WHAT IS Curriculum THEORY?

William F. Pinar

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LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
2004 Mahwah, New Jersey London

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers
10 Industrial Avenue
Mahwah, New Jersey 07430

Cover design by Sean Sciarrone

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pinar, William.
What is curriculum theory? / William F. Pinar.
p. cm. — (Studies in curriculum theory)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8058-4827-4 (cloth : alk. paper) — ISBN 0-8058-4828-2 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Education—Curricula—United States. 2. Education—Political aspects—United States.
I. Title. II. Series.

LB1570.P552 2004
375'.0001—dc22 2003060375
CIP

ISBN 1-4106-0979-0 Master e-book ISBN

For
Mary
and
Marla

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Preface

Especially during this time when the academic field of education is under savage attack by politicians, it is incumbent upon us to maintain our professional dignity by reasserting our commitment to the intellectual life of our field. Such a reassertion of our intellectual commitment includes, perhaps most of all, the study and teaching of curriculum theory and history. Such study enables us to understand this terrible time and our positions in it.

Our situation is not very different from that of our colleagues in the public schools. Having lost control of the curriculum, public-school teachers have been reduced to domestic workers, instructed by politicians to clean up the "mess" left by politics, culture, and history. That is an impossible job, of course, and politicians have seized upon its impossibility to deflect their constituents' attention away from the mess they've been making of the American nation.

We education professors who work with public-school teachers are being scapegoated as well (see chap. 9). The courses we teach are "hurdles," according to the U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, tripping up hoards of talented college graduates who would otherwise enter the teaching profession. Moreover, there is, we are told, "empirical" research that demonstrates that teachers who have been spared education coursework are more successful (than teachers who have not) in raising their students' test scores. This "business" model of education—the "bottom line" (standardized test scores) is all that matters—is now enforced by federal legislation and by presumably professional organizations like the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; see chap. 9, Sections II and III). We education professors are losing—have lost?—control of the curriculum we teach.

In this primer for teachers (prospective and practicing), I offer an interpretation of the nightmare that is the present. Our nightmare began in the 1950s, when gendered anxieties over the Cold War and racialized anxieties over school desegregation coded public education (not for the first time) as "feminized" and "black." The vicious character of politicians' and many parents' criticisms of public education is intelligible only as a recoding of these gendered and racialized anxieties, "deferred and displaced" from the originary events onto "school reform" (see chap. 2).

While the origins of our present political difficulties began with the exploitation of public education as a Presidential campaign issue in 1960 by a liberal Democratic candidate, subsequent exploitations have been made by candidates mostly on the right (see chap. 3). What is at stake in right-wing reform—which has converted the school into a business, focused on the "bottom line" (test scores) —is control of the curriculum, what teachers are permitted to teach, what children are permitted to study. At least from the 1960s, the right-wing in the United States has appreciated that its political ascendancy depends on controlling how and what Americans think.

And "conservatives"—especially in the mid-West and far West—have appreciated that the white South is key to Republican electoral success (see chap. 4). That fact first became clear in the 1964 Presidential campaign. The Democratic candidate who defeated Republican nominee Barry Goldwater—President Lyndon B. Johnson—understood that he was handing over the white South to an increasingly right-wing Republican Party when he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (see chap. 10). We teachers—in the university, in the public schools—cannot understand our present circumstances apart from appreciating how the American nation has "gone South."

Understanding the American South is a prerequisite to any effort to reconstruct public education in the United States. Understanding the white South (and its reactionary racial and gender politics, of which school reform is a "deferred and displaced" expression) requires understanding its history. In chapter 4 we glimpse a telling and still reverberating event in that racialized and gendered history: lynching. One hundred years ago, lynching was "America's National Crime." The centrality of castration to the lynching event underscores that racial politics and violence in this country have been—still are—simultaneously a sexual politics. (The widespread white rape of black female slaves established the fact that racial domination is sexualized.) It is no accident that striking sanitation workers in spring 1968—the same strike that took Martin Luther King, Jr., to Memphis—carried signs saying simply: I AM A MAN. Of course, that sentence means "I am a human being," and it means "I am a citizen." But striking sanitation workers did not choose those categories; instead, these black men chose a gendered term. The politics of school reform is intelligible only in gendered and racialized terms (see chap. 3).

Not only history presses down upon us, so does the future, fantasized as technological and "information-based" (see chaps. 5 and 6). If only we place computers in every classroom, if only school children stare at screens (rather than at teachers, evidently) they can "learn," become "competitive" in the "new millennium." Information is not knowledge, of course, and without ethical and intellectual judgment—which cannot be programmed into a machine—the Age of Information is an Age of Ignorance.

We—schoolteachers and education professors—have not survived the last 40 years of school (de)form without scars, perhaps the most prominent of which is an internalized anti-intellectualism (see chap. 7). I cannot ascribe the anti-intellectualism of the field solely to post-1960s events; there is a history of anti-intellectual vocationalism within the scholarly field of education. There are (hardly unrelated) general anti-intellectual tendencies in the American national character which have functioned historically to restrict academic—intellectual—freedom in the schools. Education professors' struggles have hardly been helped by the prejudice we too often face from Arts and Sciences colleagues. Moreover, education professors' troubled "marriage" to public-school teachers contributes to the closure of "complicated conversation," as the gendered and racialized domestication of education has rendered the classroom not a public space for complicated, sometimes contentious, conversation in which the public and private spheres are connected and reconstructed through academic knowledge. Rather, right-wing reform has rendered the classroom a privatized or domestic sphere in which children and their teachers are, simply, to do what they are told. It is a feminized and racialized domestic sphere politicians—mostly (white) men—are determined to control, disguised by apparently commonsensical claims of "accountability."

"Complicated conversation" is the central concept in contemporary curriculum studies in the United States. It is, I argue (in chap. 8), the idea that keeps hope alive, enabling us to have faith in a future in which we—both education professors and public-school teachers—determine the curriculum, both in the university and in the public schools. Teachers' intellectual determination of the curriculum—which necessarily includes choosing the means by which we assess students' study—is one key meaning of the phrase "academic freedom." Academic—intellectual—freedom is the prerequisite to the very possibility of education. Education is too important to be left to politicians and those parents who believe them.

What can we do? First, we must understand our situations, both as individuals and as a group. For the sake of such understanding, I employ the concept of *currere*—the Latin infinitive of curriculum—to denote the running (or lived experience) of the course, in this instance, the present historical situation. This autobiographical method provides a strategy for self-study, one phase of which seeks synthetical moments of "mobilization" when, as individuals and as teachers, we enter "the arena" to educate the American public.

That arena (the public sphere)—now a "shopping mall" in which citizens (and students) have been reduced to consumers—can be reconstructed in our classrooms by connecting academic knowledge to our students' (and our own) subjectivities, to society, and to the historical moment. In so doing, we can regain (relative) control of the curriculum, at least as it is enacted as a "complicated conversation," rather than reified as conceptual products on display in a store window, or in the small-group facilitation of "learning" in the school-as-corporate office (chap. 1).

The struggle to educate the American public—that is, of course, the project of "public education"—requires us to teach not only our students, but their parents, our neighbors, anyone who will listen. Teacher unions could become useful by funding a national television campaign—featuring, perhaps, movie and athletic icons to attract viewers' attention—explaining (for starters) that education is not a business. By whatever means, we must continue teaching after the bell rings and students depart our classrooms. We must renew our commitment to our own intellectual lives and to the educational reconstruction of the public sphere in America (chap. 10).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague Bill Doll, who in the late 1980s, brought to my attention Richard Rorty's theorization of "conversation." I wish to thank Donna Trueit, who introduced me to Michael Oakeshott's book on conversation, Brian Casemore for drawing my attention to Kaja Silverman's *World Spectators,* Margaret Zaccone, who sent me Daniel Noah Moses' "Distinguishing a University from a Shopping Mall," and Renee Fountain, who recommended Ewa Plonowska Ziarek's *An Ethics of Dissensus.* My thanks as well to Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, without whose research and editorial assistance the publication of the book would have been delayed by months. My thanks to Chris Myers for permitting me to draw upon *The Gender of Racial Politics and Violence in America* for sections of chapters 1, 4, 9, and 10. Thanks, too, to Elizabeth Ellsworth for reviewing the section on her work. Thanks to the anonymous reviewers, whose comments and criticisms resulted in a revised manuscript. My thanks especially to Naomi Silverman, my friend as well as editor, without whose critique and encouragement the book may not have appeared at all.

—William F. Pinar

Introduction

Fellow educators—are we not lost?
Do we know where we are,
remember where we have been,
or foresee where we are going?
—Dwayne E. Huebner (1999, 231)

[T]he fundamental issue goes unnoticed:
the abandonment of the historic mission of American education,
the democratization of liberal culture.
—Christopher Lasch (1995, 177)

We are not in the world merely by virtue of being born into it;
indeed, most of us are not really in the world at all.
—Kaja Silverman (2000, 29)

This book is no comprehensive introduction to curriculum studies, as *Understanding Curriculum* (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman 1995) attempted to be. Although the book contains no systematic review of the scholarship in the field, serious students of the field will hear echoes of others' work on nearly every page. Indeed, I quote much more than the customs of scholarship deem prudent, precisely in order to make audible the voices of others, to underscore the fact that the field is no solo performance. Curriculum theory is a complex, sometimes cacophonous, chorus, "the sound of silence breaking" (Miller in press).

Because my academic discipline is education, my work as a scholar and theoretician is structured pedagogically. In my performance of a classroom

teacher, I present what has been written on the subject, invite comments and questions, and in the process try to contribute commentary (hopefully clarifying and provocative) to the conversation myself. As a teacher, my commitment is the complication of students' understanding of the subject they are studying—in this instance, curriculum theory—while working to advance that field theoretically.

My assignment, then, is not to make curriculum theory conform to the contours of my own intellectual and political self-interest. Instead of making an argument, I work to create an impression. Rather than devising an "airtight" argument, I deliberately cut "holes" in my argument to enable students to "breathe," to "create spaces and find voices" (Miller 1990). Sometimes polemical, this primer for prospective and practicing teachers asks students to question the historical present and their relation to it, and in so doing, to construct their own understandings of what it means to teach, to study, to become "educated."

What is curriculum theory? The short answer is that *curriculum theory is the interdisciplinary study of educational experience*. Not every interdisciplinary study of educational experience is curriculum theory, of course; nor is every instance of curriculum theory interdisciplinary. Curriculum theory is a distinctive field of study, with a unique history, a complex present, an uncertain future. Discernible in this distinctive field are influences from disciplines across the humanities and the arts, and, to a lesser extent, from the social sciences (primarily social theory).

This interdisciplinary structure of the field, and especially the strong influence of the humanities and the arts, makes curriculum theory a distinctive specialization within the broad field of education, a fragmented field broadly modeled after the social and behavioral sciences. As a distinctive interdisciplinary field (rather than subfield of a single academic discipline such as educational psychology or the sociology of education), curriculum studies may be the only academic discipline within the broad field of education. Several of the social sciences—most prominently academic psychology, but sociology as well—have colonized much of the field of education. Only curriculum theory has its origin in and owes its loyalty to the discipline and experience of education.

In its interest in and commitment to the study of educational experience, curriculum theory is critical of contemporary school "reform." Indeed, "educational experience" seems precisely what politicians do not want, as they insist we focus on test scores, the "bottom line." By linking the curriculum to student performance on standardized examinations, politicians have, in effect, taken control of what is to be taught: the curriculum. Examination-driven curricula demote teachers from scholars and intellectuals to technicians in service to the state. The cultivation of self-reflexive, interdisciplinary

erudition and intellectuality disappears. Rationalized as "accountability," political socialization replaces education.

The present historical moment is, then, for public-school teachers and for those of us in the university who work with them, a nightmare. The school has become a skill-and-knowledge factory (or corporation); the education professoriate is reduced to the status of supervisory personnel. While in the schools, millions live the nightmare each day, too few seem to realize they are even asleep. As the great curriculum theorist Dwayne E. Huebner recognized more than 25 years ago, we educators are lost, submerged in present circumstances. As Huebner's opening words suggest, many of us seem to have forgotten the past, and we are unable to imagine the future. This submergence in the present is not unique to educators; historian Christopher Lasch argued that Americans generally have become "presentistic," so self-involved in surviving the present that, for us: "To live for the moment is the prevailing passion—to live for yourself, not for our predecessors or posterity" (Lasch 1978, 5).

While Lasch's (1978) portrait of what he termed "the culture of narcissism" is overdrawn (as is his caricature of progressive education in that book, as I note in chapter 7), it is, in my judgment, largely accurate. "The intense subjectivity of modern work, exemplified even more clearly in the office than in the factory," Lasch (1978, 102) observed, "causes men and women to doubt the reality of the external world and to imprison themselves . . . in a shell of protective irony." Retreating from a public sphere that no longer seems meaningful and worthy of their investment, Americans retreat into the apparent safety of private life where, they discover, there is no safety either. "On the contrary," Lasch (1978, 27) notes, "private life takes on the very qualities of the anarchic social order from which it supposed to provide a refuge."

With no place to hide, Americans retreat into—and, Lasch argues, become lost in—themselves. The psychoanalytic term for this personality disturbance is *narcissism*, not to be confused with egoism or selfishness (see Lasch 1984, 18). Recoiling from meaningful engagement in the world, the privatized self atrophies—Lasch (1984) uses the term *minimal* to denote that contraction of the self narcissism necessitates—and becomes unable to distinguish between self and other, let alone participate meaningfully in the public sphere. The past and future disappear in individualistic obsession with psychic survival in the present. As Lasch (1978, xvi) suggests, "The narcissist has no interest in the future because, in part, he has so little interest in the past."

Because the public sphere—in our case, the classroom—has become so unpleasant for so many, not a few teachers have retreated into the (apparent) safety of their own subjectivities. But in so doing, they have abdicated their professional authority and ethical responsibility for the curriculum they

teach. They have been *forced* to abdicate this authority by the bureaucratic protocols that presumably hold them "accountable," but which, in fact, render them unable to teach. (Instead, they are supposed to "manage learning.") As a field, traditional curriculum studies—in the past too often a support system for the school bureaucracy—was complicit with this presentistic capitulation to the "reform" *du jour*. As distinguished curriculum historian Herbert Kliebard (1970) made clear, the ahistorical and atheoretical character of traditional curriculum studies disabled teachers from understanding the history of their present circumstances.

My work in curriculum theory has emphasized the significance of subjectivity to teaching, to study, to the process of education. The significance of subjectivity is not as a solipsistic retreat from the public sphere. As Lasch (1978, 9) points out, subjectivity can be no refuge in an era when "[t]he possibility of genuine privacy recedes." The significance of subjectivity is that it is inseparable from the social; it is only when we—together and in solitude—reconstruct the relation between the two can we begin to restore our "shattered faith in the regeneration of life" (Lasch 1978, 207) and cultivate the "moral discipline . . . indispensable to the task of building a new order" (Lasch 1978, 235–236). Our pedagogical work is simultaneously autobiographical and political.

The reconstruction of the public sphere does not mean remaking the world (or our part of it, the school) over in our own image. The reconstruction of the private sphere does not mean remaking our subjectivity to coincide with the social. Self-understanding is not "self-improvement" so we might "get ahead." Nor is it a defensive response of self-withdrawal. "Confronted with an apparently implacable and unmanageable environment," Lasch (1984, 58) suggests, "people have turned to self-management . . . a technology of the self."

The method of *currere*—the infinitive form of curriculum—promises no quick fixes. On the contrary, this autobiographical method asks us to slow down, to remember even re-enter the past, and to meditatively imagine the future. Then, slowly and in one's own terms, one analyzes one's experience of the past and fantasies of the future in order to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one's submergence in the present. The method of *currere* is not a matter of psychic survival, but one of subjective risk and social reconstruction, the achievement of selfhood and society in the age to come. To undertake this project of social and subjective reconstruction, we teachers must remember the past and imagine the future, however unpleasant each domain may be. Not only intellectually but in our character structure, we must become "temporal," living simultaneously in the past, present, and future. In the autobiographical method I have devised, returning to the past (the "regressive") and imagining the future (the "progressive") must be understood (the "analytic") for the self to become "expanded" (in contrast to

being made "minimal" in Lasch's schema) and complicated, then, finally, mobilized (in the "synthetical" moment). Such an autobiographical sequence of ourselves as individuals and as educators might enable us to awaken from the nightmare we are living in the present.

The first step we can take toward changing reality—waking up from the nightmare that is the present state of public miseducation—is acknowledging that we are indeed living a nightmare. The nightmare that is the present—in which educators have little control over the curriculum, the very organizational and intellectual center of schooling—has several markers, prominent among them "accountability," an apparently commonsensical idea that makes teachers, rather than students and their parents, responsible for students' educational accomplishment. Education is an opportunity offered, not a service rendered.

In Part I, I review the markers of the present, focusing, in chapter 1, on the remaking of the school as a business, a scheme in which teachers first became factory workers. More recently, we have been "promoted" from the assembly line to the corporate office where we serve as "managers of student learning." "Never have corporate values reigned in the United States so supremely as they do today," Daniel Noah Moses (1999, 89) rightly observes, "when an overarching corporate metaphor has invaded all aspects of American society, including academia." While the "invasion" of the public schools is long over and "corporatization" is triumphant, in many of the nation's colleges and universities the struggle is ongoing.

In chapter 2, I outline the autobiographical method of *currere*, a method focused on self-understanding. Such understanding, I believe, can help us to understand our situation as a group. The revolutionary potential of autobiography becomes obvious in African-American practices of the genre, among them slave narratives and post-Emancipation autobiography and fiction.

While a vast body of work, this glimpse (in chapter 2) into African-American autobiography may inspire us to "talk back" to those politicians, bureaucrats, and parents who populate the nightmare that is the present. Of course, our situation cannot be compared to centuries of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination. But the heroic self-understanding, self-affirmation, self-mobilization, and collective action of African Americans—evident in African-American autobiography—may inspire us mostly white middle-class teachers to protest our present professional subjugation. African-American autobiographical practices can inspire us to carry on despite our degradation, by witnessing to subjective suffering in public, by becoming our own, more modest, versions of the private-and-public intellectuals—such as Ida B. Wells (chapters 2 and 4)—who spoke of their own subjective experience of racism in order to protest and mobilize against it.

To help us understand the present, I invoke the psychoanalytic notion of "deferred action" (*Nachtraglichkeit*), a term Freud employed to explain how

the experience of trauma is deferred—and, I would add, displaced—into other subjective and social spheres, where it is often no longer readily recognizable. In Part II, I argue that the "trauma" of the Cold War in the 1950s and the 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate the public schools (coupled with the primacy of students in 1960s civil rights struggles) was "displaced and deferred" onto public education. In the aftermath of these traumas, public education was racialized and gendered in the American popular imagination. Bluntly stated, we can understand the nightmare that is our subjugation in the present only if we appreciate that we are the victims of displaced and deferred misogyny and racism.

In arguing that racism and misogyny have been "deferred and displaced" into public education, I am not suggesting that they have been *absorbed* there. Racism and misogyny remain pervasive in America today, and while teachers also suffer from deferred and displaced versions of them, white racism in America remains corrosive and endemic, especially (but not only) in the South, now the political epicenter of American presidential politics (Black and Black 1992). Indeed, my argument here regarding the "deferred and displaced action" of racism and misogyny underlines how these forms of social hatred and prejudice intensify as they mutate.

Nor am I arguing that the subjugation of public school teachers is *only* racialized and gendered. It is classed as well. In contrast to elite professions such as medicine and, less so, law, public school teaching has long been associated with the lower middle class, and not only in salary. Public-school teaching has historically required a shorter and less rigorous credentialing period. Moreover, many teachers have been—in the popular imagination if not always in fact—the first members of their families to complete higher education. (One hundred years ago, public-school teaching rarely required a college degree.) The political problems of public education are, in part, class-based, but they are, I suggest, straightforwardly so. There is little that is deferred and displaced about the class-based character of the political subjugation of the teaching profession.

Moreover, the nightmarish quality of teachers' present subjugation—its peculiar intensity and irrationality—cannot be grasped by class analysis alone. While class conflict in the United States has produced strong political reaction, it has not tended to produce the vicious contempt teachers and *their* teachers—the education professoriate—have encountered. To grasp this "overdetermined" reaction, one must invoke models of racial prejudice and misogyny, wherein complex and convoluted psychological structures and processes intensify emotion well beyond rhyme or reason. We must move to the sphere of psychopathology to grasp the history of the present of public education in America.

We glimpse this phenomenon of deferral and displacement in chapter 3 (the first "regressive moment") where, relying on the scholarship of Robert L.

Griswold, we study the gendered character of the Kennedy Administration's educational response to the Cold War, specifically its embrace of physical fitness in 1960 and 1961. This was roughly the same period during which the National Curriculum Movement was launched. The National Curriculum Reform Movement was dedicated to aligning the secondary school subjects with the academic disciplines as they exist at the university and, in so doing, establishing academic "rigor" in the schools. To accomplish this curricular alignment, the control of curriculum had to be taken from teachers. The continuing legacies of Cold War curriculum politics structure the deplorable situation in which we teachers find ourselves today. Starting then, we began to lose all control over the curriculum, including the means by which students' study of it is assessed.

While 1960s curriculum reform—the genesis of our nightmare—was gendered, it was profoundly racialized as well. It was 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled that public schools must be desegregated, but in the South this did not occur until the late 1960s and early 1970s, under the presidential administration of Richard Nixon. (Desegregation has never occurred in the North, as primarily white suburban school districts ring primarily black urban ones.) As schools became racial battlegrounds and the pretext for white flight, and as college students fought to desegregate other public spaces (perhaps most famously lunch counters and public transportation), racial anxiety began to intensify among European Americans, an anxiety right-wing Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater worked to exploit in his 1964 campaign against Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson. It is the same white racism Alabama Governor George Wallace tried to exploit in his 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns (Black and Black 1992). While this pervasive and intensifying (white) anxiety—not limited to the South—was focused upon the public schools, it echoed through the culture at large, as broader issues of racial justice and, indeed, of the American identity itself (was this still, or even primarily, a European-identified nation?) were stimulated by the desegregation of the nation's schools. Public education—in the North especially in the urban centers, in the South everywhere—became racialized.

No doubt intensifying the racialization of education in the American popular imagination was the very visible and aggressive roles played by (especially university) students in the civil rights movements of the late 1950s and the 1960s. To illustrate students' participation in the civil rights movement, we glimpse the civil rights activism of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), including the Committee's establishment of "freedom schools." These schools and the student activism they reflected and expressed were located in the Deep South, the epicenter of the segregated nation's racial crisis.

It was in the Deep South where the political struggle for control of public education was most explicitly, most outrageously, localized. Without right-

wing exploitation of white southerners' racial fears, the 30 years of "conservative" presidential politics since the 1960s—and the school "reform" that has accompanied it—could not have occurred (Black and Black 1992). In chapter 4, we focus on three of the cultural and political problems—problems of race, class, and gender—which the South has still not worked through, which the (white) South has, in fact, declined to work through. In its reactionary repudiation of progressive racial and gender politics, the (white) South has forced—with the considerable and continuing assistance of "conservatives" nationwide, especially in the Far West and the Mid-West—the nation far to the right.

The political problem of teachers today—our scapegoating by politicians and by uninformed parents, our loss of academic freedom (the very prerequisite for our professional practice)—cannot be understood apart from right-wing politicians' manipulation of public education as a political issue. As seen in chapter 3, this political manipulation was first successfully employed in the 1960 Kennedy presidential campaign. In subsequent campaigns, the tactic was appropriated by the right, enabled all along by white reactionaries in the Deep South (Black and Black 1992).

From this regressive moment—an evocation of the past in the present—I move to the progressive moment, in which we focus on futuristic conceptions of education as primarily technological. In this future screens—television, film, and, especially, computer screens—seem everywhere, prosthetic extensions of our enfleshed bodies, dispersing our subjectivities outward, far from our concrete everyday communities into abstract cyberspace and a "global village." In this prosthetic extension of the everyday ego we took ourselves to be, the self seems to evaporate. Subjectivity itself mutates, and the "self" autobiography purports to identify and express distends into hypertextual personae, ever-changing cyborg identities. New forms of subjectivity and sexuality appear as the natural world threatens to become "virtual." In today's politics of public miseducation, the computer becomes the latest technological fantasy of educational utopia, a fantasy of "teacher-proof" curriculum, a fantasy of going where "no man has gone before."

But, as curriculum theorists have long appreciated, the exchange and acquisition of information is not education. Being informed is not equivalent to erudition. Information must be tempered with intellectual judgment, critical thinking, ethics, and self-reflexivity. The complicated conversation that is the curriculum requires interdisciplinary intellectuality, erudition, and self-reflexivity. This is not a recipe for high test scores, but a common faith in the possibility of self-realization and democratization, twin projects of social and subjective reconstruction.

After considering the future in the present during the progressive moment, we turn to the first analytic moment. There we face the facts, namely the profoundly anti-intellectual conditions of our professional labor. These are con-

conditions both internal and external to the schools, to the university-based fields of curriculum studies and teacher education. The challenge of education in this profoundly anti-intellectual historical moment is made, contrary to expectation, *more* difficult by our situation in the university, where our arts and sciences colleagues—as we term them more hopefully than accurately—too often mistake academic vocationalism and their own budgetary self-interest for interdisciplinary, socially critical, subjectively focused education.

Due to the anti-intellectualism of American culture generally, due to the deferral and displacement of racism and misogyny onto public education more specifically, and due to the anti-intellectual character of (white) southern culture and history now politically hegemonic in the United States, the field of education has (understandably) remained underdeveloped intellectually. Indeed, in part for reasons not our own, we, too, are guilty of anti-intellectualism. But, as chapter 7 makes clear, there are reasons internal to the field, reasons for which we are responsible, that we suffer our subjugation today. We cannot begin to respond to the displaced and deferred racism and misogyny we suffer today until we face the internalized consequences of our decades-long subjugation, namely a pervasive and crippling anti-intellectualism.

Whatever our fate—given our betrayal by government and by powerful professional organizations, the future is not bright—we must carry on, our dignity intact. We must renew our commitment to the intellectual character of our professional labor. We can do so, first, by engaging in frank and sustained self-criticism, as I initiate in chapter 7. There I discuss the deep-seated and pervasive anti-intellectualism in the field of education, obvious in teacher education, and expressed in the *anti-theoretical vocationalism* found not only in that field. The problem we face is hardly helped by the anti-intellectual hostility of some arts and sciences colleagues—Richard Hofstadter is but one historic example—and it is only intensified by the scapegoating of public schools and the education professoriate by politicians. Despite these assaults on the profession, we cannot retreat into a defensive posture that keeps us from facing frankly the anti-intellectualism built into the field, and from taking steps, both individually and as a professional collectivity, to correct it.

Accompanying frank and ongoing self-criticism must be the reinvigoration of our commitment to engage in "complicated conversation" with our academic subjects, our students, and ourselves, as I assert in chapter 8. Such complicated conversation requires the academic—intellectual—freedom to devise the courses we teach, the means by which we teach them, and the means by which we assess students' study of them. We must fight for that freedom as individuals in classrooms and as a profession: At both "sites" we are under assault by government and by at least two of the professional organizations pretending to representing us.

While the concept of complicated conversation is here a curricular idea and not an instructional one, pedagogical considerations are hardly irrele-

vant, as curriculum understood as complicated conversation is structured, in part, by teaching. As the analysis in chapter 7 makes clear, the anti-intellectual "barriers" to complicated conversation are numerous and profound (see Huebner 1999). Just how complicated curriculum as conversation is we glimpse in psychoanalytic reminders of structural self-deception, the contradictions of communication, and the fantasmatic character of the public sphere (Britzman 1998; Ellsworth 1997). Still, "complicated" does not mean "impossible," and we must continue the project of intellectualization, both individually and organizationally, if we are to take back our profession as teachers, not technicians.

After these moments of reflection and self-understanding that the analytic phase provides, in the synthetic moment (see chapters 9 and 10), we mobilize ourselves, both as individuals and as a profession. After the "shattering" (or "evaporation") of the ego that regression to the past and contemplation of the future invites, we return to the present, mobilized for pedagogical engagement in the reconstruction of the private and public spheres in curriculum and teaching, what James B. Macdonald (1995) termed the study of how to have a world. Public education structures self-formation and social reconstruction while, in many of its present forms, it blocks both. Teachers ought not be only school-subject specialists; I suggest that they become private-and-public intellectuals who understand that self-reflexivity, intellectuality, interdisciplinarity, and erudition are as inseparable as are the subjective and the social spheres themselves.

It is long past time for us to "talk back" to those politicians, parents, and school and university administrators who misunderstand the education of the public as a "business." Mobilized, we must enter "into the arena" and teach our fellow citizens—including uncomprehending colleagues and self-aggrandizing administrators—what is at stake in the education of children, an education in which creativity and individuality, not test-taking skills, are primary. In our time, to be intellectual requires political activism.

Within our profession, we must repudiate those professional organizations and those legislative actions by government—such as the Bush Administration's "Leave No Child Behind" legislation—that destroy the very possibility of education by misconstruing it as a "business." While we struggle as intellectuals reconstructing the private and public spheres of curriculum and teaching in schools, we must, especially among ourselves, keep hope alive. We can recapture the curriculum, someday. Without reclaiming our academic—intellectual freedom—we cannot teach. Without intellectual freedom, education ends; students are indoctrinated, forced to learn what the test-makers declare to be important.

Nightmares often refer to waking life, and so we must remember the broader political context and historical moment in which our efforts at self-understanding and social reconstruction occur. We live in an American na-

tion in which the (white reactionary) South has culturally and politically triumphed. Only when the South is (finally) reconstructed can the nation resume a progressive course toward democratization. I propose the educational reconstruction of the South through a "curriculum as social psychoanalysis," schooling that speaks to persisting problems of race, class, and gender, not only in the South but nationwide.

Such a "complicated conversation" illustrates a curriculum in which academic knowledge, subjectivity, and society are inextricably linked. It is this link, this promise of education for our private-and-public lives as Americans, which curriculum theory elaborates. If we persist in our cause—the cause of public education—someday the schools and those of us who work in them can deflect displaced and deferred racism. When we do, schools will no longer be knowledge-and-skill factories, not academic businesses but schools: sites of education for creativity, erudition, and interdisciplinary intellectuality. Someday—if we remember the past, study the future, analyze, then mobilize in, the present—education will permit the progressive pursuit of "new modes of life, eroticism, and social relations." For you, let this someday begin today.