.

The student of educational experience takes as hypothesis that at any given moment she or he is in a "biographic situation" (Pinar and Grumet 1976, 51), that is to say, that she or he is located in historical time and cultural place, but in a singularly meaningful way, a situation to be expressed in one's autobiographical voice. "Biographic situation" suggests a structure of lived meaning that follows from past situations, but which contains, perhaps unarticulated, contradictions of past and present as well as anticipation of possible futures.

> I can see that this has led to that; in that circumstance I chose that, I rejected this alternative; I affiliated with those people, then left them for these, that this field intrigued me intellectually, then that one; I worked on this problem, then that one. . . . I see that there is a coherence. Not necessarily a logical one, but a lived one, a felt one. The point of coherence is the biography as it is lived. . . . The predominant [question] is: what has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience? (Pinar and Grumet 1976, 52; quoted in Pinar et al. 1995, 520)

In the regressive step or moment I conceived of one's apparently past "lived" or existential experience as "data source." To generate "data" one free associates, after the psychoanalytic technique, to re-enter the past, and to thereby enlarge—and transform—one's memory. In doing so, one regresses: "One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present" (1976, 55). In the second or progressive step one looks toward what is not yet the case, what is not yet present. Like the past, I suggested, the future inhabits the present. Meditatively, the student of *currere* imagines possible futures.

In the analytical stage the student examines both past and present. Etymologically, *ana* means "up, throughout"; *lysis* means "a loosening." The analysis of *currere* is akin to phenomenological bracketing; one's distantiation from past and future functions to create a subjective space of freedom in the present. This occurs in the analytic moment: "How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?" (Pinar and Grumet 1976, 60; quoted in Pinar et al. 1995, 520).

The analytic phase is not self-scrutiny for the sake of public performance, a self-theatricalizing in which social life becomes a spectacle. As Lasch (1978, 94) points out: "In our society, anxious self-scrutiny (not to be confused with critical self-examination) not only serves to regulate information signaled to others and to interpret signals received; it also establishes an ironic distance from the deadly routine of daily life." The point of *currere* is an intensified engagement with daily life, not an ironic detachment from it.

What is this temporal complexity that presents itself to me as the present moment? In the synthetical step—etymologically *syn* means "together"; *tithenai* means "to place"—one re-enters the lived present. Conscious of one's breathing, indeed, of one's embodied otherness, one asks "who is that?" Listening carefully to one's own inner voice in the historical and natural world, one asks: "what is the meaning of the present?"

> Make it all a whole. It, all of it—intellect, emotion, behavior—occurs in and through the physical body. As the body is a concrete whole, so what occurs within and through the body can become a discernible whole, integrated in its meaningfulness. . . . Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation. I am placed together. Synthesis. (1976, 61; quoted in Pinar et al. 1995, 521)

The moment of synthesis—one of intense interiority—is expressed poetically by Mary Aswell Doll (2000, xii): "Curriculum is also . . . a coursing, as in an electric current. The work of the curriculum theorist should tap this intense current within, that which courses through the inner person, that which electrifies or gives life to a person's energy source."

As Megan Boler (1999, 178) appreciates, "the Socratic admonition to 'know thyself' may not lead to self-transformation." By itself and especially as a psychological process, self-reflection "may result in no measurable change or good to others or oneself" (1999, 178). In contrast to psychologistic conceptions of self-knowledge, what Boler (1999, 178) terms "collective witnessing is always understood in relation to others, and in relation to personal and cultural histories and material conditions." As this volume will make explicit, self-knowledge and collective witnessing are complementary projects of self-mobilization for social reconstruction.

The method of *currere* reconceptualized curriculum from course objectives to complicated conversation with oneself (as a "private" intellectual), an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engaged pedagogical action—as a private-and-public intellectual—with others in the social reconstruction of the public sphere. Curriculum theory asks you, as a prospective or practicing teacher, to consider your position as engaged with yourself and your students and colleagues in the construction of a public

sphere, a public sphere not yet born, a future that cannot be discerned in, or even thought from, the present. So conceived, the classroom becomes simultaneously a civic square and a room of one's own.

Autobiography is a first-person and singular version of culture and history as these are embodied in the concretely existing individual in society in historical time. In European and European-American culture (in the modernist period especially), scholarly studies of culture and history have expressed disinterested and spectator-like structures of epistemology and knowledge. In contrast to these fictive universalisms are fiction and poetry. What would the curriculum look like if we centered the school subjects in the autobiographical histories and reflections of those who undergo them? The "subjects" in school subjects would refer to human subjects as well as academic ones. Indeed, the academic disciplines are highly systematized, formalized, bureaucratized conversations among human subjects, circulating in specific regimes of reason, sometimes estranged from bodies of knowledge.

Cultural politics cannot be conducted at this time, in this place, without a politics of the individual, and within this subjective sphere the individual himself or herself must be an activist working to democratize one's interiority. The "population" internalized within is the electorate, as it were, and these "citizens" must be recognized, respected, persuaded, not silenced, "othered," deported without a "hearing." Only through a genuine democratization of one's interiorized elements, none of which gets deported (projected, in psychoanalytic terms) to the bodies of others who then become "others," can the body politic be reformed and the public sphere reconstructed. Autobiography is not bourgeois narcissism, as Christopher Lasch (1978, 206) appreciated: "Discussion of personal issues can no longer be dismissed as a form of 'bourgeois subjectivity'." Indeed, autobiography is the pedagogical political practice for the 21st century.

Indirect autobiography—an autobiographics of alterity (Gilmore 1994)—subjectifies intellectually the process of social psychoanalysis. The official story a nation or culture tells itself—often evident in school curriculum—hides other truths. The national story also creates the illusion of truth being on the social surface, when it is nearly axiomatic that the stories we tell ourselves mask other, unacceptable truths. What we as a nation try not to remember—genocide, slavery, lynching, prison rape—structures the politics of our collective identification and imagined affiliation. The pretensions of the Founding Fathers and their colleagues were not only pretensions; they were, as well, aspirations. Perhaps that was our—the white middle-class, 1960s generations of public university students—naiveté and misunderstanding: We believed only the aspirations, in part due to our teachers' and parents' (innocent?) misrepresentation of the nation.

Was it to justify their suffering during the Depression and during World War II and the Korean War and perhaps to thank someone, something—a nation, God, the two conflated for many—for delivering them from economic deprivation and from the threat of military defeat, that our parents and teachers taught us (their post-World War II children) that America was the land of liberty, freedom, equality? The words of the Founding Fathers seemed proof of an indelible and enduring identity.

And so many of us believed them, our parents, our teachers, ourselves. In the 1960s we learned (at university, not in the censored high-school curriculum) that the USA had never been only or, it seemed, mostly about those aspirations. In the midst of cultural revolution, and the intensifying antiwar and civil rights movements, these seemed not sincere aspirations but rhetorical cover-ups to hide the nation's other life, its "other" identity, its hidden curriculum. In the streets, on college campuses, across the South, we learned that, from the genocide of the indigenous peoples to the Boston Tea Party and the slave trade, the United States has always been about low taxation, individual greed, and mass violence. While these are hardly exceptional in human history, these facts did underscore to us that this country is not exceptional in human history, despite politicians' rhetoric and our miseducation.

The Founding Fathers' rhetoric is inspiring but it is not unique; the French Revolution has some rather fancy if puzzling (given the savagery of events, the quick retreat to the national fantasy Napoleon represented) language accompanying it as well. We declare these truths to be self-evident: This nation is built on the backs and bodies of vanquished "others." Does nationalism always represent, in part, a historically specific version of the dynamics of denial?

The educational task is to take the cover stories we as Americans tell ourselves and look to the back pages. We must teach what the cover stories hide, exposing and problematizing the "hidden curriculum." We do so for the sake of truth but not *just* for the sake of truth: Educational confession, including autobiographical confession (Foucault's association of confession and the regulation of the self to the contrary), is for the sake of psycho-political movement, in order to create passages out of and away from the stasis of the historical present.

Not to romanticize marginalized peoples (although there is much to admire), but it is "there"—that is to say, in our fantasies which construct the "other"—that European Americans must look to initiate our passage out of Egypt. Those split-off fantasies constitute (and hide) the blocks to cultural movement and political restructuring. The American dream understood only as wealth is a nightmare; understood symbolically as psycho-social movement and political transformation, it is dream worth waking up to. In educational terms, it is living the progressive dream of John Dewey, Jane Addams, Boyd Bode, and George B. Counts.

Just as serious autobiographical work requires the surfacing and re-incorporation of repudiated elements, cultural progress requires analogous recon-

ction. This is not the same old liberal line: One is not trying to assimilate repressed elements into the self as it exists. Rather, autobiographical la- aims to reconstitute the nation that exists, the nation that exists, as the re- rporated elements redefine the terms of a new deal, new subjectivities, a nation, and a sustainable planet.

II
THE SOCIAL AND SUBJECTIVE IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I saw them [African Americans] hedged for centuries by prejudice, intolerance, and brutality; hobbled by their own ignorance, poverty, and helplessness; yet, notwithstanding, still brave and unvanquished. . . . The situation in which they were might have seemed hopeless, but they themselves were not without hope.
—James Weldon Johnson (1933, 120)

Multiculturalism suspends the traumatic kernel of the Other, reducing it to an aseptic folklorist entity.
—Slavoj Zizek (1998, 168)

Our subjectivity is objectively intended.
—Kaja Silverman (2000, 133)

ask and begin to answer autobiographical questions requires, then, con- ing the subjective to the social, and vice versa. There is, perhaps, no more erful example of such connection that the traditions of African-Ameri- autobiography. African-American autobiographical practices racialize, ticize, and historicize self-narration. Racial politics and violence in Amer- ave been undergone as subjective as well as civic experience (Pinar 2001). ereas both white and black literary traditions in the United States begin autobiographical accounts, black accounts reveal aspects of early Amer- life absent in the early colonial journals of William Bradford, Cotton her, and Jonathon Edwards. African-American autobiographies sup- ed psycho-political struggle against a predatory and enslaving white re- e. This reverberating fact affects the entire tradition of African-American ature, not to mention the history of the United States (Morrison 1992). can-American identities have been created, in no small measure, in resis- e to murdering white masters, and lived, at times, with seemingly unbear- intensity (Butterfield 1974). In the context of racial politics in America, Stephen Butterfield (1974, 284) observes, "autobiography . . . becomes an arsenal and a battleground."

Autobiography, Butterfield (1974) believes, has been an especially appealing form to many African-American writers because, as a genre, it inhabits two worlds: history and literature. Many African-American writers, he notes, have also tended to live in two worlds: white and black, "public mask and private face" (1974, 285). Autobiography, Butterfield (1974, 284) suggests, "affords the greatest opportunities to combine the two perspectives because it develops like a village on the crossroads between the author's subjective life and his social-historical life."

Making the case to European-American readers for the significance of this genre, Butterfield (1974) argues that African-American autobiographies fill in many of the blanks of the nation's self-knowledge. They document what has been ignored in American life by many white writers and critics. Further, they show how white critical judgment has been limited, indeed deformed, by racial blind spots. "I have begun to wonder," Toni Morrison (1992, 5) famously writes,

> whether the major, much celebrated themes of American literature—individualism, masculinity, the conflict between social engagement and historical isolation, an acute and ambiguous moral problematics, the juxtaposition of innocence with figures representing death and hell—are not in fact responses to a dark, abiding, signifying Africanistic presence.

It is a powerful point differently made by Leslie Fiedler (1966).

In key ways, the African-American experience informs the American identity; in one sense, it constitutes the cultural "unconscious" of the nation (Castenell and Pinar 1993). African-American autobiographies provide inspiration and hope for all Americans; as Butterfield asserts, African-American autobiographies *are* the American conscience. But among many European Americans, especially among those in the South, a strong if false sense persists that the African-American experience has no point for them, that what happened "before" has nothing to do with the "now." Stephen Butterfield (1974, 4) knows: "Knowledge of the sins of the fathers is a terrible burden for the children of pirates, murderers, kidnappers, rapists, for the children of those who received the benefits of stolen labor and genocide and closed their eyes, perhaps with a humanitarian shudder, to its effects." This is, Deborah Britzman (1998) might say, "difficult knowledge." But, Butterfield (1974, 4) continues,

> The price of ignoring it is to smother the intelligence, with all the consequences this racism implies: to become divorced from one's humanity, to reduce oneself to a thing, a consumer, a machine for generating or appropriating surplus value, an obstacle to the growth of others. But, as so many black autobiographies demonstrate, one is never required to remain a thing. The humanity won

drawal, the private self withers (or, in his terms, is rendered "narcissistic" and "minimal").

So the historical task of self-shattering and transformation cannot proceed in a politically straightforward or authentically phenomenological fashion, at least not for those psychologically burdened in the present with the conquests of his imperial ancestors. This is no simple matter of guilt but of character structure, although these are not, if we again think of Lasch's (1984) analysis, unrelated. For those in states of marginalization and victimization, progressive possibilities remain, as African-American traditions of autobiography testify.

Too many whites (especially white men) are, in a psycho-cultural sense, their own slaves, trapped by our their internalized masters, bifurcated into sadist and masochist, one self, at once divided and united under God (Savran 1998). How can we escape our own "plantations," how can we find the "railroad" north to freedom when we have no Harriet Tubman to guide us? We cannot simply turn to the black man, as did Huck Finn, and expect to be healed (see Fiedler 1948, 1966). We cannot become black men; they are, as Ellison knew, invisible to us. What we can do is work to recover those split-off fragments of ourselves that white men—no monolithic category to be sure (Pfeil 1995)—have projected onto "others" (especially black men, black women, white women, children, and others) and reincorporate them (see Young-Bruehl 1996). From that re-experienced trauma of self-disintegration we might begin to decipher not "who am I" but "whose am I."

III
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICS OF ALTERITY

[I]gnorance seems to be mostly a matter of self-ignorance.
—Norman O. Brown (1959, 322)

Liberation also comes from intimacy with the self.
—Victor Brombert (1978, 71)

The possibility of overcoming the subjugating self-reflexivity emerges from the intensification of the divergence within the subject.
—Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (2001, 30)

A classically European statement of autobiography was made by Georges Gusdorf. What is Gusdorf's view? He began by noting that autobiography has not always existed, nor does it exist everywhere. He believed autobiography expresses "a concern particular to Western Man" (Gusdorf 1980, 29; quoted in Graham 1989, 94). That concern is an appreciation for experience, for one's own experience, for oneself. In this sense, autobiography represents an economy of the self wherein the narration of one's story functions to preserve oneself. Additionally, autobiography proclaims the self as witness: "he calls himself as witness for himself; others he calls as witnesses for what is irreplaceable in his presence" (1980, 29; quoted in Graham 1989, 94). For Gusdorf, biography sketches the exterior of a person; autobiography provides the possibility of spiritual revolution: "The artist and model coincide, the historian tackles himself as object" (1980, 31; quoted in Graham 1989, 95). In like fashion, Karl J. Weintraub (1978, 822) asserts that autobiography is "concretely experienced reality and not the realm of brute external fact."

In contrast to a painting, Gusdorf continues, autobiography retraces experience over time and place. In contrast to the diarist who may record daily experience without concern for continuity, the autobiographer must distantiate her or himself from him or herself, "in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity" (1980, 35; quoted in Graham 1989, 95). While he characterizes memoirs as a "revenge on history" (1980, 35; quoted in Graham 1989, 95), autobiographical remembrance is said to be performed for its own sake, to "recover and redeem lost time in fixing it forever" (1980, 37; quoted in Graham 1989, 95).

Gusdorf finds several problems inherent in autobiography. According to Gusdorf, the autobiographer takes the unity and identity of the self for granted, imagining that he can "merge what he has with what he has become" (1980, 39; quoted in Graham 1989, 96). Gusdorf notes that the individual person exhibits latent as well as manifest intention: "Thus the original sin of autobiography is first one of logical coherence and rationalization" (1980, 41; quoted in Graham 1989, 96). Consequently, the significance of autobiography lies "beyond truth and falsity" (1980, 43; quoted in Graham 1989, 96). Gusdorf concludes that the object of autobiography is not to report the events of an individual's life—that project belongs to the historian or biographer. For Gusdorf, the point of autobiography is to reveal the autobiographer's effort "to give the meaning of his own mythic tale" (1980, 48; quoted in Graham 1989, 97).

Robert Graham (1991) notes that Gusdorf's basic point regarding the significance of autobiography seems largely ignored by many literary theorists. Gusdorf is partly to blame, Graham suggests, choosing Narcissus as the metaphoric myth for autobiographical activity. As James Olney (1980) observed: "This shift of attention from bios to autos—from the life to the self—was, I believe, largely responsible for opening things up and turning them in a philosophical, psychological, and literary direction" (1980, 19; quoted in Graham, 97). Rather than Narcissus, Graham offers, Antaeus might prove a more appropriate image for autobiography, as suggested by Gunn (1982). In this image, Graham (1989, 97) writes, "the self that comes to life is not that of Narcissus who drowned reaching for his mirror-image in the pool, but rather the

example of Antaeus, who, so long as he remained in touch with the earth, could not be killed." It was Hercules who, after learning Antaeus' secret, suspended him in the air; there, he overcame him. As Gunn (1982) points out: "Understood as the story of Antaeus, the real question of the autobiographical self then becomes where do I belong? not, who am I? The question of the self's identity becomes the question of the self's location in a world" (23; quoted in Graham 1989, 97), a question of "place" (see chapter 4).

The trouble is, as Shari Benstock (1988, 11) observes, that "autobiography reveals the impossibility of its own dream: what begins on the presumption of self-knowledge ends in the creation of a fiction that covers over the premises of its construction." It is exactly these covered-over "premises" that "indirect autobiography" or, after Leigh Gilmore (1994), the "autobiographics of alterity," is conceived to reveal.

For Lacan, the "mirror stage" of psychic development is that time—Nancy Lesko terms it "panoptical time"—the child is initiated into the social community and brought under the law of the Symbolic (which is to say, the law of language as constituted through society). This stage results in a compelling if false image of the child's unified "self." The apparent cohesion of the self is impressed upon the child from the outside (in the mirror reflection). This seemingly unified self is, in Ellie Ragland-Sullivan's words, "asymmetrical, fictional, artificial." Ragland-Sullivan argued that the "mirror stage must, therefore, be understood as a metaphor for the vision of harmony of a subject essentially in discord" (quoted in Benstock 1988, 12).

The "discord" that is transfigured into a unified, identifiable, continuous "self" has been constructed from those images, sounds, and sensory responses available to the infant during the first 6 months or so of his or her life. This sedimented memory of the symbiotic identification with the mother and, for many men, the violence of one's repudiation of that identification—is called the unconscious, from which heteronormative men flee. In one sense, it is the "wake" which follows in the flight of the self from itself, itself as fragmented, partial, segmented, and different or "other." In this view, the unconscious is not the lower depths of the conscious but rather an inner seam, a space between "inside" and "outside." The unconscious is the "space of difference," a "gap" that the drive toward a unified self can never cover over. The unconscious, then, is what Benstock (1988, 12) terms "the space of writing," a space marked by the effects of the false symmetry of the mirror stage.

In a definition of autobiographical process that provides evidence for Lacan's mirror stage, Georges Gusdorf declared: "Autobiography . . . requires a man [*sic*] to take a distance with regard to himself in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time" (quoted in Benstock 1988, 14–15). The interest in such a distancing and reconstitution is, Bentock (1988) tells us, exactly a consequence of the mirror stage. In the Gusdorf sentence there is a recognition of the space of estrangement within the

specular (*le regard* in Lacan's terminology) that leads to the compensatory unification of the reflected self to suture disintegration and self-division (Benstock 1988). The self-dissociated elements become split-off social fragments, projected onto and, in other ways, associated with those who come to stand for what is missing, and must be kept missing, as in the European-American men's certainty of what "blacks" or "women" are "like."

When autobiography is understood phenomenologically, "distancing" and "reconstituting" need not be, strictly speaking, compensatory. These gerunds can also refer to the process of excavation, and to the architectural rebuilding of a self, with materials previously excluded (now excavated), a self more spacious, more inviting, especially to "others," like women, children, African Americans, who become, now, no longer "others" and no longer invisible. Too often the black male body is, for the European-American male, what he, in his self-dissociated imaginary, is "not," that is, "dangerous, athletic, and virile" (Murtadha-Watts 2000, 52).

For Georges Gusdorf, autobiography "is the mirror in which the individual reflects his own image" (quoted in Benstock 1988, 15). In such a mirror the "self" and the "reflection" coincide. This definition of autobiography overlooks the educational potential of autobiography. This potential has to do with the ways in which "self" and "self-image" fail to coincide. Perhaps, as Benstock (1988) suggests, they can never coincide in language. This "failure" is not because certain forms of autobiography are not sufficiently self-conscious. Rather, it is because certain forms of self-writing have no interest in creating a cohesive self, continuous over time. Certain forms of autobiographical writing acknowledge difference and discontinuity over sameness and identity. Such writing occupies the "seam" of the conscious/unconscious where boundaries between internal and external intersect (Benstock 1988).

Benstock's point seems right to me, but there are racial and gender differences that can be usefully acknowledged. For heterosexually identified white men, finding the seams, discovering the traces of rejected fragments, and creating interior spaces may well prove pedagogically useful, potentially self-shattering. As Ewa Plonowska Ziarek (2001, 39) points out:

> Yet, it is the tear, or the separation of the self from its sedimented identity, that enables a redefinition of becoming and freedom from its sedimented identity, that enables a redefinition of becoming and freedom from the liberation of identity to the continuous "surpassing" of oneself.

The task for African-American and women's autobiography may be different. When already on the margins, when testifying to subjective experience the dominant regime fails to recognize, self-writing—think of Ida B. Wells (1970)—may help form a mobilized, coherent self in solidarity with (subjugated) others. For those whose mobilization is taken-for-granted, even over-

determined, whose integration is the consequence of cultural hegemony, then autobiographical writing must indeed seek the seams.

Language itself may function as a defense against unconscious knowledge, Benstock notes. There is no clearly discernible border between conscious and unconscious modes of experience. Lacerated by language, the speaking subject is, in Lacan's view, primordially divided (Benstock 1988). Does this self-division have to be played out imperialistically, as in hegemonic white masculinity? Or is this self-division itself historical and political and gendered and racialized?

I argue that self-division is gendered; it is male, it is, especially, "straight." "The straight mind valorizes difference," Bersani (1995, 39) asserts. He is not conflating sexual preference with cognitive practice, as he adds "[o]bviously don't have to be straight to think straight." The association of compulsory heterosexuality with a hierarchical view of difference can be understood psychoanalytically. Bersani (1995) reminds us that Kenneth Lewes (1988) theorized male heterosexual desire as the complicated consequence of flight to the father following a horrified retreat from the mother. So conceptualized, male heterosexuality is constructed upon and actively requires a traumatic privileging of difference. "The cultural consolidation of heterosexuality," Bersani (1995, 40) writes, "is grounded in its more fundamental, non-reflective construction as the compulsive repetition of a traumatic response to difference." In this regard, "the straight mind might be thought of as a sublimation of this privileging of difference" (Bersani 1995, 40).

Nor is it "playing in the dark" (to recall Morrison's fine phrase [1992]) to see that self-division may be racialized, as European Americans—especially straight white men—tend not to experience a divided self, but, rather, a splitting off of disavowed interior fragments, projecting them onto the social field, creating "others." This self-structure differs from the "dual consciousness" Du Bois (1903) described, as dual consciousness, fashioned in response to racism and white supremacy, does not involve self-dissociation but stereoscopic vision.

On April 20, 1919, Virginia Woolf wrote: "The main requisite, I think on re-reading my old volumes, is not to play the part of censor, but to write as the mood comes or of anything whatever; since I was curious to find how I went for things put in haphazard, and found the significance to lie where I never saw it at the time" (quoted in Benstock 1988, 18). Is this the Lacanian idea that one's objects of desire are often relocated to fool oneself, to hide the "crime," rearranging the clues at the scene? "Haphazard" is smart because it invites the "truth" to inadvertently find its way through the censor. Later, when one's eyes are looking the other way, perhaps one understands the meaning of a misplaced clue. It is an indirect investigation.

Almost 6 years later (March 20, 1926) Woolf comments, "as far as I know, as a writer I am only now writing out my mind," a turn of phrase that suggests multiple relations between "mind" and "writing." On October 29, 1933, she notes "how tremendously important unconsciousness is when one writes" (both passages quoted in Benstock 1988, 19). Benstock (1988) suggests that the relation of the conscious to the unconscious, of the mind to writing, of the interior to the exterior of political systems, imply a problematization of (I would add, especially male) narrative conventions. There is, perhaps, a questioning of the Symbolic law, which might take the form of reconceptualizing narrative form itself. One such reconceptualization might well, it seems to me, be an "autobiographics of alterity," or "indirect autobiography" (after Pier Paulo Pasolini) or "autobiographicality" (Cavell 1994, 10), in which one's views of "others" are taken to be just that. Such notions invite us to understand curriculum as a verb, as *currere*.

Virginia Woolf believed that the "strong emotion must leave its trace." Finding ways to discover and decode these traces becomes both the impetus for her memoir writing and, Benstock (1988) adds, the guarantee of its failure. Woolf must discount memories: "As an account of my life they are misleading, because the things one does not remember are as important; perhaps they are more important" (quoted passages in Benstock 1988, 27–28). She's right, of course. The first things that come to mind are merely that, the first things. One must wait for the second, third, and fourth, until one has found clues pointing to what the first things hide. Virginia Woolf understands: Strong emotion leaves traces, which is to say clues. What one does not remember, or, at least, remember immediately (and that "immediately" can last for decades), is probably more important. That is why the periphery—of one's everyday ego, of the body politic—is so important.

Shari Benstock (1988) contrasts Virginia Woolf's notion of reality with T. S. Eliot's. Woolf does not experience a shock of recognition in the mirror. Rather, reality reveals itself as a linguistic space (a "scene") that conceals and simultaneously seals the gap (the "crack") of the unconscious. Language operates via distinctions and differences, and thereby becomes a medium by which and through the "self" is constructed. "Writing the self" is, Benstock (1988, 29) continues: "a process of simultaneous sealing and splitting that can only trace fissures of discontinuity."

The autobiographical process occurs—here Benstock quotes James Olney—via "the individual's special, peculiar psychic configuration," but it is not an act of "consciousness, pure and simple," as it must refer to "objects outside itself to . . . events, and to . . . other lives"; it must participate in the "shifting, changing unrealities of mundane life"; it is never "atemporal" (quoted in Benstock 1988, 29).

The cultural precondition for autobiography, Georges Gusdorf had argued, is a pervasive concept of individualism, a "conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life," a self-consciousness that is "the late product of a specific civilization," by which he meant the post-Renaissance west-

ern societies (quoted in Friedman 1988, 34). Gusdorf's contributions are undeniable, Susan Stanford Friedman (1988) reminds, especially his appreciation for the fact that autobiographical selves are constructed through the process of writing and therefore cannot replicate exactly the selves who lived.

But there is a fundamental inappropriateness, Friedman (1988) insists, of individualistic models of the self-formation for women and for other "others." It is twofold. First, individualism does not take into account the problems of a culturally imposed group identity for women and racialized minorities. That is to say, the individualism model tends to ignore the social and political configurations of oppression and colonization, the ways that collective suffering can make for solidarity. Second, Friedman continues, the emphasis on separateness ignores important developmental differences in the socialization of male and female gender identity. From both ideological and psychological perspectives, then, individualistic models of the self ignore the roles of collective and relational identities in the individuation process of women and minorities (Friedman 1988), and, I would add, of men as well, however denied these may be for many men. In the United States, the "possessive individual" is a cultural myth, a psychological compensation, a political convenience, an economic rationale, but not a cultural reality.

Psychoanalytic theories of autobiography, Friedman (1988) continues, focus on the development of the self as it forms through intense interaction with others, particularly with the mother, father, and/or caretakers. Such a relational focus differs sharply, she notes, from the theories of Olney and Gusdorf. Freidman is, of course, right that the self is undeniably plural. While it is so that the self is an interactional self, the self is also capable of singularity and solitariness, a "room of one's own." Being in relation to others does not deny singularity. Besides being in profoundly formative relationships with others, one is oneself a shifting configuration of introjected as well as self-dissociated fragments of (past) others, in kaleidoscopic reconfigurations located in place and across time, structured in gendered, racialized ways. I think of William Earle (1972), who argued convincingly that we cannot get ourselves "right" unless we get ourselves exactly, precisely, uniquely "right" as individuals. If individuality were not a developmental possibility, psychoanalysis would be a subfield of sociology.

Also influenced by psychoanalysis, Jeffrey Mehlman (1971/1974) discerns narcissistic and Oedipal phases inscribed in autobiographical narratives. The failures of Narcissus and Oedipus prefigure the impossible task of the autobiographer to find and report a definitively authentic self. Autobiography is, thereby, "necessarily fictive," as it fashions a self whose very coherence disguises its falseness and alienation (quoted in Friedman 1988, 37). To find a "real" self, a definitive or final self, is the autobiographical version of "positivism."

There are moments in autobiographical work, in the regressive phase, when the movement is back from the present, toward the sources, the antecedents, of one's present situation. The regressive moment or step is an effort to get "underneath" the layers where one lives, to earlier layers where one can re-experience what is excluded in the presently constituted ego. Often this process "feels" like reaching more truthful versions: As in geological formations, there is the experience of "discovery," of learning how the particular knot of feeling/thought/action followed in some very specific way from earlier "knots," earlier events (Laing 1970).

There is, I think we can say, a relatively "authentic" self, or selves, or elements of self. This is the person I was conditioned and brought up to be. When I am in touch with that "self," and act in accordance with him or her, I feel congruent, integrated, "right." The regressive phase of *currere* is about uncovering this self, and in psychoanalytic fashion, experiencing the relief of understanding how one came to be psychically, which is to say, socially. For, as in psychoanalysis, bringing to light what was held in obscurity represents, in part, the therapeutic potential and consequence of self-reflective study. It is also the political potential, as one may choose not to coincide with the racialized and gendered creature one's family required one to be.

Of course, transference relationships can function therapeutically, although this transference can be not only with another individual, for instance, one's teacher. Transference can be with/among various fragments of self, excluded from membership in the present ego assemblage, perhaps repudiated by projecting them onto "others." The regressive phase of *currere* is a discursive (hence specifically fictional in Mehlman's sense) practice of truth-telling, of confession, but not to the priest (as in regulative practices of the Catholic Church) or to one's fellow-travelers (as in the solidarity of Alcoholics Anonymous). It is to oneself one comes to practice the autobiographics of self-shattering, revelation, confession, and reconfiguration. Self-excavation precedes the self-understanding, which precedes self-mobilization, although any rigidly linear conceptions of self-reflexivity necessarily reify subjectivity.

The progressive phrase of *currere* may be understood as a kind of free-associative "futuring" during which one seeks the revelation of one's fantasies of what one might be. These imaginings are expressions of who one is not now, of material felt to be missing, sought after, aspired to. The possibility in this phase, at which Mehlman hints, is to discern how who one is hides what one might become. These fictive representations of who I might be, what world I might inhabit in the future, these fictional versions of who I might be someday but am not now allow us to feel our way through the obscurity of the present. They are the means by which we midwife what is not yet born, in ourselves, generated by others. They change where we are, how we feel, what

we think; they become, in another sense, discursive passages, what Rorty calls a "vocabulary" by means of which we move into new lived space. We become different selves, and in so doing, we become different in the world that itself becomes transformed by our presence there.

Both one's past and one's fantasies of the future are simultaneously in "the" past and "the" future. The self is profoundly historical, even if this temporal constitution is obscured in the commodification of social relations capitalism compels. The self is gendered and racialized as well, yet these "aspects" do not "add up" to one, total, complete self. There is a subjective, "felt" singularity that comprises, finally, our individuality, that incorporates these social dimensions, renders them a matter of feeling (Boler 1999; see also Jackson 1999).

Now this individuality may be illusory; it may because we are embodied, that we have separate bodies that we also experience the illusion of being singular selves. Is the body "the locus of learning" (Stoller 1997, 13)? For now, let us acknowledge, with Susan Friedman (1988, 38), that serious autobiography is possible only when:

> [t]he individual does not feel herself to exist outside of others, and still less against others, but very much with others in an interdependent existence that asserts its rhythms everywhere in the community . . . [where] lives are so thoroughly entangled that each of them has its center everywhere and its circumference nowhere. The important unit is thus never the isolated being.

Not only are we never isolated, we are not unitary or self-identical. Formed by sociality, in historical time, we are informed by the past that haunts us through dreams and nightmares.

IV
DEFERRED AND DISPLACED ACTION

The primal scene is always a scene that is "unknown" and "forgotten."
—Ned Lukacher (1986, 27)

Although representing what is most emphatically our own, the language of our desire consequently remains for most of us irreducibly Other. In a certain sense, we do not even speak it; rather, it speaks us.
—Kaja Silverman (2000, 51)

If the affect is a wound to thought, how then is it possible to think the affect?
—Deborah Britzman (2000, 43)

Curriculum conceived as *currere* requires not only the study of autobiography, history, and social theory, it requires as well the serious study of psychoanalytic theory. There is, perhaps, no tradition of systematic inquiry into the sphere of the subjective, into the processes of self-formation—and their complex and ever-changing relations to the social and historical—that offers us as many provocative conceptual tools as do the various strands of psychoanalytic theory. As Robert Graham (1989, 101) observed: "Autobiography has everything to learn from psychoanalysis." Psychoanalytic theory offers a model of translating private language into the public language and, thereby, enabling the re-symbolization of private and public meaning (Warnke 1993).

Psychoanalysis shares with modern philosophy, literary theory, and criticism, Ned Lukacher (1986) points out, a refusal to forget the question of origin. Psychoanalysis in particular is dedicated to the labor of remembering "the primordial forgetfulness that conceals the origin" (Lukacher 1986, 26). The notion of the primal scene is key to this labor (see also Edelman 1994). Freud formulated the idea while working with his most famous patient, a Russian man named Sergei Pankejev. On the eve of his fourth birthday, Pankejev had dreamed that through an opened window he saw a barren tree in winter in which six or seven white wolves were sitting and staring at him, obviously about to leap in upon him and consume him. He awoke screaming. For the remainder of his long life, Pankejev—named by Freud the "Wolf-Man"—never forgot the terror and the profound impression of reality that the dream created (Lukacher 1986).

In his study of the Wolf-Man's case—*From The History of an Infantile Neurosis*, published in 1918, wherein for the first time appears the concept of "primal scene"—Freud theorizes the relation of the dream to reality. The patient had presented Freud with both a verbal text and a line drawing of wolves sitting in a tree after remembering the dream early in the course of a 4-year analysis. Much of the remaining analysis was devoted to determining the relation of the dream to reality. For nearly 40 years Freud pondered the relation of dreams to reality, without ever reaching a definitive theorization. Does the dream point to the empirical fact of the primal scene, or is it the consequence of a "primal phantasy"? (Recall the controversy surrounding Freud's famous inversion of his theory that many children had been sexually molested by their parents to the theory of infantile sexuality, in which infants are themselves sexual and desire their parents.) The dream suggests something anterior, perhaps something we might characterize as "the origin," but its interpretation does not necessarily bring this actual primal scene into memory (Lukacher 1986).

In the broad field of education—in which curriculum theory is situated—there is a tradition of interest in psychoanalysis. During the Progressive Era there were efforts to theorize a psychoanalysis of education (see Cremin 1961, 209ff.), but those efforts disappeared as business thinking and the political interests dominated school curriculum.